

Aged horses – AR.45B

Summary:

The current AR.45B provides that a horse that is aged 12 years or more 'shall not be permitted to start in any race unless it has undergone a pre-race veterinary examination which satisfies the Stewards that the horse should be permitted to start.' The effect of this rule is to allow horses aged 12 years or more to race, but only after a veterinary examination which is to the satisfaction of the Stewards.

The Australian Racing Board sought advice from the Veterinary and Analysts Committee (VAC) in respect of an appropriate compulsory retirement age of horses. The critical premise of the advice obtained was the fundamental importance of animal welfare, and related public perception.

The VAC's advice, which is supported by data, research and sound welfare policy, recommended a new rule which prohibits horses from racing once they reach 13 years of age, and also that more stringent steps be taken to approve 12 year old horses to race.

Furthermore, VAC recommended that AR.45B be re-drafted to require that any horse aged 12 years must obtain the Stewards' permission to race during its 12 year old racing season. The re-drafted rule sets out more comprehensive provisions in respect of how the Stewards' permission is to be granted.

It has been decided to replace AR.45B.

Rule:

Delete AR.45B and replace with the following:

“AR.45B

- (1) Subject to AR.45B(2), a horse that is aged 12 years is not permitted to race.
- (2) The Stewards may give their express permission for a horse aged 12 to start in a race or races during its 12 year old racing season, if:
 - a. the trainer provides to the Stewards a veterinary report in respect of the horse's condition and suitability to race, and any other information, examination or report as required by the Stewards; and
 - b. the Stewards are satisfied that the horse is suitable to race.
- (3) Any permission granted by the Stewards pursuant to AR 45B(2) expires at the conclusion of the horse's 12 year old racing season, or earlier as provided by the Stewards.
- (4) Upon a horse turning 13 years of age, it is immediately retired and de-registered under these Rules and is ineligible to race, trial or be trained.

- (5) If a horse aged 12 participates in any race without permission given by the Stewards in accordance with this rule or if a horse over 12 years participates in a race:
- a. the trainer and any other relevant person may be penalised; and/or
 - b. the horse may be disqualified for the relevant race.”

Date of Effect: 1 August, 2015