The Horseracing Industry's Challenge with drugs, deception and death

Horse History

Somewhere in history, it is indicated that horses were a reliable resource of meat and milk. There is no accessible time during which they became domestic mules as they were considered animals of the wild. At some point in time, a defined clarification of horses became construct for the more favorable "domesticated" type which enabled a sense of separatism from " wild ponies".

Historians have savored the relativity of the "horse" as it appeared in early period artwork of booth Greek and Roman cultures. Preservation of such imagery from the 1680 to 1875 time frame depicts the horse as the primary vehicle of transportation for chariots carts, wagons, and riding in exploration, war, and agriculture. They are a recognized feature of trade, commerce, and recreation.

It is Poseidon who is designated, God of Horses, in Greece by the Hellenes during the 2nd Century bce as he fathered Pegasus with Medusa.

Horses also hold a respective presence in Greek mythology and as a deity of sort amongst the Native American culture. As Native Americans are notable a "horse culture" as it's tribal community whose traditional life involved herding and breeding horses. The horse in-turn, took on a versatile role as dually a spiritual and mythical healers of their physical and spiritual well being. It too became a symbol "of freedom".

England AD 210, the record of Arabians brought by Lucius Septimius Severus, Emperor of Rome to Britain. Darley Arabian is said to be the father of the Thoroughbred proven by the Eclipse. The Eclipse horse is the noted male ancestry of almost 100% of all Thoroughbreds.

We can then assume that amidst the understanding of the horses symbolism of "freedom" is the reality that it gifted man with the ability to roam the earth and explore new territory at will. At times the firm animal moves slowly and at will swiftly about varied terrains. This is the precursor and interpretation of it's natural ability that influenced the tryst stance at using the animal for recreational purposes. The assumption that just as the separatism of those used for domestication and those of the wild there was a evolving sense of intellect that fought in chore to train them to run.



Horse Racing

The horseracing industry, though an antique happening, is motivated by financial gain and prestige. Owners are eager to take home top-prizes in recognition of the genuine ability of their well trained horse for whom they've sacrificed a major monetary investment. This inspires grueling regimes, constant travel, and lack of companionship for most horses. It too limits the sense of connectivity onto the many veterinarians, jockeys, trainers, transport persons, etc…who breeze in and out of their lives as it unknowingly strives to ascend the ranks within the world of commercial horseracing.

Thoroughbred foals are taken from their mothers at approximately 6 months. At this time, the skeletal system of the average race horse is still developing when they typically begin training and at time racing. These animals are forced to run long distances at a fast then faster pace. Some are unable to handle the pressure as a professional race horse and naturally experience trauma such as hairline fractures and other injury's that are difficult to diagnose. Others gain injury during transportation between country or states racetracks. They are trucked, shipped or flown as home becomes the road for most and training is an outlet from the stable they are kept in. Thus, these injuries can be exacerbated in their next race or workout resulting in shattered bones and emergency surgery's. Also, horses do not handle remaining stable for long periods of time and may resist casts or slings. Inability to treat the injury can further to a severe irreversible state and they may never race again. Some are euthanized to reserve plausible veterinary fees and expenses associated with the horses condition.

Race horse investors spend millions and despite the insurance premiums paid for each, euthanizing them is not always an option. Anticipation of financial outcomes provokes spending to maintenance their medical conditions. And, training too is driven by a horses market value. It is therefore those horses with no record of value who see early death if they become severely injured citing it as resolution to impending expenses. It can cost beyond $50,000 per year to care for a single race horse inclusive of over $1000 annual insurance payment.

Animal Rights

Insurance scandal is not without influence as well as we know it is expensive to buy and lose the value of an intended 'winning' Thoroughbred. Intentional injury by cruel and non-typical owners and trainers has been documented over time as well. As we've learned, insurance policy's are subject to payouts for injury, cause or documented medical problem indicated which results in euthanization of the insured horse. This payout practice encompasses theft and unlawful

removal, poisoning, and willful malicious misconduct. The anticipation of loss is a natural stimulant toward 'false' acts in hopes of recouping financial loss by owners and trainers alike. This is a form of animal rights violation.

One of the primary interest of animal rights activism is to cease any and all human activities which cause animal suffering. This is not just about skins, furs, horns, or better racing, it involves the factory farming, experimentation, and natural habitat protections.

