

News Release - Manitoba

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PROVINCE ANNOUNCES TRANSITIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

After analyzing the recommendations outlined in the final report from an external review of Manitoba's horse racing industry, the Manitoba government has brought forward a three-year transitional plan to enhance the sustainability of the horse racing industry, Agriculture Minister Ralph Eichler announced today.

"The breeding, training and racing of horses in Manitoba is a significant economic activity that supports agricultural linkages and attracts visitors to our province," said Eichler. "Our government is taking important steps to ensure the horse racing industry remains stable and secure now and in the future."

In 2014, the previous government and the Manitoba Jockey Club (MJC) reached a court ordered settlement, which ensured the province provide MJC with annual supplemental grants for a 10-year duration:

- \$5.4 million for years one to four;
- \$5.25 million for years five and six;
- \$5 million for years seven and eight;
- \$4 million for year nine; and
- \$3 million for year 10.

The Manitoba government will collapse the remaining five-year framework into a three-year transitional structure for the Manitoba Jockey Club. The Manitoba Jockey Club, the Manitoba Horse Racing Commission and the Manitoba Great Western Harness Racing Circuit will have their funding maintained at current levels for the next three racing season to provide adequate time to develop a long term strategy.

"This new transitional structure will provide important continued stability for horse racing in Manitoba," said Darren Dunn, CEO, Assiniboia Downs. "We believe the strategy announced today validates the significant contributions, as outlined in the recently released report that the horse race industry makes in the province through jobs, tax creation, tourism and agricultural impacts."

“As standardbred horse people, we are appreciative of both public and government support for the horse racing industry” said Mike Williams, president, Manitoba Great Western Harness Racing Circuit. “In partnership with the Manitoba government, we will look at this transition period as an opportunity to continue searching for viable options for a completely sustainable standardbred industry in the future.”

The Manitoba government will work in collaboration with stakeholders on future actions related to the sustainability of the horse racing industry. The minister thanked all of those who contributed feedback and insight into the review in addition to the consultants for their work.

The final report can be viewed at www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/surveys-and-consultations/index.html.

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For more information:

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- Media requests for general information, contact Communications Services Manitoba: 204-945-3765.
- Media requests for ministerial comment, contact Communications and Stakeholder Relations: 204-945-4916.