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TRPB TO INTRODUCE DIGITAL TATTOO

The Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau (TRPB), an investigative agency formed in 1946 by the Thoroughbred Racing Associations of North America to protect the integrity of the sport, has announced the introduction of the digital tattoo system, scheduled for full implementation by January 1, 2020.

The announcement was made by J. Curtis Linnell, executive vice president of the TRPB.

The TRPB provides authentication of identity for every Thoroughbred racing in the United States and Canada.

The Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI) passed a model rule regarding digital tattoos this past summer. The model rule states, effective by January 1, 2020, the racing secretary shall ensure that the registration certificates for all Thoroughbred horses that were foaled in 2018 or thereafter have a digital tattoo prior to entry in a race.

“With modern technology, specifically the use of microchips, scanners, wireless technology and tablets, a digital tattoo will clearly provide a superior and more robust form of identification,” Linnell said. “We want the industry at large, as well as regulators and horse identification officials, not only to be aware of the impending change but to be fully prepared for implementation of the digital tattoo by January 1, 2020.”

The transition to the TRPB Digital Tattoo follows the recent requirement by The Jockey Club for a horse to be microchipped prior to being registered and, more recently, the availability of a digital certificate of foal registration. The breed registry for Thoroughbreds in North America issued the first digital foal certificate in May.

The software for the digital tattoo was developed by The Jockey Club Technology Services.

“The TRPB’s Digital Tattoos are an ideal complement to The Jockey Club’s microchip and digital certificate initiatives,” said Rick Bailey, The Jockey Club registrar. “We are working closely with the TRPB to ensure that the horse identification system in place in for Thoroughbred racehorses in the U.S. and Canada is thorough as well as technologically advanced.”

In essence, the digital tattoo is an electronic validation of the identity of a horse performed by a trained TRPB technician. The technician will use a scanner to read the horse’s microchip and the microchip number will hyperlink to electronic registration information.

After fully examining the markings and foal photos contained in the horse’s electronic record, the technician will confirm the identity of the horse standing in front of him or her and upload a selection of digital pictures documenting the horse’s markings to The Jockey Club’s database. The TRPB technician will then place an electronic embossment on the face photo of the horse and a digital stamp on the electronic certificate of registration.

This digital tattoo will indicate that the TRPB has verified the identity of the horse and uploaded updated digital photographs to the breed registry’s database.

TRPB personnel will be meeting with racing officials, regulators, horse identification personnel and various other industry officials through the end of this year and throughout next year to familiarize them with the change. The current practice of branding horses on the inside lip will be discontinued at the end of 2019.

The TRPB website will contain additional information leading up to the rollout of the digital tattoo.

The TRPB, based in Fair Hill, Maryland, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Thoroughbred Racing Associations of North America and serves as a national investigative agency in the horse racing industry with the goal of maintaining public confidence in the sport of Thoroughbred racing.

Additional information about TRPB is available at trpb.com.