

Pimlico – 2006

(Some news stories show Laurel, MD and the date, these are news stories that contain information for both Pimlico and Laurel Park)

MJC Announces Final 2005 Handle Figures



One of many full fields takes to the turf at Laurel Park. (Photo by Jim McCue)

LAUREL, MD., 01-05-06---A record setting Preakness Stakes and a productive fall meeting helped the total wagering at Pimlico and Laurel Park improve as the Maryland Jockey Club today announced its 2005 figures. All sources handle totaled \$896.1 million as compared to \$868.1 million from the same period in 2004. The daily average handle from all sources increased nearly four percent from \$3.41 million to \$3.54 million. For the fifth consecutive year, the daily average handle on the export signal increased.

The marquee event of the year, the Preakness Stakes®, was a major success as a crowd of 115,318 packed historic Pimlico Race Course on May 21, the largest crowd to witness a sporting event in the state. Attendance figures have now topped six-figures in six of the last seven years, including five straight. Preakness day wagering finished at more than \$91 million, breaking the record of nearly \$88 million set in 2004. A pool of \$63.2 million was bet on the middle jewel of the Triple Crown.

The two headline events of the fall calendar at Laurel Park also set records. The \$5.1 million bet on the October 15 card was a record for Maryland Million races, while a total of \$4.8 million passed through the pari-mutuel windows on the November 19 Fall Festival Of Racing program, a day featuring eight added money races, headlined by the Grade I De Francis Dash.

Numbers for the Laurel Park fall meeting were up nearly 30%. A major reason for the increase was the success of the new Laurel Park turf course, which debuted on September 7. The new, sweeping turf course, which was widened from 75 feet to 142 feet, helped make the track a top simulcast signal with an average of 11.2 starters per grass race as the export numbers were up more than 60% from last fall. The statistics were impressive as 105-of-134 races featured double digit fields, a 78% rate. Laurel Park's new turf course saw 29 full fields of 14 facing the starter. Only 11 races featured fewer than eight starters and nine of those were seven horse fields. The average win payoff was \$14.45.

"It has been a program that has been well received by people around the country as evidenced by our export handle which continues to soar on a daily basis," said Maryland Jockey Club Chief Operating Officer Lou Raffetto. "We have also brought back the local fans who lost faith in our product who now bet on Maryland racing again. The racing office continues to do a great job putting together excellent fields, both in quality and in quantity. This has been the catalyst to our growth."

Five Horses Isolated at Pimlico Due to Suspected Case of Equine Herpesvirus

LAUREL, MD., 01-06-06---A suspected case of equine herpesvirus (EHV-1) has caused officials at Pimlico Race Course to isolate five horses in the Detention Barn and put a Hold Order on Barn 5 at the Baltimore track as a precautionary measure. The Maryland Department of Agriculture is awaiting results of tests to determine if a horse stabled in the barn, who was euthanized earlier this week, was infected.

Equine herpesvirus-1 (also known as "rhino"), which causes upper respiratory infection, can also cause neurological disease, which five other horses in Barn 5 have experienced.

The Hold Order affects the barn that houses horses trained by William Christmas, Charles Frock, Robert Gamber, Hassan Elamri and David Mohan. Horses conditioned by those trainers are not allowed to race until further notice. Beginning tomorrow the 40 horses remaining in the barn will be allowed to train from 10-11 a.m. The other 500 horses based at Pimlico will train from 5:30-9:30 a.m.

Live racing is currently being conducted at Pimlico's sister track, Laurel Park. The Pimlico spring meeting begins in mid-April.

There is currently no known method to reliably prevent the neurologic form of EHV-1 infection. It is recommended to maintain appropriate vaccination procedures in an attempt to reduce the incidence of the respiratory form of EHV-1 infection, which may help prevent the neurologic form. Transmission of the virus can occur via coughing or sneezing over a distance of up to 35 feet as well as by direct contact with infected horses, feed and equipment.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture placed an initial "Investigational Animal Hold Order" on January 5. Even before that time, Maryland Jockey Club officials ensured that no non-resident horses came in contact with the affected horses or the barn in which they are housed. Based on clinical signs, there is no reason to believe that there is any human health risk.

"The Hold Order, which restricts the movement of horses to and from the affected barn, is a precautionary measure to prevent any possible spread of illness among horses while we wait for diagnostic test results," said Maryland State Veterinarian, Guy Hohenhaus. "We are working with track management to keep the healthy horses in training while protecting the health of all other horses at the facility. They are athletes and need to stay in their routine as long as the investigation permits."

Turfway Park, Churchill Downs, Prairie Meadows, Calder Race Course and The Meadows all had cases of EHV-1 in 2005.



Director of Racing, Georganne Hale and Dr. David Zipf discuss the Equine Herpesvirus at a Laurel Park press conference.
(Photo by Jim McCue)

News Conference

01-06-06

Laurel Park Pressbox

Herpesvirus Case Suspected At Pimlico

Dr. David G. Zipf-Veterinarian, Maryland Racing Commission

Georganne Hale-Director Of Racing/Racing Secretary, Maryland Jockey Club

Dr. Zipf: "I might say one thing. As of right now we do not have any confirmed on blood tests of the actual Herpes Type I equine virus. The tests are pending. The horse which was euthanized from barn 5 on Monday morning showed no signs. That what was phenomenal. The initial horse was very strange. The horse trained on Friday. It went to the track and worked. It was showing no signs of any distress or problems. Saturday it walked and it was okay. Sunday it walked showing absolutely no symptoms of the typical herpes type 1. Monday morning when they came in the found the horse in lateral recumbence. In other words completely paralyzed. It did not get up. One thing led to another and they elected to euthanize the horse. It was not responding. Blood samples were taken and submitted to the laboratory for confirmation. It takes anywhere from seven to eight days. We should know something around next Tuesday. The lab is Amtech."

Dr. Zipf: "The first sign would be a rise in temperature, a fever. Then possibly going off feed, then a nasal (discharge), then the telltale sign is ataxia or stiffness in the hindquarters because the virus localizes in the nervous tissue, the brain and spinal cord. Lack of coordination. It attacks the nervous system."

Dr. Zipf: "Usually it's some kind of spinal injury for it to come on this quickly, maybe getting cast in the stall or some type of fracture. It was kind of suspected that it was some type of injury for such a rapid onset. The subsequent signs from the second horse that was stabled right behind the horse which was euthanized sent up the red flag. They say it is spread like an aerosol, sometimes spread out 35 feet to be contracted by another horse. But in real life it doesn't happen that way. All the cases we've seen which are noted at different tracks and at the Columbia Horse Center here in Maryland (last spring), all the cases have been intimate contact. Horses that have been nuzzling each other, in stalls adjacent stall. We have to govern our restrictions with this in mind."

Dr. Zipf: "Barn five is an isolated area now with 35 to 40 horses remaining in the barn. The isolated horses are in barn 8, which is the detention barn. There is a single attendant who is permitted to go in and out of the barn, but when he comes out he must change boots and clothing and go through the wash stall to limit the amount of contact his clothing could have with other horses in other areas."

Dr. Zipf: "The horses in barn five also have restrictions. There are not allowed to train during the regular training hours which end at 9:30 a.m. The track is harrowed and the horses from this barn are allowed to go out on the track. The patrol outrider must use a different pony so as to not to contaminate any other horse that it might come in contact with. Even the outriders' ponies are confined to a pony barn."

