



MEDIA RELEASE

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NZTR WELFARE PLANS OUTLINED AT INTERNATIONAL FORUM

The steps the New Zealand thoroughbred industry is taking in the field of horse welfare have been outlined at the second International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses, in Seoul, South Korea.

Martin Burns, the NZTR General Manager of Racing and Equine Welfare, was among the speakers at the forum, which was held in conjunction with the Asian Racing Conference.

Burns outlined the NZTR vision for thoroughbred welfare, which was that “a thoroughbred should be provided a good life, with the care and conditions that will allow it to thrive and perform to its natural abilities, with minimal discomfort and an absence of suffering.”

The welfare vision was based upon the five domains model of animal welfare - nutrition, environment, mental state, physical health and behaviour.

Burns noted that traceability needed to be part of any welfare plan. “We need to identify and better understand why some foals don’t progress to race, and when horses leave racing or a breeding herd, know where they go, what they do and that they will be well cared for.

“NZTR is introducing improved welfare guidelines and clear obligations upon ‘accountable persons’ within the Rules of Racing, which includes a duty of care in rehoming retired horses.”

The industry was also working with various partners to provide opportunities for a second career for thoroughbreds and to raise awareness of the versatility of the thoroughbred.

Lyndon Barends, the chief executive of The National Horseracing Authority of South Africa and the keynote speaker at the forum, stressed the significance of aftercare as being a priority to the racing industry.

"Everyone in the racing and breeding industries derives their salary from the horse. Aftercare cannot be an afterthought. It's critical to the industry as a whole," Barends said.

"Every jurisdiction in the racing industry should take steps to develop infrastructure to assist horses when they retire from racing, and IFAR is there to assist by providing insight, education, and expertise," said Di Arbuthnot, the chair of IFAR and the chief executive of Retraining of Racehorses, an aftercare organization in the UK.

Representatives from Japan and Korea spoke of the advances and newly developed work regarding aftercare of thoroughbreds within the racing industries in their regions.

Jock Hutchison of Horseback UK spoke of the intelligence and sensitivity of the thoroughbred that makes it the ideal breed to assist war veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. He noted that thoroughbreds can be just as beneficial for humans as humans can be for thoroughbreds.

Erin Crady from Thoroughbred Charities of America described the efforts to rescue horses affected by Hurricane Maria and the means through which the organization was able to raise the necessary funds to assist these animals.

Godolphin's head of global charity and one of the founders of IFAR, Diana Cooper, commented that "the horses we breed give us such pleasure, and they deserve a good life from cradle to grave. Aftercare is non-negotiable."

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