



# PETA Infiltrates the Horse Industry

## PETA Pays for Influence in Animal Industry

Many of the methods and strategies of animal extremist groups have been exposed in recent years by various proponents of animal ownership and use. However, a tactic that has received less attention is that of animal extremist groups buying shares in publicly traded animal industry companies, which then allows them to influence company policy.

According to PETA's motto, "animals are not ours to experiment on, eat, wear, use for entertainment, or abuse in any other way. The group opposes speciesism, which is a human-supremacist worldview." Thus, it's easy to see the intent of their parasitic involvement with animal industry.

PETA owns shares in the meat companies Hormel Foods, Tyson, Maple Leaf, and Smithfield, and the PETA website states that their intent is to "directly urge CEOs to convert all slaughterhouses to produce and pack only vegan meats."

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## PETA Buys Shares in Racetrack-Owning Companies

Horse industry people that spend time on social media are probably aware of Facebook's crack-down on animal sales through the platform. Although the policy had already been in place for several years, enforcement was increased around the same time that PETA bought shares in Facebook. The buy in was initiated following PETA's accusation that Facebook censors their sensationalist and often falsified content by covering photos; PETA has traditionally relied on gore and shock value to bring in donations.

PETA has now infiltrated the horse industry directly, having purchased stock in four companies that own racetracks across the United States. The announcement was made in late October 2020, and although the exact number of shares is unknown, it's enough for PETA representatives to attend meetings and introduce resolutions.

The companies are VICI Properties, Boyd Gaming, Penn National Gaming, and Gaming and Leisure Properties. These companies own twelve racetracks among them, including Mountaineer Casino, Racetrack & Resort and Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races in West Virginia; JACK Thistledown Racino, Belterra Park Gaming, and Hollywood Gaming at Mahoning Valley Race Course in Ohio; Evangeline Downs Racetrack & Casino and Delta Downs Racetrack Casino Hotel in Louisiana; Retama Park and Sam Houston Race Park in Texas; Zia Park Casino Hotel & Racetrack in New Mexico; and Hollywood Casino at Penn National Race Course in Pennsylvania.

Considering PETA's history and mission, this move is of significant concern to the horse industry as a whole. It is standard procedure for animal extremist groups to insinuate their ideas, no matter how misguided or outright fallacious they may be, into the minds of the general public and lawmakers who have no realistic frame of reference regarding true animal welfare.

PETA takes a slightly different approach with inserting themselves into the horse racing industry. On the surface, the group takes what appears to be a softer stance than their norm, which belies their long-held and plainly stated stance against any and all animal use. They state that their demands of the racing industry are "the minimum action that needs to be taken."

## Animal Extremist Demands are Redundant and Unnecessary

PETA's opportunistic, unneeded invasion of the horse racing industry came following an entirely unexpected, unpredictable spate of breakdowns and deaths of racehorses at Santa Anita, which industry experts attribute to the never-before-seen track conditions after a spring of record rainfall.


Nevertheless, California racing authorities implemented a broad and comprehensive set of reforms, which resulted in zero training or racing fatalities at Santa Anita in the fall 2020 season. Two of the most significant reforms require that the track moisture content, cushion, properly mixed cushion, is checked every morning before a race day; that a standing MRI machine and standing PET scan be utilized, resulting in multiple micro lesions being found (not visible on radiograph) before the lesion can become a catastrophic injury. Overall, the increased scrutiny, increased vet checks, and top of the line diagnostic equipment have helped significantly.

Below are photos of the standing MRI and standing PET machines at work at California's Santa Anita:

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In addition, the Jockey Club released their vision for comprehensive reform, which can be read here: [http://www.jockeyclub.com/pdfs/vision\\_2025.pdf](http://www.jockeyclub.com/pdfs/vision_2025.pdf)

Also, in late September 2020, the Horse Racing Integrity Act (HR 1754) passed the house. If made law, the act would make a single, federal overseeing body to govern racing's medication and drug testing policies. This entity would take over the role from the 38 existing racing authorities in the nation.

With existing and potential issues already being addressed so comprehensively on multiple levels by industry professionals, it is plain that PETA's forcing their way into the equation is not for the betterment of racing or animal welfare, but rather to position them to work like termites in the core of the sport of kings.

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