Georganne Hale: "It's fortunate for us that the situation is isolated to the one barn at Pimlico where we are not racing. We are getting calls from owners and trainers but we are reassuring them that we are located far away from the restricted area here at Laurel Park. Racing is continuing as usual."

Pimlico Equine Herpes Update

BALTIMORE, 01-10-06---The Maryland Department of Agriculture confirmed today that the preliminary lab report on News Reporter proved the five-year-old gelding was infected by equine herpesvirus (EHV-1). The Charles Frock trainee was euthanized Jan 2. Equine herpesvirus-1 (also known as "rhino"), which causes upper respiratory infection, can also cause neurological disease.

"The result of the diagnostic performed suggested that the horse had mounted an extremely strong and recent immune response to the herpes virus, which is very good evidence that we are dealing with a current infection and more specifically a neurologic disease," said Maryland State Veterinarian, Guy Hohenhaus. "This result was very consistent with what we expected. This confirms what we and the veterinarians treating these animals have been suspecting for several days."

Since last Friday, Pimlico Race Course officials have isolated horses in the Detention Barn and put a Hold Order on Barn 5 at the Baltimore track as a precautionary measure. Six horses are currently in isolation, including four who are experiencing neurological signs.

The Hold Order affects the barn that houses horses trained by Frock, William Christmas, Robert Gamber, Hassan Elamri and David Mohan. Horses conditioned by those trainers are not allowed to race until further notice. The 40 horses remaining in the barn are training from 10-11 a.m. The other 500 horses based at Pimlico are training from 5:30-9:30 a.m.

Live racing is currently being conducted at Pimlico's sister track, Laurel Park. The Pimlico spring meeting begins in mid-April.

"This outbreak is behaving like you would suspect a herpes outbreak to behave. It is very similar to other outbreaks we have seen at similar facilities over the last several years in that over a period of several days you have several new horses spiking fevers or showing neurological signs," added Hohenhaus. "We are taking all the necessary precautionary measures to contain the animals showing signs of suspected illness and have the full cooperation of all parties involved."

The Maryland Department of Agriculture expects test results back Friday, Jan 13.

There is currently no known method to reliably prevent the neurologic form of EHV-1 infection. It is recommended to maintain appropriate vaccination procedures in an attempt to reduce the incidence of the respiratory form of EHV-1 infection, which may help prevent the neurologic form. Transmission of the virus can occur via coughing or sneezing over a distance of up to 35 feet as well as by direct contact with infected horses, feed and equipment.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture placed an initial "Investigational Animal Hold Order" on Jan 5. Even before that time, Maryland Jockey Club officials ensured that no non-resident horses came in contact with the affected horses or the barn in which they are housed. Based on clinical signs, there is no reason to believe that there is any human health risk.

Second Horse Euthanized at Pimlico Due to Suspected Case of Equine Herpesvirus

BALTIMORE, 01-13-06---A second suspected case of equine herpesvirus (EHV-1) at Pimlico Race Course has caused officials from the Maryland Department of Agriculture to place a "Hold Order" on Barn 6. Equine herpesvirus-1 (also known as "rhino"), which causes upper respiratory infection, can also cause neurological disease. A horse in that barn was euthanized this morning after showing neurological signs, 11 days after News Reporter, a gelding stabled in Barn 5, was euthanized. Tests released Tuesday confirmed that News Reporter was carrying the herpes virus.

"This morning in Barn 6 one horse who had been previously healthy became very sick and demonstrated neurologic signs to a point where it was unable to rise even with assistance," said Maryland State Veterinarian, Guy Hohenhaus. "The owners opted, after discussions with their veterinarians, to euthanize the animal and submit it for postmortem examination at the College Park laboratory."

The second Hold Order affects horses trained by Simon Purdy, Crystal Pickett, Henry Walters, Judith DiNatale, Joseph Ayres, Sr. and Joseph Ayres, Jr. Horses conditioned by those trainers are not allowed to race until further notice. The 43 horses in the barn will be allowed to train from 10-11 a.m.

One week ago, Pimlico officials isolated horses showing signs of the virus into the Detention Barn (Barn 8) and put a Hold Order on Barn 5 at the Baltimore track as a precautionary measure. Six horses are currently in isolation.

This morning the Department of Agriculture received test results on five of the six horses currently in isolation. The five all tested positive for Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, a screening test looking for direct evidence of the virus in the blood. Results on the sixth horse, who began a fever Monday afternoon, will be available next week. That horse and another in the Detention Barn have not had signs of neurologic disease.

"This means we are still dealing with an active herpes outbreak but all the animals in Barn 8 have all shown improvement," added Hohenhaus. "Things have also stabilized in Barn 5 where we have not had a sick animal since Monday."

The first Hold Order affects the barn that houses horses trained by Charles Frock, William Christmas, Robert Gamber, Hassan Elamri and David Mohan. Horses conditioned by those trainers are not allowed to race until further notice. The 40 horses have been allowed to train from 10-11 a.m.

The other 450 horses based at Pimlico will continue to train from 5:30-9:30 a.m. Beginning Jan 14, horses from farms will not be allowed to ship into the Preakness Way portion of Pimlico to work. Trainers can use the Rogers Avenue side of Pimlico or ship to Laurel Park or the Bowie Training Center.

Live racing is currently being conducted at Pimlico's sister track, Laurel Park. The Pimlico spring meeting begins in mid-April.

There is currently no known method to reliably prevent the neurologic form of EHV-1 infection. It is recommended to maintain appropriate vaccination procedures in an attempt to reduce the incidence of the respiratory form of EHV-1 infection, which may help prevent the neurologic form. Transmission of the virus can occur via coughing or sneezing over a distance of up to 35 feet as well as by direct contact with infected horses, feed and equipment.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture placed an initial "Investigational Animal Hold Order" on Jan 5. Even before that time, Maryland Jockey Club officials ensured that no non-resident horses came in contact with the affected horses or the barn in which they are housed. Based on clinical signs, there is no reason to believe that there is any human health risk.

Turfway Park, Churchill Downs, Prairie Meadows, Calder Race Course and The Meadows all had cases of EHV-1 in 2005.



(Photo by Jim McCue)

Transcript of news conference concerning Equine Herpesvirus at Pimlico
01-13-2006
Laurel Park Pressbox

Dr. David Zipf-State Veterinarian, Maryland Racing Commission
Georganne Hale-Director Of Racing/Racing Secretary, Maryland Jockey Club

Q: What is going on in the detention barn right now?

Dr. Zipf: As of right now there are six horses. One horse right now has pretty severe symptoms. Five of the six have been confirmed with cytology tests, this tells that the virus is present. The sixth is not positive yet because the test has not been done yet, but I'm sure it will show. The ones that have shown the symptoms are responding to treatment as well as can be expected. Each day they get slightly better. To keep the fever down they get anti-pyretic drugs and heavy cortical steroids to reduce the virus in the nervous system.

We met at Pimlico this morning hoping to get the reports from the lab. There were no more cases in Barn 5. The war wasn't over but we thought we'd won the battle, but as soon as we got there we heard there was a horse down in Barn 6 and we all gasped. We were hoping it was colic or a fracture but the symptoms were very identical to News Reporter, the initial horse. The horse was euthanized. It could not even sit up. It was thrashing, doing damage to itself. It was taken right to the Department of Agriculture in Beltsville to do the cytology work again. They'll be able to tell right away from examination.

