

# IGSRV Principles for Acceptable Welfare Practices in Horseracing

## Preamble

The International Group of Specialist Racing Veterinarians (IGSRV) expects those involved in horse racing to act responsibly towards all horses engaged in the sport. The IGSRV considers that the health and welfare of the horse must be recognized as fundamental concerns for all industry participants and that racing authorities should have appropriate measures in place to ensure that these are not compromised.

The document entitled “*IGSRV Welfare Guidelines for Horse Racing*” outlines the principles for the ethical management of horses. The **IGSRV Principles for Acceptable Welfare Practices in Horseracing** complements the former document and addresses practices that are considered to have no place in the treatment or management of racehorses and practices that may have legitimate value but should be controlled or otherwise restricted.

Racing authorities are expected to monitor the welfare of racehorses and are encouraged to design and implement programs to improve the health and welfare of racehorses in their jurisdiction. The IGSRV is committed to the advancement of equine research and particularly that which is designed to enhance the health and welfare of the racehorse. Racing authorities and their veterinary advisors are encouraged to be proactive in the support of relevant research, to continually review and upgrade their equine welfare policies in light of new research findings and strive to adopt principles of “best practice” with respect to equine welfare.

The IGSRV has identified two key areas that racing authorities should consider when developing health and welfare strategies:

### **A - Practices that have no place in the treatment or management of a racehorse:**

- The use of any object, device or chemical to achieve an inappropriate response, conditioned or otherwise, or to modify performance in any way by causing suffering and / or anxiety to the horse at any time during training or racing.
- Subjecting horses to medical or surgical procedures that have not been supervised by a licensed veterinarian and are not consistent with providing medical and/or welfare benefits to the horse.
- Practices that are fraudulent, potentially fraudulent or may have adverse consequences for the integrity of the breed or the industry.
- Tampering by means of any physical, chemical or physiological interference with a racehorse intended to artificially modify its athletic performance in any way.

**B - Practices that may have legitimate therapeutic value, but should be controlled or otherwise restricted prior to racing:**

- ▀ The IGSRV recognises that there are certain products, procedures and treatment modalities that may have therapeutic benefits when applied appropriately under veterinary supervision. Such practices should be monitored and regulated as deemed appropriate by the regulatory veterinary authority of individual racing jurisdictions to ensure adequate control and compliance. Regulation may include the recommendation and enforcement of withdrawal times.

The responsibility for determining the acceptability of any particular practice lies with the veterinary regulatory authority of individual racing jurisdictions. The IGSRV remains a resource for the racing industry, providing leadership and assisting racing authorities wherever possible.

*Adopted October 17, 2008*