Today's collection fighting for global animal rights includes a movement lead by philosophers whom expressed views about the moral rights of animals. Animal Liberation, a book, sites human and animal interest in a sense of equality in the depth of pleasure and escalation of pain. Having a limited ability to communicate one must gauge if they suffer? Some suggest that animals are for 'use' by humans to fulfill task, as food, or companionship. Moral perspectives are unnecessary as they are not of equal value to humans and are irrational. Though arguable, we become familiar with how the animal is most frequently utilized in our society's and how humans relate emotionally to their co-existence. We owe then nothing as naturally earthly beast who protect and care for their families in wild. Once a domestic or breed animal, it holds to its intended use for work or pleasure, for travel or racing. As a personal owner and those horse owners with investors quality care is essential and by law. When and if this goes afoul, typically when financial woes come about for the owner(s), neglect in care begins to take hold. Activist seek to save and restore any horse found living within abusive conditions.

For example, in India, horses, donkeys, and mules are found to dwell is diseased, wet, unclean conditions violations of the laws and guidelines. Their animals have disease eyes & hooves, are malnourished, and swollen joints & limbs among other physical problems. They are in crowded quarters and tied to post which can cause spread of viral fungal diseases. Activist have honed in on the neglect and abuse in hope of changing their poor quality habits for the animals safety and welfare.

Too, there is the simplistic use as pets that are cared for and loved. As show horses, such as for Budweiser Clydesdales, the horses are visual representatives of the corporation and it's widely marketed products. The company came under scrutiny when discovered they remove the tail bone for esthetics. Part of the proceeds from sales is assumable for the animals care as they have suggested removal is for 'safety' reasons during transportation. However, the tail is a toll to swat flies and biting insects, reproduction, disease prevention, for balance, mobility, and communication. This medical 'tail docking' is prohibited in 10 states with exception.

Racing Medication Testing & Euthanasia

Horses are subject to physical evaluations just as humans having there vitals taken using medical equipment and practitioners hands to monitor body such as heart, lungs, and muscular systems. Blood works is taken, hydration levels evaluated, electrolyte balances, observation of preexisting infection, and other aspects of the animals health and natural life.

Owners and trainers, in the horse racing industry globally, often agree to over indulge in their use of drugs. Again, horse purchasing and breeding is heavily invested in by groups of wealthy people, syndicates, and other with intentions of building a reputation for winning horses. This implies the need for drugs such as steroids to strengthen the horses ability to run hard and fast and faster in real time application. They ward of potential infections, save the animal for experiencing pain to enable it's ability to race in anti-inflammatory, pain relievers, and proactive bleed medication. There are legal industry recognize meds and illegal drugs which escape detection in lab testing. Despite the limitation(s), varied organization try to micro-manage the overall welfare of the racing horses in effort to alleviate undue suffrage, abuse, and euthanizations. Though is too is known preexisting conditions can also cause adverse reactions to medications such as prior surgery, infections or fractures.

At times there is the need to begin drug therapy for chronic pain before a horse has medical procedures to enable endurance and proper pain management. There is full use of local regional equine anesthesia or standing sedation and general anesthesia administration.

Oversights by industry officials can result in ongoing abuses whereas avoidance of 'steroidal' use would result in horses who can not withstand the intense training nor maintain health throughout the overly aggressive impact of pace and racing every month. They may fall victim to injury during transport as well. The less known reality is that horses "die everyday" in this industry. Standing sedation is used because horses tend to refuse laying down and also it takes four medical staff members to guide one horse up and down etc….

Recovery for this eager animal is just as complicated as once again, horses prefer to stand and have a difficult time laying down and withstanding use of restrictive matter for healing appendages etc... There mobility is predictive of its blood circulation ability also.

If a horse dies on the track, a necropsy is in order to suggest the cause and contributing factor as relative to the veterinary records and interviews for the owners and stakeholders. These professionals often add-in what could have plausibly prevented the incident from happening.

Upon death, horses are euthanized. Those who have suffered severe non-maintenance injury's are sent for slaughter. Slaughterhouses are found worldwide, yet there are none found within U.S. borders. Despite a Congressional budget for such, horses are sent abroad for slaughter as some countries cater to "horse meat" sales for local consumption in Canada, Mexico, and Japan.