This barn is possibly forty feet from Barn 5. It could have been an aerosol infection. This is unlikely but a possibility. We still believe it has to be pretty intimate contact. We don't know where this horse has been. It might have been walked one barn over, especially if it was during inclement weather.

Q: Have you been in contact with Turfway Park at all?

Dr. Zipf: I get memos from them. Like with Penn National, I get write-ups from the vets there. Now they've sent me a complete organized paper. It was similar with what was happening here until it jumped to another barn here.

It seems like when it manifests itself, it is much more severe than where one infected horse spreads it to another. It's always been one very acute case that is the trigger, then subsequent degree of infections in subsequent horses.

Q: How many of the horses at Pimlico were vaccinated for this?

Dr. Zipf: Anywhere from 40 to 60% of the private vets are doing this. There is some question to the efficiency of the vaccine.

Q: Would it be in the best interest of the racetrack to mandate the vaccine?

Georganne Hale: It's like me telling you have to get a flu shot. Some people believe in it. Some don't. The ones who take horses back and forth from the farm, they are more likely to do this.

Dr. Zipf: The degree of protection is questionable. If the horse is a carrier, it's questionable how much protection they're getting from the vaccine. The ones in isolation are being treated with a human anti-viral medication (Acyclovir). It's for shingles and chicken pox. It's in the family. It's an oral medication. It's going to lessen the degree of the infection in the body. There's nothing for horses. It's the only product out there.

Q: Would you recommend that infected horses vacate?

Dr. Zipf: This was discussed. The idea is where would you move them? Quarantine would be the next move.

Q: Could the other horses go elsewhere?

Georganne Hale: I haven't had anyone pack up and leave. People who run them off the farm will just keep them up there. It's hurting everybody. The horses which are being kept from racing are being set back and will have to train back to shape.

Dr. Zipf: The latency of the virus is what's scary. We're seeing more of it and there's no geographical limits on a horse's travel. I knew it was just a matter of time. Up until now we had dodged a bullet here.

Q: Is this more than in other years?

Dr. Zipf: Maybe we've seen a similar number of outbreaks but the one's we've seen years ago, maybe 7-10 years ago, there would be one horse and that was it. That's what is scary. We're seeing it more widespread, not just one horse in one stable. We are encouraging vaccinating. It will cut down on the severity.

Third Barn At Pimlico Is Isolated Due To Suspected Case Of Equine Herpesvirus

BALTIMORE, 01-19-06---The Maryland Department of Agriculture has placed an "Investigational Animal Hold Order" on Barn A at Pimlico Race Course after a horse showed signs of equine herpesvirus (EHV-1) this morning. Barns 5 and 6 at the historic Baltimore track are also under a Hold Order. The third Hold Order affects horses trained by Joseph Delozier, Steven Hinds, Ellis Pruce and Casey Randall. Equine herpesvirus-1 (also known as "rhino"), which causes upper respiratory infection, can also cause neurological disease.

"The finding today of a horse with signs consistent with equine herpesvirus in Barn A comes as a surprise to us and is very disappointing," said Maryland State Veterinarian, Dr. Guy Hohenhaus. "While there is no way to know if this suspected new case is connected with the others, we are looking into any possible relationship between them to find and close any gaps that might allow for transmission."

On January 2 News Reporter, a gelding trained by Charles Frock in Barn 5 was euthanized. Tests confirmed he was carrying the herpes virus. Kalli Calling, a three-year-old filly conditioned by Simon Purdy in Barn 6, was euthanized on January 13. The Department of Agriculture expects to receive test results either Friday or Monday on whether she had the virus.

On January 6, Pimlico officials isolated horses showing signs of the virus into the Detention Barn (Barn 8) and put a Hold Order on Barn 5 as a precautionary measure. A total of six horses from the barn were sent to the isolation barn. All six tested positive for Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, a screening test looking for direct evidence of the virus in the blood. It has been 10 days since a horse in the barn has shown signs of the virus.

"We applaud the conscientious efforts of everyone at the track for their efforts to contain this incident," continued Hohenhaus. "Based on the current situation in Barns 5 and 6, we believe that the preventive actions in place are working and we continue to try to bring closure to this difficult situation just as soon as possible."

On January 13, a Hold Order was put on Barn 6 after Kalli Calling was euthanized. Two horses from Barn 6 have been moved to Barn 8 after coming down with high fevers but have not had signs of neurologic disease.

The nearly 115 horses affected by the Hold Order are allowed to train from 10-11:30 a.m. The other 400 horses based at Pimlico train from 5:30-9:30 a.m. Horses from farms are not allowed to ship into Pimlico to work. Trainers can ship to Laurel Park or the Bowie Training Center.

Live racing is currently being conducted at Pimlico's sister track, Laurel Park. The Pimlico spring meeting begins in mid-April.

There is currently no known method to reliably prevent the neurologic form of EHV-1 infection. It is recommended to maintain appropriate vaccination procedures in an attempt to reduce the incidence of the respiratory form of EHV-1 infection, which may help prevent the neurologic form. Transmission of the virus can occur via coughing or sneezing over a distance of up to 35 feet as well as by direct contact with infected horses, feed and equipment. Based on clinical signs, there is no reason to believe that there is any human health risk.

Turfway Park, Churchill Downs, Prairie Meadows, Calder Race Course and The Meadows all had cases of EHV-1 in 2005.



(Photo by Jim McCue)

Press Conference 01-19-06

Topic: Equine Herpesvirus at Pimlico

Laurel Park Pressbox

Dr. Guy Hohenhaus, state veterinarian for the Maryland Department of Agriculture

Dr. David Zipf, state veterinarian for the Maryland Racing Commission

Georganne Hale, Maryland Jockey Club racing secretary

Q: Can we recap how many are sick?

Georganne Hale: In Barn 8, the isolation barn, we have six from Barn 5 and two from Barn 6.

Dr. Hohenhaus: The horses in Barn 8 continue to make good progress and even if they fully recover, they're going to be restricted in that barn for some time and we'll begin testing on that.

Q. What did you find this morning?

Dr. Hohenhaus: The disease has appeared on a different side at Pimlico than we've been working with the past couple weeks. A single horse in Barn A, that has led to the isolation of that horse in Barn A. That horse has been taken to a remote area of the barn, far away from horses as we can get it. The Department of Agriculture has put a hold order on that barn. Animals coming in and out of that barn are being put on strict limitation. There are three barns that have had disease outbreaks and one barn that we moved the animals as a convenience to better managing and isolation.

Dr. Zipf: The horse in barn A was ataxic. That means it was uncoordinated. It was still on it's feet, it was upright but a bit wobbly, still alert, it was eating, it did not have a fever but we don't know if the fever could have been several days ago and gone undetected. There was an area in Barn A with ten stalls vacant so we moved it to that area.

Dr. Hohenhaus: The seriousness of the disease is that we've dealt with approximately ten cases and two horses have been put down. That would mean that you have a mortality of about twenty percent. It's very consistent with other outbreaks at other facilities. It's only a small fraction of the horses at Pimlico.

Q. How is it spread?

Dr. Hohenhaus: It is most likely spread by close contact or by wind or by equipment shared by horses. Less likely to be tracked on the feet of people and the measures that the track has taken to control this outbreak are consistent with the things to reduced those possibilities.

