

The Fund's Mission and Performance Measures - 2008



The Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund, by law, supports several facets of standardbred breeding and racing in the state. These important areas include:

FAIRS

During 2008 the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund (the Fund) provided almost \$165,000 to the 22 agricultural fairs that continue to conduct harness racing. By law these funds must be used for maintenance and repairs of racing and other fair facilities. These renovation monies were in addition to \$33,000 provided to administer the races and \$450,000 in funding for purses contested for in the County Fair Division of the New York Sire Stakes Program.

The Fund provided maintenance and construction monies for the New York State Fair in Syracuse. During August the Fund also provided \$723,000 in purse money for the Fund's annual state fair series, formerly raced at the New York State Exposition. This was a 2.5% increase over 2007. In 2008 this series was again raced at Tioga Downs in Nichols, New York. The series provides an important opportunity for horsemen to establish record times for their horses on a larger oval track. The Fund's State Fair program also gave horsemen the opportunity to show off their 3 year old horses at the traditional Fourth of July meet at the Goshen Historic Track in Goshen, New York. Horsemen at Goshen competed for a total of \$ 233,000 in purse money during the two day meet.

EQUINE RESEARCH

The Harry M. Zweig Memorial Fund for Equine Research honors the late Dr. Harry Zweig, a distinguished veterinarian, and his numerous contributions to the state's equine industry. In 1979, by amendment to the pari-mutuel racing and wagering law, the New York State legislature created the Harry M. Zweig Memorial Fund for Equine Research to promote equine research at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. The Harry M. Zweig Committee was established for the purpose of administering the fund and is composed of individuals in specified state agencies and equine industry positions and others who represent equine breeders, owners, trainers, and veterinarians. The Fund contributed \$332,983 in 2008 to the equine research fund for a variety of medical research including: causes and possible cures for equine respiratory and influenza problems, embryonic stem cell research and mapping the horse genome. This represents an 11% increase over 2007.

CONSULTING CONTRACTS

In 2008 the Fund entered into two contracts: 3GS for internet advisory and consulting services in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 and Wojeski and Company for auditing services in the amount of \$7,250.

4-H CLUBS

The Fund contributed \$53,550 for broad-based support to the statewide 4-H program centered at Cornell, helping to provide youngsters with educational opportunities and information on possible careers within the breeding and racing industries.

The dedicated staff and volunteers involved in this program expose young people to a variety of equine experiences. These include tours of regional harness tracks, career exploration tours of racing and breeding facilities. Monies from the Fund also help to underwrite costs associated with supplies and training for 4-H staff members. This includes updating educational materials such as books, visual aids and videos. Distribution of the NYS 4-H Horse Program newsletter "Unbridled Thoughts" has been considerably strengthened since it was put on the website of the Cornell Department of Animal Science in 2005.

Standardbred day clinics are another popular feature of the statewide program. Approximately 10 of these clinics are held at farms, county show grounds, local schools, or county fairs, while others culminate in a race track tour and a night at the races.

Toward the end of the summer, the Fund also helps to support "The Kids and Horse Tent" at the State Fair at Syracuse. This tent is managed by volunteers and staffed by 4-H youth. Approximately 8,000 to 10,000 youth and adults visit the tent each year.

THE BREEDING SCENE

The New York breeding industry has been undergoing rapid growth. This is directly related to the installation of video lottery terminals at racetracks and increased purses. In 2008 the number of mares bred to New York stallions fell by 16% over 2007 from 2173 to 1827. This is actually a positive development. As the standardbred breed continues to improve only the very top quality horses can compete. Although more money is being invested in standardbred horses every year, only the very best horses can hope to compete, further demonstrating the industry's "flight to quality." It should be noted that yearling nominations trail breeding by two years. Interest in the program is expected to continue as better quality mares and stallions are drawn to the state by our very popular New York Sire Stakes harness racing program.

Read the Fund's [2008 Annual Report](#).