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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kentucky Quarter Horse groups withhold position on HHR

(February 1, 2021) – Two statewide breed organizations, the Kentucky Quarter Horse Association (KyQHA) and the Kentucky Quarter Horse Racing Association (KyQHRA), are united in withholding a position regarding proposed legislation to maintain the status quo for operators of Historical Horse Racing (HHR) facilities. While there are over 10,000 owners of more than 30,000 Quarter Horses *confirmed* across all 120 counties, and while Quarter Horses have long been a wholly legal pari-mutuel racing breed in the Commonwealth, no licensed track offers so-called “sprint racing.” As a result, no portion of earnings from HHR terminals is of benefit to Kentucky owners and breeders of Quarter Horses.

The KyQHA is the official state affiliate of the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), the world’s largest equine registry, while the KyQHRA is designated by statute as the horsemen’s organization for Quarter Horse racing. Yet, in spite of the enormous popularity of Quarter Horse racing at two Kentucky racetracks in the 1980s, there have been no Quarter Horse racing opportunities of consequence in over 30 years – when a political battle over the right to simulcast (*BOPTROT*) enabled other breeds to crowd out sprint racing. Given that the Legislature granted Quarter Horses legal status as a racing breed similar to others, this history of a lack of access to racing days for three decades suggests discrimination.

“The Quarter Horse industry has not been afforded an opportunity to review proposed legislation relating to future changes in law pertaining to the legality of HHR terminals,” said Keith Kleine, KyQHA president. “Until such time as the proposed legislation is seen by our industry, and it includes some kind of stake and engagement in the process for our breeders and owners, the KyQHA will not be taking a formal position on HHR.”

Richard Connelley, DMD, the Kentucky Quarter Horse Racing Association president, commented, “At such time as details of the proposed legislation are known by KyQHRA and KyQHA, the determination of our industry to support it will likely be based upon whether the legislation contains any features or language that indicate some clear path to the long-overdue restoration of pari-mutuel Quarter Horse racing to Kentucky.”

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