

M. Kelly Young Unanimously Named Executive Director of the Agriculture & NYS Horse Breeding Development Fund

The Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund Board of Trustees, which runs the prestigious New York Sire Stakes series, unanimously approved the appointment of harness racing expert M. Kelly Young as the Fund's Executive Director.

Young, a fifth-generation participant in harness racing, grew up on a leading horse breeding farm outside Goshen. She most recently served as Deputy Director of Public Policy for the New York Farm Bureau where her legislative and regulatory portfolio has included dairy, forestry, aquaculture and food policy and access. She has held various positions over the past decade with the Farm Bureau and has expertise in general agricultural matters, which are critical to the Fund's mission to support the state's harness racing industry.

"I am excited to help New York's storied harness racing industry grow and thrive in this new position," said Young. "I thank the Board of Trustees for their confidence in my abilities, and look forward to working with horsepersons, breeders, tracks, fans and everyone in the industry to uphold harness racing's important place in our state's agricultural sector."

Richard A. Ball, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and Fund Trustee, said, "Kelly's extensive knowledge and understanding of both the Standardbred breeding industry and New York agriculture make her a great fit for this position. I have no doubt that she will be a tremendous asset to the Fund. Her energy, enthusiasm and focus will help us identify new opportunities for New York's Standardbred farms to prosper and strengthen the overall racing industry for years to come. I am excited to work with her as she takes on this new role."

Barry Sample, Chairman of the New York State Gaming Commission and Fund Trustee, said, "Kelly's knowledge of New York's harness racing is second-to-none, and her dedication to the sport is commendable as evidenced through her career including service on the New York Racing Fan Advisory Council. Her leadership skills are exactly what the industry needs at this exact time and I look forward to continuing to work with her in her new role."

Peter Arrigenna, Standardbred Breeder and Fund Trustee, said, "Kelly brings a fresh perspective with welcome expertise and leadership to the Fund. She is well-respected by all facets of the industry and deservedly so. I welcome her to the Fund as we continue to grow the sport and enhance our state's racing infrastructure to get more breeders in the game."

Mike Kimelman, Standardbred Breeder and Fund Trustee said, "In an ever-increasingly competitive marketplace, harness racing is at a crossroads. We need unmatched leadership and expertise to ensure our sport's continued viability. Kelly was literally born into this job, with a harness racing industry pedigree and a lifetime of experience. She is up to the task and a great fit. I look forward to working with her."

Young previously served as Executive Director for the Harness Horse Breeders of New York State and was Associate Editor of The Horseman and Fair World, where she developed and wrote stories on harness racing.

Young was selected for a 2013 McCloy Fellowship in Agriculture and was a member of Class 13 of the Empire State Food and Agricultural Leadership Institute (LEAD-NY). She received multiple awards for her writing from the American Farm Bureau Federation, the U.S. Harness Writers Association and the New York Agricultural Society.

Young is currently a member of the New York State Racing Fan Advisory Council, which provides recommendations to the New York State Gaming Commission on matters related to growing the fan base of horse racing. She also serves as president of the Saratoga Harness Hall of Fame and is a member of the U.S. Harness Writers Association. Young holds a B.A. from Boston University.

Established in 1965, the Fund's primary mission is to promote and preserve agriculture through the promotion of horse breeding and equine research in New York State. It directs the state's premier harness racing program designed to stimulate the breeding, buying and racing of Standardbred horses in New York. Because of the State's unparalleled breeding industry, there is strong international demand for New York-bred Standardbred horses.

The Fund receives money from the mutual handle at the licensed tracks across the state to provide purse money for the New York Sire Stakes in these major areas:

- Sire Stakes Races: The most talented New York-bred 2- and 3-year-olds vie for enhanced purses at the state's pari-mutuel tracks. Each year, the top performers compete in eight races, traditionally known as the "Night of Champions."
- Excelsior/State Fair Series: 2- and 3-year-old New York-bred trotters and pacers compete in these races, including the annual State Fair race held at the Goshen Historic Track.
- County Fair Racing: The best "earn as you learn" program in Sire Stakes racing is non-betting racing that takes place at 20 agricultural fairs throughout the state, culminating in championship races for each age and gait at the end of summer.
- Agriculture and Equine Research: The Fund provides assistance to county agricultural societies to maintain and repair racing facilities and also contributes to both the 4-H program and the Dr. Harry M. Zweig Fund for Equine Research at Cornell University.

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