This too can be lucrative for countries such as Korea who invest well into the billions for quality race horses. Horses sent to these facilities endure days of seclusion with no water or food in addition to the plausibility of bodily injury occurrences during transport.

Activism



Why the need for activism in the horse racing industry?

The afterlife for a racehorse is a total question of their condition and the owners further interest in maintenance of the animal. You might think after having shortened their life for sport, the mare would be taken to a place of rest and total care for the rest of their life span, yet, this is not always the case. Not even for a champion. Some find a home to graze as others are released to substandard living, some taken to sale yards, used for pleasure riding, and even sold for slaughter and sale of its meat. Others are placed on farm land suffering without proper pampering and a lack of attention from animal lovers.

The mortality rate(s) globally are so outrageous to industry insiders, veterinary professionals, and outsiders with a sense of awareness that it almost impossible to ignore by animal rights activist and animal lovers alike. As with all worldly concerns, not everyone feels spurned into action, however, are those charismatics who take an active stance against these recognized abuses.

Facts:

1. Seven horses died in the pre-term of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs 2023.
2. Total of 12 horses died with the Kentucky Derby.
3. Recent years played host to 30 deaths at Santa Anita in California 2019.
4. In 2018, Accolade, was subject a full 'animal cruelty' investigation by The Department of Agriculture regarding a starting gate incident.
5. 2009 – 2021 Thoroughbreds in the United States and Canada lost over 7,200 horses in races.
6. The colt, Barbaro, winner of the 2006 Kentucky Derby shattered it's leg two weeks later at the Preakness event.

7. In 2014 and 2019 the FDA warned that pyrimethamine and toltrazuril where connected to equine deaths and not approved for use.
8. Deadly strain of equine Herpes Virus can spread and cause an outbreak as horses are kept in large gathered group in one place.
9. In 2020 52 horses died equine deaths at Triple Crown Track.
10. Long Island Belmont host 65 dead horses in 2020. 7 racing, 27 were in training and 18 other illnesses category such as colic.
11. Lasix is banned as an anti-bleeding remedy drug.
12. 18 yr. old jockey, Axel Concepcion's careless riding suspended the September 21 race and euthanized a rival horse at Delaware Park Race Track. Delaware Thoroughbred Racing Commission reviews this matter.
13. A horse, Excursionniste, injured the week before dies after shattering his leg at Belmont Park's Stake Day.
14. Mashnee Girl's suffered a fatal injury at Belmont Stakes June 11th 2023 after a yearlong layoff from injury and subsequent surgery.



References

1. "7 Horses died in the lead-up to the Kentucky Derby." What is being done to prevent deaths and injuries? (Nation May 8, 2023 14:40 AM EDT). *PBS NewsHour.com*

2. Bowers, Mark. (Saturday, June 16, 2018). "Worker seen on video punching horse in the face at Delaware Race Track." *WPVI.com.*

3. Britannica.com The modern animal rights movement

4. Hofmann, Stacey. (Wednesday, June 27, 2018). Investigation of animal cruelty at Delaware Park concluded. Department of Agriculture posted: *Newsdelaware.gov.*

5. Dinklage, Peter, Williams, and Other Notable New Yorkers Appear in PETA Video Condemning Horse-Drawn Carriage Trade Published April 2, 2014 by PETA Update November 30, 2022

6. "Equine Anesthesia: Keeping horses sleeping easy." (Tuesday, April 11, 2023- 11:23am). *Horse-anesthsianews.com*

7. "Life of a Racehorse." (accessed 11/28/23 @1:52pm). *horseracingkills.com*

8. PETA Investigation Sept. 20, 2023

9. "The Horseracing Industry: Drugs, Deception and Death." (accessed 11/28/23). *Share@PostShare.com*

10. Thornton, T. D.. Apprentice Suspended 30 Days for 'Extremely Careless' Riding in Delaware Race that Caused Equine Fatality, Thursday, September 28, 2023 @ 7:54pm

11. Waldman, Elena. Update! (June 21, 2023). "Horse Who Died at Belmont Stakes Was Injured Just a WEEK Prior." *Peta.org.*

12. Warren, Rob. (April 27, 2018). "A Deadly Strain of Equine Herpes Virus," https://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu