

NHBPA Board Resolution, July 24, 2011 –

NHBPA Recommendations to Alter Guidelines for Overages of Phenylbutazone

WHEREAS, the National HBPA Board of Directors during its meeting on Sunday, July 24, 2011, having considered the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium's (RMTC's) Proposal to Modify Penalties for Minor Overages of Phenylbutazone (Bute) to be presented at the RCI Model Rules Committee meeting on July 26-27, 2011;

WHEREAS, the use of Bute as a therapeutic medication in racehorses in training, when appropriately administered, has well-recognized humane and safe therapeutic uses that helps maintain the health and welfare of the horse;

WHEREAS, the RCI Model Rules Committee, for a long period of time, determined the thresholds / decision levels for Bute violations to be 5 micrograms per milliliter (5 mcg/ml), but recently changed the thresholds / decision levels to 2 micrograms per milliliter (2 mcg/ml);

WHEREAS, the National HBPA opposed any change in the thresholds / decision levels for Bute without adequate scientific support;

WHEREAS, the RMTC now recommends a reduction in the penalties for minor overages of Bute – that are much more likely to be found at the 2 mcg/ml level – to ameliorate the unfairness and impropriety of imposing penalties for insignificant and/or accidental overages in the use of such therapeutic medication;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National HBPA Board of Directors asks the RCI Model Rules Committee to reconsider the recent change in thresholds / decision levels for Bute violations from the longstanding 5 mcg/ml level. The lowered 2 mcg/ml level will inevitably cause unjustified "positives." While the RMTC's proposal to reduce penalties for minor overages at this lowered level may alleviate some problems due to this change, the Model Rules Committee is requested to address the real problem which is that longstanding thresholds / decision levels should not be changed without adequate scientific support. The results of the 2010 RMTC phenylbutazone study analyzed in Pennsylvania showed that a significant proportion of the findings exceeded the 2 mcg/ml level. This emphasizes the lack of scientific support for the new 2 mcg/ml level for Bute.