

GREYHOUND RACING..... PAST PRESENT..... FUTURE!

At the close of 2009 we find that 9 greyhound tracks will no longer feature live racing that represents nearly 1/3 of the tracks in the country.

The list of closings is comprised of two tracks in Massachusetts two in New Hampshire two in Texas one in Rhode Island, one in Wisconsin and one in Arizona. Most of these tracks have or will close due to economical reasons. 4 will close as a direct result of Animal rights issues along with economics.

Most of these tracks have greyhounds that can compete at other tracks. Owners of these greyhounds are calling many of the kennels located at tracks in Florida. Some of these greyhounds will even come to race here at Melbourne. The unfortunate part is that the greyhounds from northern tracks will displace greyhounds racing poorly in Florida kennels. Many of those Florida greyhounds will be desperate to get into adoption programs given the numbers migrating south.

At the end of 2009 there will be more greyhound racetracks operating in the state of Florida than all the rest of the racing states COMBINED!

Florida has 11 tracks operating year round and two that are seasonal and that is down from the 16 that operated in Florida years ago. There will be only 25 tracks racing nationwide in 2010.

The future is ominous for greyhounds that race for a living. Breeders have not slowed down significantly and there were 20,227 Pups registered in 2007, 20,365 Pups registered in 2008 and 9,863 Pups registered in the first 8 months of 2009 (estimate for the total in 2009 is over 15,000. Many of the greyhound owners will be hard pressed to find places in kennels for their hounds to race with the 1/3 reduction of racetracks nationally.

Several Florida tracks have in the past and will in the future lobby to end racing at their facilities while leaving the simulcast, card rooms and casino activity to stand alone. Some of these track loose hundreds of thousands of dollars supporting live racing as there is not enough activity to have racing support itself. Florida law mandates that greyhound racing is required in order to operate other gambling activities like Poker rooms or casino gaming.

Legislation in 2009 did not make it out of "committee" that would allow tracks to operate poker rooms and casino gaming without live racing.

Should such legislation make to the floor and pass we would find several greyhound tracks in Florida that would opt to discontinue live racing. This time it would be at tracks where the greyhounds would be less competitive and the percentages much higher that would need homes. If 3 or 4 tracks discontinued racing, it would mean that 3000 to 4000 greyhounds would need homes all at once.

We all need to gear up for the inevitable as it will happen in the future!
Dennis Tyler