

LIMITS ON THOROUGHBRED STALLION BOOKS

By Steven A. Sansone



In May of 2020, the United States Jockey Club Stewards, not the entire membership, passed Rule 14C which limits the number of mares bred to a Thoroughbred stallion born in 2020 and forward. The number is 140.

Why? The Stewards referenced a 2011 study published by the Journal of Animal Genetics that showed an increase of inbreeding from 1996 to 2006. During this ten year period the number of stallions covering 100 or more mares rose from 14 to 128. In 2020, 42 U.S. based Thoroughbred stallions covered more than 140 mares.

The new Rule is comprehensive and detailed. The first cover of the first 140 counts to the total. If a mare slips or dies additional mares cannot be added to the book. Each year the first foals out of the 140 reported mares are the only offspring that can be Jockey Club registered.

What might be the projected benefits of this Rule? Lower stud fees for first year horses. Older, productive stallions' books can increase. Stallions that are ignored during the third through fifth years of their careers will be considered. New syndicates and owners of stallions will grow. Income will increase and spread to these respective entities. Genetics will expand.

What are the negatives? For stallion prospects of 2020 and forward, their economic value will decrease. Less revenue. Foreign entities can out bid U.S. farms for new stallions. Small breeders cannot have access to some stallions. Southern Hemisphere shuttle markets will benefit as the number of mares allowed to be bred will expand. This is a controversial Rule. The U.S. Jockey Club is the only one to enact a limit. There has been a legal suit filed challenging this limit. I will address the suit in a future article. Stay tuned!
