

REVIEW

Combined handle from on-track and inter-track wagering in 1986 totaled \$838,346,834, which represented a 9% decline from the previous year and the lowest handle since 1977. Of this total, thoroughbred racing accounted for \$453,655,005, a decrease of 13% while harness racing contributed \$384,367,218, down 4% from the previous year.

Attendance at both thoroughbred and harness tracks decreased in 1986 to 5,953,957, representing a 12% decline from 1985. Revenue to the State totaled \$51,462,300, a decrease of 15% from 1985. The decline in racing attendance and handle may be related to the loss of the premier summer thoroughbred race meet at Arlington Park from the Chicago area thoroughbred racing circuit. Although on site handle and attendance figures continued to drop in 1986, gains in handle and attendance were experienced at inter-track wagering facilities. Inter-track wagering handle on harness racing climbed 44% and attendance increased by 48%, while inter-track wagering handle on thoroughbred racing increased 9% and attendance was up 3%.

Due to the loss of its grandstand facility, Arlington Park applied for and received 13 days of racing in 1986, which was conducted under temporary facilities. This meet, which became known as the International Festival of Racing, was presented in a fair like atmosphere and featured several graded stakes races and purse monies totaling more than \$4.9 million. The Festival of Racing also showcased the sixth running of the Budweiser-Arlington Million, which attracted the attention of the racing industry from around the world.

The highlight of the 1986 racing season was the passage of an omnibus racing bill (House Bill 2486) to aid the Illinois racing industry. One of the key provisions in the bill was the reduction in the State pari-mutuel tax to a flat 2% tax rate for every track located in counties with populations greater than 400,000 and a 1% tax for the first \$400,000 wagered for tracks located in counties with populations under 400,000. This new tax rate will be effective as of January 1, 1988. Additionally, after July 1, 1987, all inter-track wagering licenses and inter-track wagering locations will be subject to a daily tax of 1% on the first \$400,000. The second key provision of the bill enables each track to establish two off-track betting parlors within certain mileage restrictions.

The bill also expands the Board's authority to conduct background checks on race track employees, including pari-mutuel clerks, parking attendants, and security personnel. Another segment of the bill was aimed at increasing security and bolstering public confidence by establishing security barns where horses may be sequestered for up to five hours prior to post time.

It is anticipated that with the passage of this Bill, the ownership of Arlington Park Racetrack will begin construction of the clubhouse and grandstand facility, which was destroyed by fire during the summer of 1985. Completion of the new facility is not anticipated until the summer of 1989.

LABORATORY

Human substance abuse testing remained a topic of much concern to the Board. A pilot project originally started in 1985 and scheduled for full implementation in 1986, was temporarily put on hold in April of 1986 while constitutional issues emanating from human drug testing programs were being challenged in courts around the country. This program is scheduled to commence during the 1987 racing season.

In 1986, the Illinois Racing Board Laboratory received 15,631 post-race urine samples and 16,504 post-race blood samples from horses participating in races in Illinois. After testing these samples, the Laboratory issued 21 Etorphine positives, 20 Dexamethasone/Betamethasone (Steroid) positives, three (3) Procaine positives, two (2) Promazine Sulfoxide positives and one (1) Banamine positive.

Of the 16,504 post race blood samples received, 1,535 (9%) were screened quantitatively for Phenylbutazone and its metabolites. Of those tested, 133 were reported over the accepted level of 2.8 mg/ml for a percentage of one (1) violation per 11 post-race blood samples tested.

In 1986, the Laboratory began developing a pilot pre-race testing program, which would require all equine participants to be screened for prohibited substances prior to racing. It is anticipated that this new program will be in place during the 1987 racing season as supplement to the Board's post-race testing program.

The following statistics are indicative of the total number of samples received by the Illinois Racing Board Laboratory during the 1986 racing season:

	EQUINE			# of Total
	<u>Urines</u>	<u>Blood</u>	<u>Lasix Bloods</u>	
Harness	9,066	9,676	4,707	23,449
Thoroughbred	<u>6,565</u>	<u>6,828</u>	<u>9,435</u>	<u>22,828</u>
Totals	15,565	16,504	14,142	46,277

In 1986, there were 32 Illinois-bred thoroughbred stakes offered worth \$1,564,300. In addition, \$320,000 in stallion owner awards were paid to supporters of the Illinois thoroughbred breeding program. The growth of the state's thoroughbred breeding industry is illustrated by the increase in Illinois registered thoroughbred foals from 354 in 1976 to 1821 in 1986. In addition, the number of stallions registered to stand at stud has risen during this time from 127 to 369.

On the standardbred side, there were 217 Illinois-bred harness stakes offered worth \$3,790,659. In addition, \$1,009,634 was distributed in breeders awards. As is the case in the thoroughbred industry, the number of standardbred foals registered each year continues to increase. Since the new breeding program went into effect in 1975 with 978 registered foals, that figure has increased to 2142 by 1986. In addition, the number of stallions registered in the state has risen from 165 to 294.