

Coming Soon To A Racetrack Near You



by DOUG BURGE

In the March 2009 *California Thoroughbred* editorial, I outlined the new additions to the California-bred incentive and racing program that had been supported by the Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC) and the various racing associations. These enhancements provide significant purse bonuses for Cal-bred maiden allowance winners as well as benefits to Cal-bred maiden claiming horses and amendments to current eligibility requirements that will provide advantages and opportunities that will only exist for horses bred locally.

At that time, I promised updates to the status of the legislative vehicle that would provide the long term funding beginning in January 2010, as well as the means of possibly starting this program this year through other sources of funding.

First, I am pleased to announce that through the financial commitment of the California Marketing Committee (CMC), we have plans to unveil these new enhancements (both North and South) in late September during the Oak Tree Racing Association meeting at Santa Anita Park. It is currently planned at that time for the maiden bonuses, and all other benefits, to become available. With the Breeders' Cup once again being held during Oak Tree, this is the opportune time to show the rest of the country just how much more valuable our Cal-breds will become.

Secondly, the legislation (AB 1578) that will both reallocate existing incentive award money and provide a

matching amount from TOC, is an Assembly G. O. Committee bill that is currently scheduled to be heard in the Senate, without any known opposition. As mentioned previously, this measure will provide the future funding for the new program.

Over the past month, along with our partners from Barretts Equine Limited, I have visited farms throughout the state inspecting yearlings and discussing with farm owners/managers the solutions needed to improve the economics for those investing in the production of Thoroughbreds. The feedback from mare and stallion owners on the new improvements to the program has been very well received. Many stallion bookings have picked up since the announcement, as mare owners who were on the fence about breeding in California this year have now chosen to do so.

We realize that the poor economic conditions and uncertainties that racing has faced has caused declines in the demand and production of horses both in state and abroad. We are optimistic that these significant increases in purse money and opportunities will certainly boost the value of Cal-breds and provide the ample return for those breeding and or purchasing young horses.

As the industry continues to pursue stabilization and growth, through the protection of existing racetracks and the creation of new revenue streams, it is also vital that added incentives be offered now to stimulate the production of horses in California. 🐾

MAIDEN BONUS PROGRAM

- I. Owner(s) of a registered California-bred maiden shall be paid a **\$20,000** owner's bonus for winning a maiden allowance race in Southern California, and a **\$10,000** owner's bonus for winning a maiden allowance race in the North.

*Paid directly to the owner within 30 days after the win.

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MAIDEN BONUS PROGRAM

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- II. California-bred maiden \$40,000 claiming race shall be raised to \$50,000-\$40,000.
California-bred \$50,000 or less maiden winners eligible for the current \$40,000 or less starter races