Q. What measures are you taking to control the spread?

Georganne Hale: We have three holding barns now. There are guards at each end. Nobody can enter unless they work in that barn. When they leave they have to step into the disinfectant container that we have outside?

Q. What about the horses?

Georganne Hale: Those horses effected can only train after 10 a.m. The other horses train from 5:30 to 9:30. The horses in the other barns can go anywhere. The effected horses cannot come to Laurel to race.

Dr. Hohenhaus: The other horses are free to move about as normal.

Q. What is the treatment?

Dr. Zipf: Right now they are using heavy doses of the steroids, the anti-inflammatory drugs. It's a symptomatic treatment, relieve the inflammation the virus sets up in the tissue. That's the main course of treatment.

Q: What new concerns do you have?

Dr. Hohenhaus: I can't tell you if it did or did not spread from the other side. The other possibility is that this is a purely timed coincidence. As far as time goes it looks like it is related but is going to be difficult to say for certain.

Q: Did you look to see if this coincided with when the horses last raced?

Georganne Hale: I check when each horse had raced and I checked the forms from the horses on the vans and nothing coincides. They raced on different days. They were not on the same vans. Nothing.

Dr. Hohenhaus: Along that line it's natural where did it come from. We probably will not have that answer but I'm more really interested in where it might go. We are looking to make sure no horses from any of the barns, particularly from Barn A were in contact with other horses. We are tracking where the horses have been in the past week. If a few more days pass and we have no more linked we may have passed the probable time that that could have happened.

Q: How many horses are we talking about? How many horses have to be held.

Georganne Hale: We're looking a little over a hundred horses. It definitely has affected my entries. Now people are getting a little timid from entering from up at Pimlico. Some states are not allowing horses to ship into me now. They are saying if they go to run there (in Maryland) you can't come back. Now we have Middleburg Training Center saying if you leave Middleburg you can't come back.

Dr. Hohenhaus: A horse that has been in Maryland generally is not able to go other places. That includes horses passing through Maryland have gotten into trouble with other states. Any horse that visited or passed through Maryland is getting effected. As inconvenient as it is for us, those are the things we would do to other states in similar situations. That's how states look out for their animal populations.

Q. How long with this last if this is it?

Dr. Hohenhaus: At twenty-one days without any new diseases outbreaks or cases we would start considering are we in fact free of this. As we get a little further away from an active infection of a given animal we'd still like to give additional tests to see if they are still potentially infectious.

Q: This is effecting the horse industry in the state of Maryland.

Dr. Hohenhaus: Absolutely. It's not like getting a cold and then you're layed up for a week and then you're better. It lingers on and we have to impose reasonable safety margins. Certainly Barn 5 is furthest along in this process. We're pushing two weeks so conceivably Barn 5 could be released from the hold in about 10 days.

The general rule is Maryland horses are restricted in the region. Different states are doing different things to us. In some instances it's just horses from the racing industry. In other instances it's more broad. Each state has the ability to tailor it's own response.

Q: How many shippers a week do you get?

Georganne Hale: Probably 30% of my horses are shippers. Philadelphia Park is letting their horses ship in if I keep them apart from everybody in the receiving barn, if I put a private barn to put them in. New York is letting them, also.

When those horses get out of the holding barns I'm going to have to write shorter races for them. Right now we're going with nine races a day. I haven't had anybody pack up and leave. People who horses on the farm are saying they will just run them from off the farm and keep them up there.

Dr. Zipf: Those horses in Barn 5 and 6 might be withholding training right now so as not to put the horses under stress and risk their immunity.

Q: Would it be a good idea to close down Pimlico?

Dr. Hohenhaus: That's the million dollar question today because we decided that all factors being considered it wasn't necessary or appropriate at this point in time. The emergence in herpes in another barn would be the threshold. Further out from that if it came out in another barn we would close that side of Pimlico. Is the control strategy working? We can say that it may not be working as well as we like, because nobody wanted to see Barn 6 involved last week because things had been going well. That was unwanted, not completely unexpected, from an adjacent barn, from airborne spread or somebody moving it. The opposite situation is what we see today. If I knew for certain that this came from the other side of Pimlico, then clearly something we're doing isn't quite adequate. This is the season for this particular disease and there's nothing to say that it can't emerge in more than one place at the same time, so

where it came from I don't know. Maybe this is a very unfortunate coincidence. It is not a clear indication that we've lost control in things.

The good folks at Pimlico are doing extraordinary things. They've hired extra security guards, posted them around these barns to control the movement. They're changing boot wash, sometimes hourly. Training schedules have been turned on their heads.

Trainer, owners everybody have been agreeable. No finger pointing. None of the ugly things. People are doing what we're asking them to do. Pimlico has maintained a semblance of order without radically altering things, except for Barns 5 and 6. We've had superb cooperation. Folks are willing to do anything, at great expense to the operation.

The private vets are the ones who treat the animals. They are the very important link. Most private vets are accredited by the state government as agents of the government. They are the eyes and ears. We are in conversations with them on a daily basis. I have a veterinary field investigator, Dr. Marla Stevens. She is my personal eyes and ears on the situation on a daily basis at Pimlico. Dr. Zipf is there every day.

Dr. Zipf: The horses from Barn 6 were admitted (to Barn 8) on the basis of a high fever. Neither has exhibited neurological problems.

Dr. Hohenhaus: We deal with the horses in the area where they are. We have a way to deal with them in Barn A, where we can accomplish what we want to accomplish. It's a sick horse already so you can't make it a whole lot sicker. The downside of moving it to Barn 8, although it was an intuitive thought, that might cause more trouble on the other side, disturb people and disrupt very good communication and cooperation we have. I don't want them to think they're the repository for sick horses.

The truth is with an outbreak, in the end its not all neatly tied up. It's often unsatisfying but the real purpose is to stop it as soon as we can, to prevent it wherever we can. I'd say were still in the middle of the road.

Every horse that breaks with illness is one to many, but I wouldn't call this a huge, catastrophic outbreak. We're heavily embargoed in many areas already and have been since we made the first report.

MJC Places Quarantine on Pimlico Race Course

BALTIMORE, 01-21-06---The Maryland Jockey Club has placed a quarantine on Pimlico Race Course effective the end of racing today, January 21 until further notice because of the equine herpesvirus (EHV-1) situation at the Baltimore track.

Since the new year 11 horses have shown signs of the virus causing the Maryland Department of Agriculture to place an "Investigational Animal Hold Order" on three barns. Two horses were euthanized and tested positive for the virus. Eight horses from Barns 5 and 6 are currently in isolation in the Detention Barn. A ninth showed signs of the virus Thursday morning in Barn A. Equine herpesvirus-1 (also known as "rhino"), which causes upper respiratory infection, can also cause neurological disease.

"This is a precautionary measure," said Lou Raffetto, Chief Operating Officer for the Maryland Jockey Club. "It is in our best interest to restrict the movement in and out of Pimlico until we see the outcome of the tests on the horse in Barn A."

Nearly 500 horses are currently stabled at Pimlico, including nearly 110 affected by the Hold Orders. Horses from Barns A, 5 and 6 will continue to train from 10-11:30 a.m. The other horses based at Pimlico train from 5:30-9:30 a.m.

Live racing is currently being conducted at Pimlico's sister track, Laurel Park. The Pimlico spring meeting begins in mid-April.

