

A Year To Build Upon



From The Executive Corner

by DOUG BURGE

As one can see from the cover of this December 2013 issue of our monthly *California Thoroughbred* magazine, the race for leading sire in the state is coming down to the wire with one month left this year. Five-time leading California stallion Unusual Heat has a narrow advantage over four-time leading California juvenile sire Tribal Rule. Regardless of the outcome, both stallions have had a remarkable year, each with more than \$4.4 million in yearly progeny earnings to date. And with many races left in the month of December, either sire could surpass the \$5 million mark for the year.

In fact, 2013 has been a very good year for many California-based stallions. Fueled by higher in-state purses provided for in both the Golden State Series of stakes races and average overnight races, 20 California stallions currently have yearly progeny earnings over \$1 million. Several California stallions have also sired graded stakes winners this year, including four grade I wins.

In regards to the overall health of the breeding industry, we are continuing a trend of stability with the number of mares bred and resulting foal crop. Numbers recently reported by The Jockey Club, which represents roughly 90 percent of the final count of mares bred, showed that California experienced a slight drop of 3.1 percent which was lower than the total North America decline of 3.4 percent (see chart below). This number doesn't totally equate to the following year's expected foal crop, as several mares who were covered in other states will drop California-bred foals in 2014.

Although quantity has dropped significantly in the last 10 years, the quality of horses produced continues to improve as evidenced by the results on the track. Furthermore, restricted races continue to fill at a higher percentage than before, even with half the racing inventory now being produced.

The enhancements made to the racing and incentive program over the past few years, such as the Maiden Bonus Program and Golden State Series, coupled with stability now in both the racing calendar and stabling options, have created more optimism among California's breeders and owners. In fact, many grade I-winning stallions have recently retired to the state, along with a commitment of mare support by their owners.

As racing in-state continues to be more dependent on the local product, with Cal-breds making up well over half the fields in the Golden State, this investment by breeders is vital to the long-term health of the industry. It is the mission of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA) to further maximize the return and opportunities available through the incentive and racing programs. Through the support of the Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC), and all the racing associations, a continued emphasis on Cal-breds will remain in place, boding well for the future stabilization and growth of the racing inventory.

—Happy Holidays

State/Province	2012 Stallions	2013 Stallions	Pct. Change	2012 Mares Bred	2013 Mares Bred	Pct. Change
Kentucky	224	235	4.9	15,361	15,695	2.2
Florida	126	126	0.0	3,070	2,853	-7.1
California	166	136	-18.1	2,406	2,332	-3.1
Louisiana	144	137	-4.9	2,072	1,833	-11.5
New York	60	62	3.3	1,641	1,560	-4.9
New Mexico	109	97	-11.0	983	971	-1.2
Oklahoma	93	89	-4.3	911	928	1.9
Pennsylvania	74	53	-28.4	1,061	902	-15.0
Texas	110	105	-4.5	835	865	3.6
Ontario	66	37	-43.9	1,288	726	-43.6
National	1,861	1,698	-8.8	35,391	34,174	-3.4