

Equine Medical Advisory

Rodenticide Bait Box Placement

April 23, 2025

On April 14, 2025, a Commission review of the location of bait boxes containing anti-coagulant rodenticides in the Belmont Park stable area identified 410 boxes, of which 356, or 87.80 percent, were located outside barns. A total of 54 rodenticide bait boxes, or 13.17 percent, were located inside barns.

While toxicosis from pesticides rarely occurs in horses, academic literature has long identified inappropriate pesticide use or mishandling by humans as the likely source when such incidents do occur.^{1, 2}

While ingestion of small amounts of anticoagulant rodenticides alone is rarely fatal to a horse, ingestion combined with strenuous exercise or other yet unknown pre-disposing synergistic factors have been associated with sudden death in Thoroughbred racehorses.^{3, 4, 5}

The Commission has engaged NYRA to ensure there is a timely removal of bait boxes placed inside the barns of the Belmont Park stable area. Additionally, NYRA has committed to reviewing bait box placement with its pest control company to ensure their contracted pest control technicians properly place them outside the barns.

While the disproportionate distribution of bait boxes would suggest pest control technicians are appropriately placing bait boxes outside the barns, it is incumbent upon trainers to ensure that their staff are not moving bait boxes inside the barns. Should rodents or open burrows be observed inside the barns, a trainer should immediately make a report to NYRA Facilities so non-toxic interventions may be taken.

Thank you for your continuing efforts to provide the best possible care for your horses.

¹ Russel SH, Monin T, Edwards WC. Rodenticide toxicosis in a horse, J Am Vet Med Assoc. 1978 Feb 1;172(3):270-1;

² Plumlee KH. Pesticide toxicosis in the horse, Vet Clin North Am Equine Pract. 2001 Dec;17(3):491-500;

³ See Jack Shinar, Rodenticide Linked to Six Sudden Horse Deaths, The Blood-Horse, December 18, 2014.

⁴ Carvallo FR, et al. Cluster of cases of massive hemorrhage associated with anticoagulant detection in race horses. J. Vet. Diagn. Invest. 27, 112-116.

⁴ Nagy, AL, et al. Long-established and emerging pesticide poisoning in horses. Equine Vet Education 2019 31(9) 456-500 doi: 10.1111/eve.12997