There is currently no known method to reliably prevent the neurologic form of EHV-1 infection. It is recommended to maintain appropriate vaccination procedures in an attempt to reduce the incidence of the respiratory form of EHV-1 infection, which may help prevent the neurologic form. Transmission of the virus can occur via coughing or sneezing over a distance of up to 35 feet as well as by direct contact with infected horses, feed and equipment. Based on clinical signs, there is no reason to believe that there is any human health risk.

Turfway Park, Churchill Downs, Prairie Meadows, Calder Race Course and The Meadows all had cases of EHV-1 in 2005.



Maryland Jockey Club COO,
Lou Raffetto and Dr. David Zipf.
(Photo by Jim McCue)

Press Conference 01-21-06

Topic: Equine Herpesvirus at Pimlico

Laurel Park Pressbox

Lou Raffetto, Chief Operating Officer Maryland Jockey Club

Dr. David Zipf, state veterinarian for the Maryland Racing Commission

Q: Why Quarantine Pimlico now?

Raffetto: We've been contemplating this. We've been trying to hold off. I think the icing on the cake was when one of the horses stabled at Penn National ran here January 2nd, the same day as the horse belonging to Simon Purdy, came up positive. We felt we had to take some kind of action, albeit drastic, to deal with it, to try to curtail it, not that we know it's going to work but we felt we needed to do something. As to that horse, we don't know if that horse had it when she raced that day for sure.

Dr. Zipf: Just judging from the nature of the disease, the horse from Penn National developed the symptoms just four days after it raced here, it raced on a Monday and on Friday it started to spike a fever, one of the first signs of this disorder. The incubation period is usually seven to ten days so this does not fit, the symptoms showed up in a time frame that was not in line with what we know. It was only four days. This can happen. There are a lot of variability's, depending on the animal, its body chemistry, all kinds of factors come into play. It can be shorter than seven to ten days. This horse could have been harboring the infection before it came here. This is supposition. Putting part of the puzzle together and this is one of the pieces. It is now on a farm and show quite extensive symptoms of ataxia. It is still alive but it is a severe case of a neurotically herpes type I.

Raffetto: Also keep in mind the horse in Barn A, we have not received tests on that horse. Horses sometimes come up with a fever. This horse has not come up with a fever. It is eating up, unlike the other two horses that had to be put down. This is a precautionary measure. Once we know this horse is positive or not we will take the next appropriate step. Barn 5 is scheduled to get out of quarantine on the 30th of this month. There have been other indications back there to this point. This had been a great deal of concern by all facets of the industry. The owners and trainers here and in all jurisdictions. Hopefully we are erring on the side of caution. Hopefully this horse will come back negative and that would be great.

Q. There is no timetable for Pimlico?

Raffetto: It's closed until further notice.

Q. What does this do to racing?

Raffetto: That remains to be seen. Entries for Wednesday were on the light side, but certain days fall that way anyway. We know there are trainers at Pimlico that haven't been running because of their horses stressing so they've been reluctant to enter. Maybe here and at Bowie, too, because they didn't want to race with Pimlico horses. We took entries today, removed Pimlico horses from the box and I believe the card for Thursday has eighty-three horses. Is it going to have an impact? Absolutely. Possibly to the point of a horse a race, but what's more important is the long-term program. We need to keep it going. If we have to cut back to eight races on any given day we will. We have a lot going on in February with the SprintFest and we need to get this cleared up so the jurisdictions are willing to ship into Maryland and vice versa by that time. Keep in mind Turfway had a similar situation with two barns that were quarantined and they continued to race at Turfway.

Our situation is a little bit different because unlike Kentucky where the horses are basically there and race only there to a great extent, we have horses that ship in and ship out. We will do what we need to do. If there is a shortage of

horses we'll cut back to eight races a day. If there is a greater shortage of horses we will cut back to four days a week, but I'm hoping that the support of the local program will let us continue to race five days a week.

Q: Can you explain the nature of the herpes virus?

Dr. Zipf: This virus is host specific. It does not jump from one species to another. Type I and Type 4 are the problem ones. Type I causes cough, nasal discharge but it can also cause neurological problems. Horses get it in intimate contact. They show it in varying degrees to the point where they lay down and they can't get up. It effects to different degrees to different horses. Once it's in a population a horse can pick it up and it remains latent. For some unknown reason, a year or more after it picks it up, it takes off and becomes virulent. This is a kind of persistent thing. The severity and the occurrence are becoming more prevalent and this is scary. This is why we're so concerned.

Q: We're all three horses that you are testing for the virus, were they all inoculated?

Dr. Zipf: The horse in Barn A was inoculated in a pretty stringent vaccination program. The other two I don't believe were.

Q: Would you move the date of the SprintFest if this virus is still hanging around in February?

Raffetto: We would consider that. We're not going to do anything that jeopardizes the quality of the program. If it's in the best interest we will move it datewise. We're four weeks away and we'd like to think with the hold period in Barn 5 over on the 30th and Barn 6 maybe another week of that, we should have some idea and sufficient time to modify the schedule if needs be. If we decide two weeks out from now we're fine. What we're going to continue to do is isolate Barns 5, 6 and A and mandate that they train different hours as they have been. If the quarantine is still in effect on the 31st and there have been no more indications in Barn 5, my feeling is letting Barn 5 go back in training with the rest of the general horse population, if there is no more indication of the virus at that time.

Raffetto: Today's restriction (at Pimlico) is being put into effect by the Maryland Jockey Club, not by any governmental official. We made an announcement to the horsemen at Pimlico and passed out a notice stating that the quarantine was in effect restricting movement out of the barn area until further notice, pending test results of the horse in Barn A. The people at Pimlico were not surprised. They've handled it. They understand the nature of it. While it is very difficult for them, as it is for us to put it into effect, they've been receptive, if one can put it that way, to such a situation.

Q: The horses that we're entered to run from Pimlico were allowed to run today?

Raffetto: We allowed those horses to run. Some were already in route. This is all a precautionary move. It's not because there is another case.

Q: When will you get the test results on the horse in Barn A?

Dr. Zipf: Four days for the titer and seven to ten days for the PCR.

Raffetto: This horse is reacting differently than the horses that were put down. I don't believe this horse is running a temperature. He's been eating up, which is unlike the others and there's been no indication of anything in Barn A. We're hoping that this is something else. It may be likely, so this is why this quarantine is in effect. If the test is negative that could be a real positive for us.

Pimlico Officials Consider Lifting Quarantine Next Saturday, February 4th



Friday's Press Conference was held in the Laurel Park Press Box. (Photo by Jim McCue)

LAUREL, MD. 01-27-06---Maryland Jockey Club officials are hopeful it will be able to lift the quarantine on Pimlico Race Course next Saturday, February 4, which had been put in place because of an outbreak of equine herpesvirus (EHV-1). Chief Operating Officer Lou Raffetto made the announcement this afternoon at a news conference in the Laurel Park pressbox. Raffetto placed the quarantine on the historic Baltimore track last Saturday, January 21.

Since the new year 11 horses at Pimlico have tested positive for the virus. Three horses have been euthanized, while eight horses are currently in isolation in the Detention Barn. Barns 5, 6 and A are in isolation from the general population after having horses show symptoms of the virus.

