

2009 President's Report

CANADIAN THOROUGHBRED HORSE SOCIETY
BRITISH COLUMBIA DIVISION



Leif Nordahl

2009 was a year of change in the local Thoroughbred industry and the British Columbia division of the CTHS was not exempt. After almost a decade of dedicated service to the breeding industry, Dixie Jacobson resigned as president and her presence will be missed at the board level. Other changes to the board include a new three-year term replacing the two-year term that was previously in effect.

Two new directors were welcomed to the board in 2009. Brenda Southam was appointed as director in May. Scott Ksionysk resigned from his position on the board in December and was replaced by Richard Yates in February, 2010. Yates authored an extensive in-depth review of the Industry that is available for viewing at www.cthsbc.org.

A major step toward stabilizing the provincial racing industry was taken when the Thoroughbred and Standardbred Horse Racing Executive formed the Horse Racing Leadership Council of BC in April, 2009. Representatives of both breeds committed to working together to provide the leadership to improve and expand the horse racing industry in British Columbia. The committee will meet monthly to discuss issues of common interest and concern.

In May, Chris Curtis was appointed Special Advisor, GPEB by the BC Government under the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch and conducted a complete analysis of the entire BC racing industry (Thoroughbred and Standardbred).

As a result of this analysis in November, Minister of Housing and Social Development Rich Coleman announced the new BC Horse Racing Industry Management Committee consisting of several high-profile industry investors including Bill Boden, Michael Graydon, George Morfitt, Glen Todd, Milton Woensdregt and committee chair Derek Sturko.

This committee is a critical part of efforts to stabilize and revitalize BC's horse racing industry and the partnership formed between government and the industry to seek solutions to the serious challenges faced by the industry.

On December 7, 2009 the committee had their first meeting and the priorities of the committee defined at this meeting were:

- Implementing the new industry financial model, including the allocation of all anticipated revenue for the period beginning Jan. 1, 2010 and the replacement of the current complicated array of agreements with a small number of more strategic agreement;
- Expanding public awareness, involvement and, most importantly, attendance through improved marketing;
- Evaluating and improving the effectiveness of existing industry programs and activities; and
- Proposing longer term solutions to systemic industry problems.

A Memorandum of Agreement between the BC Horse Racing Industry

Management Committee and the BC Horse Racing Industry Organization is expected to be signed by all parties in the near future.

Negotiations during the past season with Hastings Racecourse were successful in having Hastings agree to pay 13% on all races (including restricted), to British Columbia-breds in 2010.

After several years of indecision, Hastings Racecourse is returning to the original BC Cup Day format to assist the BC breeders and promote our talented BC-bred horses. In 2010 the track has implemented several changes to the race conditions, the most popular being the return of the BC-bred restriction to all the black-type events on the BC Cup card.

Unfortunately the popular mare-in-foal program, co-sponsored with Hastings, has been suspended indefinitely due to funding issues.

Results from the July, 2009 mail-in ballot resulted in a change to the criteria of the Broodmare Awards program for 2009. Awards will be paid to the owner of the broodmare at the time of foaling when a BC-bred horse finishes 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in any race. There will now be awards for horses 4 years old and older that are competing in the lowest two claiming categories, which would also include starter allowance/handicap races for those two categories.

The 2009 edition of the Yearling and Mixed Sale was held on September 15th at Thunderbird Show Park and the results were down from previous years, as expected, with the economic downturn. However, on a positive note, decreases were moderate and the general feeling among breeders was optimistic.

The annual Industry Awards Presentation & Christmas Social took place on December 12th at The Derby Bar & Grill and the BC Division of the CTHS salutes the many British Columbia-bred champions that were honoured.

Significant progress was made in 2009 towards putting the racing industry in British Columbia into a secure position. Although breeders still face some difficult challenges in 2010, the future of horse racing in British Columbia appears much brighter with the coming together of all invested members in a united effort.

Several young stallions with impressive credentials have been imported into the province and breeders are faced with some exciting options in 2010.

The British Columbia division of the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society will continue to take a strong position representing breeders in upcoming industry negotiations. With all parties working together, we will overcome the challenges ahead.

The foaling season is well underway and the racing season is approaching soon. Good luck to breeders, stallion owners, and horsemen throughout the province in 2010.