



401 WEST MAIN STREET, SUITE 222 · LEXINGTON, KY 40507 · PHONE: 859-759-4081 · WWW.RMTCNET.COM

Date: March 15, 2021

To: Ed Martin, Executive Director ARCI

From: Mary Scollay, DVM, Executive Director RMTC

Re: Recommendation for 4/B Penalty Classification for Dextrorphan

The RMTC was requested to recommend a penalty classification for dextrorphan, a substance currently unclassified in the ARCI's Uniform Classification of Foreign Substances.

Dextrorphan is a metabolite of dextromethorphan (4/B), a cough suppressant that is commercially available with FDA-approved for human use in over-the-counter, tablet and oral syrup formulations (e.g. Robitussin DM). It is a component of combination products (e.g. Mucinex) with guaifenesin (4/C), an expectorant that is listed on the Schedule of Controlled Therapeutic Substances. Dextromethorphan is also a substance of human abuse. When consumed in large doses, its dose-dependent effects range from euphoria to hallucinations, dissociative (out-of-body) experiences, coma, and death.

The SAC met via videoconference on March 4th and reviewed scientific literature and facts related to previous dextrorphan cases. The SAC recommended a 4/B classification, consistent with the parent drug dextromethorphan. While for other substances, evidence for psychoactive effect in horses, or other mammalian species, would result in a higher penalty classification, the SAC was unable to identify a source for dextrorphan (other than dextromethorphan), and further determined that the detection of dextrorphan in a horse's post-race sample would either be attributed to administration of dextromethorphan syrup for cough control or inadvertent exposure through contact with human substance abusers. In some cases, dextromethorphan was determined to have been administered by lay persons and absent veterinary examination of the affected horse. Consultation with a veterinarian could potentially prevent these violations and ensure that a horse's medical treatment addresses the underlying cause of the cough rather than simply suppressing the clinical signs of respiratory disease.

Human substance abusers are reported to consume doses of dextromethorphan (to achieve psychoactive effects of its metabolite dextrorphan) at 5-30 times the maximum label dose. Extrapolating that dosing to a horse this would equate to an administration of 2 ½ to 15 pints of over-the-counter dextromethorphan. The willful administration of dextromethorphan to achieve the psychoactive effects—that represent risk of harm rather than performance enhancement—is highly improbable. The

recommended 4/B classification fairly addresses the logical routes of exposure and allows for mitigation of the penalty assessed the trainer in consideration of the facts of the case.

The RMTC Board of Directors considered the SAC's 4/B recommendation and approved it by a supermajority vote of: 19 in favor; 1 opposed (NHBPA) and 1 abstention (ARCI).