"We are hopeful, based on the evidence to date, barring any other incidents at Pimlico that we may be able to remove that quarantine effective Saturday the 4th," said Raffetto. "Barn 5 will be out of isolation on the 30th. The hold order would remain in place until it is lifted from Barn 6 and Barn A and we would go back to the plan that was in place initially with other horses at Pimlico being allowed to run at Laurel, with the holds on the other barns until they are released. There is some good news here. We are moving in the right direction. We're hopeful that we have this under control.

"I'm very comfortable with that," added Dr. Guy Hohenhaus, state veterinarian for the Department of Agriculture, who also took part in today's news conference.

This morning the Maryland Department of Agriculture placed an initial "Investigational Animal Hold Order" on Barn 9 at Laurel Park after a horse was euthanized yesterday.

"We can't really say more about it than that it does not appear to have been a herpes case but we cannot exclude herpes as a cause so we are treating that as a suspect," said Hohenhaus.

"There is a question of lameness in this horse, a few days prior to this situation," added Raffetto. "There is a feeling that this may be a broken pelvis. This is purely a precautionary measure as we've tried to take all along. We've tried to take extra measures."



Pimlico quarantine. (Photo by Jim McCue)

The outrider's pony that was removed from Laurel to Pimlico after testing positive on a blood sample Monday afternoon, January 23 tested negative on nasal swabs, which means that animal is not infectious to other animals. It will be released from a Hold Order today and returned to duty.

Yesterday suspected cases of equine herpesvirus (EHV-1) caused the Maryland State Veterinarian to place an "Investigational Animal Hold Order" today on a private farm in Kent County. The farm is used as an off-track training facility for a Pimlico-based trainer. The farm received a horse from Pimlico on January 10, after the two-year-old spent the three previous days in Barn A while enroute from Ocala, Florida. The Maryland Department of Agriculture is waiting for test results, which are expected next week, to determine the cause of illness for one horse euthanized and another showing neurologic signs. The horse that visited Pimlico before transferring to Maryland's Eastern Shore is not the horse that was euthanized.

Yesterday Raffetto decided not to card live racing on Sunday January 29 and Sunday February 5, two days which had previously been scheduled for racing on the Laurel winter calendar, due to a shortage of entries, stemming from a quarantine of 500 horses at Pimlico and restrictions on the movement of Thoroughbreds in and out of the state due to the outbreak of EHV-1.

This afternoon Raffetto indicated Laurel Park will likely move a pair of Grade II sprints on Presidents' Weekend to March. The \$300,000 Barbara Fritchie Breeders' Cup Handicap, scheduled to run February 18 and \$300,000 General George Breeders' Cup Handicap, now set for February 20, are the marquee races of the Laurel winter meeting.

**Press Conference
Laurel Park Pressbox
01-27-06
Equine Herpesvirus at Pimlico
Dr. Guy Hohenhaus, State Veterinarian, Md. Dept. Agriculture
Lou Raffetto, Chief Operating Officer, Maryland Jockey Club**

Dr. Hohenhaus: I want to update you on the Equine Herpesvirus in the state of Maryland. Last night we put out a release where we told you of a private horse farm in Kent County that had a horse that was euthanized with clinical signs consistent with neurologic herpes. That animal was examined in one of our laboratories and additional results are pending. Also on that farm is another horse that has neurological signs consistent with herpes. That horse is somewhat better today by my reports. A third horse on that property has a fever. The horse that died is linked to Pimlico (this statement was corrected later in the press conference – the horse that was euthanized had not passed through Pimlico), apparently passed through Pimlico several weeks ago through one of the barns that is currently effected, prior to us being aware of any disease in that barn. There is a clear link to Pimlico but that is all we have at this time. Currently we have investigators on the ground in Kent County that are working with the farm owner. They are tracing any horses that may be linked to that farm to make sure no additional concerns.

There appear to be no concerns in the immediate area of that farm with regard to any neighboring areas. There is a 21 day hold order that has been placed on that property if there are no additional cases then in 21 days we will be begin clearing that property for release.

The second issue here at Laurel, yesterday, at about the same time in the morning there was a horse that was euthanized. The horse had clinical signs that are not in fact strongly consistent with neurologic herpes. The working diagnosis, working hypothesis by the attending veterinarian was that the horse had an injury, possibly a pelvic injury that would account for its lameness and progressive (decline). That animal was euthanized in the morning because it appeared to be getting worse. Our College Park lab has additional lab work pending next week. We are hopeful that this is not herpes, but we cannot exclude the fact that this could be herpes and we are taking extra precaution of placing the barn that this horse was in, in a short term hold order until we have results back next week that will clarify the situation. We are erring on the side of caution.

At Pimlico, in the first barn, Barn 5, there have been no new cases in almost three weeks now. We are beginning a testing protocol, where we can hopefully clear that barn sometime next week, provided the results come back all negative on the horses. If they are not all negative we would have to work on clearing horses one at a time. Barn 6 is approximately a week behind Barn 5. The same situation applies. We expect to be sampling horses to see if they are no longer shedding virus in that barn.

The outrider pony that was removed from Laurel to Pimlico tested positive on a blood sample, but tested negative on nasal swabs, which means that animal is not infectious to other animals. It will be released from hold today and be returned to duty.

A couple of other things. There have been no new cases in Barns 5 or 6 since the 15th of January so we are starting to get a pretty good timeline. No new cases at Pimlico since the 19th, so we're passed a week on that. We feel confidently the measures that have been put in place by our agency with the full cooperation and collaboration of the jockey club, owners, trainers and others are continuing to work well and we make progress. If this continues its good news for racing in Maryland, good news for the horse industry in general. What we're doing appears to be working despite having a setback or two.

Lou Raffetto: We believe that at this point in time we've taken the proper precautionary measures where we're delighted with the work of Dr. Hohenhaus and his staff and we appreciate all their efforts. This past Saturday we put the entire barn area at Pimlico on quarantine. This is really a precautionary measure so we can step back and analyze the situation. We're pleased to see we are making progress. We are hopeful, based on the evidence to date, barring any other incidents at Pimlico that we may be able to remove that quarantine effective Saturday the 4th (February). Doctor says Barn 5 will be out of isolation on the 30th. The hold order would remain in place until it is lifted from Barn 6 and Barn A and we would go back to the plan that was in place initially with other horses at Pimlico being allowed to run at Laurel, with the holds on the other barns until they are released. There is some good news here. We are moving in the right direction. We're hopeful that we have this under control.

Q: Can you speak to the impact that this is having at Laurel?

Raffetto: I was hopeful when we quarantined the Pimlico barn area that we might be able to continue on a five day a week basis by reducing the number of races. The first day we had no problem with entries or the following two days, but I think it was more wishful thinking. As it turns out, we are working with two barn areas (Laurel and Bowie), with no shippers coming from any other locations. We have about 1,500 horses in those two barn areas but realistically a thousand active horses, so we decided it would be prudent to reduce the schedule to four days a week, take six programs that would have been below the quality that we are seeking and end up with four programs that will be what our fans are used to. Obviously there is an economic impact for us, but at this point that is a short term problem that we are dealing with. We're more concerned with the long term situation.

Generally speaking, total handle on those days is \$2 million in handle outside the state of Maryland and approximately a quarter of a million dollars within our boundaries. It's about \$125,000 that the horsemen would lose by not running those races, but on the other hand, because we simulcast we probably could get half of that back. The net loss to the horsemen on generating purse money is probably in the vicinity of \$70,000 and for the association somewhere in that vicinity also.

