

FBI enters into equine drug war 8-27-15

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FBI ENTERS INTO EQUINE DRUG WAR

PENNSYLVANIA RACEHORSE TRAINER INDICTED BY FEDERAL GRAND JURY

By [Glory Ann Kurtz](#)

Aug. 27, 2015

All equine associations that hold or sanction shows need to carefully check their equine drug policies as the policing of horses in races and shows has risen to the federal level, with individuals found guilty facing up to 20 years in prison on each count.

According to the *Paulick Report*, on Aug. 12, Murray Rojas, 49, a two-time leading Penn National trainer was indicted by a federal grand jury on federal wire fraud and conspiracy charges that happened at Penn National race course in 2013. The indictment indicated, “she directed and conspired with veterinarians to administer medication to horses on race day.” The indictment further states that “Rojas concealed the conduct by backdating invoices for the sale and administration of drugs to horses on the day they were to race and to submit fraudulent veterinary treatment reports to the Pennsylvania Horse Racing Commission.”

Also, the wire fraud charges are based on purse money won by horses she trained being funded through interstate wagering and the money being transmitted electronically.

It is to be noted that Rojas is the fourth Pennsylvania-based trainer since November 2013 to be indicted on fraud by a federal grand jury. Also, earlier this year, four Pennsylvania-based veterinarians were indicted and pleaded guilty to conspiring to treat horses illegally within 24 hours of a race as part of an ongoing grand jury

investigation that involves the FBI and the Pennsylvania Racing Commission. A jury trial is scheduled for Nov. 2, 2015.

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Allaboutcutting.com has been warning the equine industry on the drug issue for years. Both Rick Dennis, who does drug testing in people, and I have tried to enlighten the equine industry that changes are coming. It's no longer speculation. Even though the above situation is the result of an investigation by the FBI in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Racing Commission, it is only a matter of time before they discover the drug use in performance horses and seek indictments of trainers, riders, owners and veterinarians who are found violating the association's drug use policies with the aid of sports-enhancing drugs.

Almost all money received by an association to pay off an equine event has been transmitted through the U.S. mail or electronically – even the sponsor and state monies received – which would constitute wire fraud if they are found guilty. Also, in 2016 new laws on animal abuse and drugs will go into effect. It won't be long before the federal government will require statistics from your association's drug testing, just like they currently do with drug testing in people. When stats of a segment of the industry show a high rate of positive results, they will investigate. The equine industry needs to be ready.