

Stamping out Doping

The governing body of international equestrian sport creates medication and doping commission.

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Rufus, ridden by champion rider Rodrigo Pessoa of Brazil, was found to have a banned substance in his system during the 2008 Olympic Games. Several other horses also tested positive for banned substances during the Games. Several horses that competed in the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Hong Kong were found to have banned substances in their systems, so it comes as no surprise that the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI)--the governing body of international equestrian sport--wants to stamp out doping. The first step in this effort is the November 20 announcement that the FEI is creating a commission on medication and doping to be chaired by Dr. Arne Ljungqvist, chairman of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Medical Commission and Vice president of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

According to the FEI, the commission will offer "a robust examination of the way the equine anti-doping policies can be further harmonized to WADA norms in order to ensure that horse welfare remains at the heart of the system and is fully protected. The commission represents a united effort by all concerned athletes, national federations, veterinarians and representatives of the judicial process to overcome the grey areas that lie between therapeutic medication and doping and to simplify and distinguish for equestrian athletes the practices that are acceptable from those that are not. The commission will also seek to clarify all due processes and procedures relating to the analysis of samples in order to lead to a consensus on a simple definition that gives the IOC, WADA and all stakeholders a clear and unequivocal definition of parallel protocols to those used for human athletes in a code that is agreed by all members of the family who seek clean sport."