Q: Are you concerned that out of state owners won't bring their horses to Pimlico for the Preakness once that meet starts?

Raffetto: No. I don't have any concerns. This same situation existed in Kentucky last year. Once they understand it, the nature of it, while this is highly contagious, it is easy to kill and we are not talking about opening Pimlico (to race) until April 20th we're certain that this will be long behind us and we don't expect any residual effect of this situation. Turfway had a similar situation. There has been no negative effect on them, horses not wanting to run there.

General George Day (Sat. Feb. 18th) and Barbara Fritchie Day (Mon. Feb. 20th) are two days we are concerned with. In the near term, even though we feel we are moving in the right direction, we don't have a final timeline on this obviously, so we are going to take a real hard look at moving those races to March. We think it's in the best interest of the racing program.

While it's a difficult situation, in that you hate to lose the events, again it's what is best for the program. It's a very strong likelihood that those two races, each \$300,000 events, would be moved to some time in March when we feel comfortable that the quarantines will be lifted and with the other states around us.

There's probably a 90% chance that we are going to do this. We wouldn't be doing right by our races if we ran them. I could say it's more than likely. I can't tell you when we are going to move them, to which date, but I'm comfortable saying they could be moved two to four weeks later.

Q: There is some supposition that this originated in Florida. Do you have any more on this?

Hohenhaus: The question of Florida comes up anytime there is an outbreak in another part of the country. The disappointing news is that you're not often able to trace back where this comes from. In the case of Kent County, there seems to be a link to Pimlico. I don't know that there is any specific link to Florida.

There was a horse euthanized yesterday at Laurel. We can't really say more about it than that it does not appear to have been a herpes case but we cannot exclude herpes as a cause so we are treating that as a suspect. We have a report of confidentially. The appropriate action has been taken in the barn area. We have put a restriction on that barn, similar to what we have done at Pimlico.

Q: How comfortable are you at lifting the quarantine at Pimlico on February 4th?

Hohenhaus: I'm very comfortable with that. That self imposed quarantine is a track decision that has been made for business purposes that obviously have relationship to animal health but it is in addition to the official restrictions that my agency has placed on controlling contagious disease.

Raffetto: Additionally, on the question of the horse in Barn 9 here at Laurel. There is a question of lameness in this horse, a few days prior to this situation. There is a feeling that this may be a broken pelvis. This is purely a precautionary measure as we've tried to take all along. We've tried to take extra measures.

Hohenhaus: We're in the process of trying to clear Barn 5 at Pimlico. That involves taking some nasal samples. If those come back all with a favorable result we can lift the hold after the 30th.

Hohenhaus: I've just been informed that the horse that was euthanized in Kent County was not the horse that came through Pimlico. The animal which came through Pimlico is one of the sick animals, but the euthanized horse was not the Pimlico horse.

Q: Are there any other precautions at Laurel?

Hohenhaus: There are several things being done that are of a general nature. Decontaminating the starting gate and all those type of things that are very important and prudent. Those things tend to fall in the extraordinary layers of precaution that we take. They're not likely to yield a great deal of benefit but they are straightforward and we do it because they yield a little benefit that is good.

Laurel Park Horse Tests Positive For Equine Herpesvirus



LAUREL, MD. 01-31-06---The Maryland Department of Agriculture confirmed today that Hey Ralph, a filly trained by Rodney Jenkins at Laurel Park, was infected by equine herpesvirus (EHV-1). The three-year-old was euthanized Jan 26 with a suspected pelvic injury. A Hold Order has been placed on Barn 9 at the central Maryland track. Jenkins has elected not to train any of his horses until the Hold Order ends.

"We are working cooperatively with all involved parties using the most up-to-date science and respected practices, and going beyond what has been done in previous EHV incidents around the country, to manage this situation," said Maryland State Veterinarian, Dr. Guy Hohenhaus. "We urge everyone's patience and diligence in continuing strong preventive measures such as keeping new horses separate from others for a period of time, disinfecting, and keeping vaccinations up to date. It is a matter of time and continued proper management to bring this outbreak to conclusion."

Three horses have been euthanized at Pimlico Race Course, Laurel's sister track, this month, where the outbreak was first discovered. Another horse, so far unlinked with the Barn 5 and 6 incidents, was put down last week at a Kent County farm. Equine herpesvirus-1 (also known as "rhino"), which causes upper respiratory infection, can also cause neurological disease.

Eight horses remain isolated in the Pimlico Detention Barn suffering from various levels of the virus. The Maryland Jockey Club proactively placed the historic Baltimore oval on quarantine on Jan 21, restricting the movement of horses. There have been no new cases on of EHV-1 at Pimlico since Jan 19.

"Today's news is disappointing but we still think we see the light at the end of the tunnel," said Lou Raffetto, Chief Operating Officer for the Maryland Jockey Club. "We had hoped we would have this situation under control by February 9, which essentially would have been one month since the first case at Pimlico. We are now going to have to wait and monitor the situation here at Laurel. We have already put the proper precautions into place to control the situation."

Three barns at Pimlico remain under Hold Orders. The Department of Agriculture revealed this morning that it cannot lift the Hold Order on Barn 5 at Pimlico because one horse still tested positive for the virus on a nasal swab sample, despite not showing symptoms. Additional tests are being run. The barn was eligible to come off the Hold Order yesterday afternoon. The Hold Order on Barn 6 is scheduled to be removed this Sunday, Feb 5 if all tests are negative. The Hold Order on Barn A could be cleared Thursday, Feb 9.

"Progress is being made and there is strong reason to maintain a positive outlook," added Hohenhaus. "It is just not going as quickly as anyone would like."

Last week Raffetto decided not to card live racing on Sunday, Jan 29 and Sunday, Feb 5, two days which had previously been scheduled for racing on the Laurel winter calendar, due to a shortage of entries, stemming from a quarantine of 500 horses at Pimlico and restrictions on the movement of Thoroughbreds in and out of the state due to the outbreak of EHV-1.

Laurel Park will also move a pair of Grade II sprints presently scheduled for Presidents' Weekend. The \$300,000 Barbara Fritchie Breeders' Cup Handicap (February 18) and \$300,000 General George Breeders' Cup Handicap, (February 20), are the marquee races of the Laurel winter meeting. It is expected that a final decision on when those races will be conducted will be made within the next two weeks.

There is currently no known method to reliably prevent the neurologic form of EHV-1 infection. It is recommended to maintain appropriate vaccination procedures in an attempt to reduce the incidence of the respiratory form of EHV-1 infection, which may help prevent the neurologic form. Transmission of the virus can occur via coughing or sneezing over a distance of up to 35 feet as well as by direct contact with infected horses, feed and equipment. Based on clinical signs, there is no reason to believe that there is any human health risk.



