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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**New York Sire Stakes County Fair Series Begins 2018 Season**

*Racing Series at 21 County Fairs to be held July through August; Finals September 6 at Monticello*

**ALBANY, N.Y.** – The 2018 New York Sire Stakes County Fair Series is underway this week with racing at the Goshen Historic Track (July 2) and the Chenango County Fair at Afton (July 5). The two-month series includes 21 race days at fairs across the state, culminating with the County Fair Finals, scheduled for September 6 at Monticello Raceway. The Finals will be contested for \$10,000 purses.

A complete schedule of County Fair Races is listed at [www.nysirestakes.com](http://www.nysirestakes.com).

The County Fair Series will consist of 21 non-pari-mutuel harness races open to eligible two and three-year-old New York Standardbreds, separated into eight divisions based on age, gender and gait. The events provided young horses with the opportunity to earn as they learn, while bringing the community together for a series of races.

“The New York Sire Stakes County Fair Series is an exciting competition that we look forward to each year,” said M. Kelly Young, executive director, Agriculture & NYS Horse Breeding Development Fund. “We love having the opportunity to introduce harness racing to new audiences at the fairs who will hopefully show an interest in the sport for years to come.”

The County Fair Series will also include Racing Under Saddle (RUS) exhibitions. RUS is a hybrid between harness and Thoroughbred racing where riders race atop Standardbreds at a trot. RUS NY was formed in 2014 to increase interest in the sport and showcase the versatility of the Standardbred breed.

The New York Sire Stakes is the state’s premier harness racing program designed to promote the breeding, buying and racing of Standardbred horses in New York State. It is the nation’s oldest harness racing program of its kind and is administered by the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund.

***About the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund:***

The Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund (the Fund) is a public benefit corporation established in 1965 by the Laverne Law (Laws of New York, Chapter 567 of the Laws of 1965). The mission of the Fund is to promote agriculture through the breeding of Standardbred horses and the conduct of equine research within the State. To carry out its legislative mission, the Fund administers the New York Sire Stakes races, Excelsior/State Fair Series races, and County Fair Races. Additionally, the Fund provides assistance to county agriculture societies and contributes to the statewide 4-H program and to the Harry M. Zweig Fund for Equine Research.

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