**News Conference
Laurel Park Press Box
01-31-06
Equine Herpesvirus In Maryland**

Dr. Guy Hohenhaus (State Veterinarian representing the Maryland Department of Agriculture): Although today's update might not be as positive as we may like, there's good reason to be optimistic. Progress is being made at Pimlico. Last week we took diagnostic specimens to attempt to clear Barn 5, that's the first barn that was affected on January 6th. Those results came back yesterday and while they were largely encouraging there was one animal that we cannot clear of our sample. This morning we followed up with a 100% testing of the animals in Barn 5 so we can clear animals individually and address any animals that are not cleared as an individual. We are doing the same procedure for Barn 8, which is the isolation barn where we put a small number of animals that actually got sick. They are now coming up on the three-week period and we expect to find most of them no longer carrying the virus. Those results will be back at the end of this week or Monday. Based on that, with the removal of any residual horses which might be infected in Barn 5 we can return healthy horses from Barn 8 to Barn 5, remove persistently infected horses to the isolation facility and at that point in time clear Barn 5. This procedure necessitates us to defer the Barn 6 clearing process, which we had originally hoped to schedule this week for approximately one week. We'll pick that up next week.

Following along to Laurel, there was a horse in Barn 9 we spoke about last week. That horse was initially thought by attending veterinarians to have sustained a rear limb injury. The horse was euthanized because it was progressively worse. The horse was necropsied at the College Park Animal Health laboratory last week; we were unable to confirm the diagnosis of broken pelvis or any other muscular skeletal disorder. As a precaution we've placed a hold order on Barn 9 pending a sample that was sent to several labs around the county. Last night two of those samples came back positive for herpes. The horse in Barn 9 is a confirmed case of herpes. We placed a 21 day order which started on the day the horse was euthanized, that clock is already ticking. That barn is being monitored along with strict preventative measures. Temperatures are being monitored so we can identify any new cases and today there have not been any other sick animals in that barn or any other barn at Laurel.

In Kent County there are a total of four horses since this began. This includes the horse that died last week. There are two horses that are showing neurological signs and one that is a simple fever at this time. While that situation is being

to stabilize I cannot say with any confidence that there will not be any more cases over there. It has to run its course until we are confident that it is over.

During this entire time we are using the most up to date science and medical practices. We consult frequently with colleagues around the country that are grappling with this or have research institutions, other folks in the regulatory arena and the racing world. We need to also make it clear that each case, each farm, each barn is a unique entity and while we broadly apply standard operating procedures to these premises, we have to tailor the response to the individual circumstances. The best response to get the best outcome. We cannot compare what we do in one place to the other; sometimes the comparisons are not valid or strong. In most cases we are going beyond protocols, the Jockey Club has consistently placed restrictions above and beyond what my agency has determined were required for good prudent practice. They have always added to the requirements we placed on them and it certainly contributes to the ease, which we've been able to manage this problem. We urge everyone's patience and diligence. We often forget that we are preventing cases by our actions.

It's going to be a matter of time that we can bring this to a proper resolution. We need to continue to get the assistance of everyone who is contributing to the response.

Progress is being made and we have every reason to be positive and optimistic. This just will not end as quickly as everyone had would have wished.

Lou Raffetto (Chief Operating Officer, Maryland Jockey Club): Needless to say we are disappointed about the outcome of the horse in Barn 9 at Laurel.

We're going to conduct business as usual here. This has been the case in other jurisdictions that have faced these situations. As it relates to the horses in Barn 9, they will be quarantined in isolation for another 17 days, pending the outcomes of testing. The horses in that barn, all trained by Rodney Jenkins, will not go to the track to train. He's elected to carry on his business in that fashion. Strict isolation during that time. We are hopeful that this is an isolated incident.

At Pimlico, there have not been any additional cases, but we are taking the extra measures and we are going to extend that quarantine through Tuesday with a plan, provided the hold order is lifted by the state. We are going to align our quarantine of Pimlico's general horse population, which that hold order on Barn 5 and Barn 8. It would mean that we would then allow our horses to enter (races) this Friday for the first day of racing next week (Wednesday). We are hopeful the situation at Pimlico is under control and it's just one isolated incident here. We'll take whatever steps are necessary to keep it in one spot (at Laurel).

Dr. David Zipf (State Veterinarian representing the Maryland Racing Commission): We've had to adapt and adjust to all of these situations and I'd like to commend trainer Rodney Jenkins in Barn 9 for taking the stance he has taken. He's hoping his horses can get enough exercise without going to the track. He will not let any of his horses leave the barn. This is ideal. It's a complete quarantine. We commend him and his whole crew. It's a real class act. He was a show horse trainer. He's dealt with strangles and other herpes outbreaks. He's been down this road and learned from those experiences. We're indebted to him.

Q: Why was the case in Barn 9 different?

Zipf: The horse in Barn 9 has had a history of muscle problems, muscle stiffness. On January 13th it was scratched for a problem with muscle soreness in the hindquarters. We were dealing with this horse, but it had not shown the ataxia, which we attribute to the herpes type 1 virus. Then on the Monday before it euthanized it was showing lameness in the right front leg. We don't see pronounced lameness with the herpes. Then the private veterinarian did a nerve block, suspecting the knee, he went to inject the horse and the horse flipped. We thought possibly it was trauma, a fracture, torn muscle, injury. On Thursday it was paralyzed and that was when they elected to euthanize the horse and submit it for a post mortem exam. It just wasn't typical symptoms. This is an atypical bug we are dealing with and we expect to see these variations of the virus.

Hohenhaus: This horse would have not have been considered as a herpes suspect except taking in the circumstances of this situation. Because we are in a higher level of alert, we took the additional precautions initially and we're happy we were proactive on that. This would be about the last horse we would have suspected because it hadn't been racing; it hasn't spent a lot time out of the barn. The good piece is that it was at a low risk for transferring it to others. We have not been able to link it to any other animals of concern at this time.

Q: How has racing been dealing with this?

Raffetto: That which doesn't kill you makes you stronger. We're pretty strong right now. It takes its toll. It's tough on the racing office. It's tough on the trainers at Pimlico. We have a great deal of empathy for them. Obviously there are financial implications for the company and for the horsemen. We're going to get beyond this. The most disappointing

fact is that the whole Laurel meet has been going so well, sort of rebirth, so we'd been looking at the new year in a new way, but we're faced with this and we'll get by this and get back on track.

Q: There seem to be more unknowns than knowns about this virus.

Hohenhaus: This is one of the more enigmatic diseases that you deal with, probably not the most but there are a lot of facets that we don't understand. It confounds your ability to respond because you're not sure what the enemy is doing. There are certain things that are predictable and we do things based on the science and what works.

It hasn't been necessary to modify things at Laurel because there are quite a few management practices that were already in place designed to address the small part of the risk of transmission. The bigger part of the risk is close contact of horses to each other and shared equipment, bridles and bits and things like that. And the people, somebody who handles the sick horse and then another horse, the high-risk activities.

Raffetto: The Rodney Jenkins horse (the Laurel horse in Barn 9) had been vaccinated, eight days prior to the illness.

Zipf: In the Rodney Jenkins barn they are taking temperatures every three hours, every horse in the barn and they are not seeing any problems. We haven't seen any other cases in the barn and we're hoping we won't.

Hohenhaus: A good vaccine generally protects a large percentage of the people or animals that are vaccinated with it but it by no means 100% and there are lots of reasons a vaccine fails. In this case this is not an ideal vaccine. Most are helpful. Horses that are currently vaccinated (every three to four months) tend to have less disease. A horse that is five to six months away from its last vaccination is not much different than a horse that was never vaccinated. There are no other restrictions at Laurel except for Barn 9.

Q: What is the gestation (incubation period) of the virus?

Hohenhaus: The vast majority of horses that are infected are going to show signs of the disease within ten days of the infection. It might go beyond that, but that does not represent the typical horse.

-MJC-