Father Patrick Debuts In Maxie Lee

Although Father Patrick had 12 wins in 17 starts last year, it wasn’t until his season-ending win in the $500,000 Breeders Crown at the Meadowlands that he was able to catapult himself to Dan Patch Award honors as the 3-Year-Old Colt Trotter of the Year.

Although he had major scores in the Canadian Trotting Classic and Earl Beal Jr. Memorial, Father Patrick was seemingly playing third fiddle in the Jimmy Takter barn to Hambletonian winner Trixton and Kentucky Futurity champ Nuncio. The final tally for divisional honors showed Father Patrick with a 94-57 vote margin over Nuncio, with Trixton a distant third.

With Trixton retired to the breeding shed and Nuncio overseas racing for owner Stefan Melander, Father Patrick is Takter’s best chance among the older male trotters in 2015.

After three qualifiers at the Meadowlands—including a 1:53 win that was capped off with a last quarter of :26 flat and a 1:52 effort in his last start on May 16—Father Patrick will make his 4-year-old debut on Sunday at Harrah’s Philadelphia. With regular driver Yannick Gingras in the sulky, Father Patrick will start from post 5 in the $150,000 Maxie Lee Memorial, with the son of Cantab Hall taking on seven rivals that includes the 2013 Horse of the Year Bee A Magician, who has looked sensational in a perfect three-for-three campaign thus far this year.

“This looks like an Elitlopp field, but she’s the horse to beat.”
—Father Patrick’s trainer, Jimmy Takter

“‘This looks like an Elitlopp field, but she’s the horse to beat; she’s looked fantastic,’ Takter said about Bee A Magician, who starts from post 3 in the Maxie Lee with Brian Sears driving. ‘She’s a year older now and she’s tough.’”

Bee A Magician is one of two mares in the race, joining 2014 divisional champ Classic Martine, who counts the Miami Valley Distaff as one of two wins this year. The race also includes the 2012 Hambletonian winner Market Share, a two-time divisional champ in 2012 and ‘13, and recent Meadows Maturity champ Melady’s Monet.

The Maxie Lee is the last of three $150,000 invitations on the afternoon card at Harrah’s Philadelphia, joining the Jerry Taylor Memorial for older male pacers and the Betsy Ross for older mare pacers.

Continues on page 2
Father Patrick has been living a double life this spring, breeding mares at Walnridge Farm while remaining in training for Takter. “He’s been collected three times this week and he will continue on until he services all the mares,” said Takter. “He’s done it all super.”

Father Patrick is booked to be bred to 70 mares and as of May 20 had 40 confirmed in foal. Takter believes that despite the tough competition, Father Patrick is ready. “He’s been qualifying so good. In the last qualifier it looked like he could have gone under 1:50,” he said. “I like his spot with the five hole, which is good at Chester.”

Takter will also start Great Vintage in the Jerry Taylor, with David Miller driving the 7-year-old son of American Ideal from post 4. Great Vintage comes into the race with $718,108 in career earnings, the majority earned early in his career. Great Vintage made just 14 starts last year with three wins and $70,850 in earnings, with his season ending due to injury in late August.

After a win (1:51) and second in two qualifiers—posting final quarters of :25.4 in both starts—Great Vintage scored a career best-equaling 1:49.1 win in his pari-mutuel debut May 16 at the Meadowlands.

Like Father Patrick, Great Vintage also spent some time in the breeding shed this spring at Walnridge Farm. “He got hurt and we were breeding him and then I said to put him back in training,” said Takter. “And he’s come back better than ever. He was awesome that last start. He is just a lovely horse; just the loveliest horse ever.”—By Gordon Waterstone
Lohmeyer Hopes Ideal Nuggets Can Sparkle In 2015

Round two of the three-week New Jersey Sires Stakes (NJSS) for 3 year olds of both sexes and gaits takes place this weekend at the Meadowlands. When the dust settles, the top 10 point earners in each of the four divisions will return for the quartet of $100,000 finals on Saturday night, May 30.

After a pair of divisions for 3-year-old filly pacers last weekend, there will be just one $25,000 split on Saturday. Missing in action are both Lindys Old Lady and Happiness, who won their respective divisions last time out but are getting the week off from trainers Frank Antonacci and Ron Burke, respectively, to wait for the final.

Nine sophomore filly pacers are back in action Saturday, including runners-up Cheyenne Robin and Stacia Hanover, the latter capturing last year’s NJSS final for 2-year-old filly pacers.

The field includes one newcomer in Ideal Nuggets, who comes into the race off a fifth and third in a pair of qualifiers at the Big M, the latter coming back on May 1. Ideal Nuggets will start from post 1 with Tim Tetrick driving.

“She qualified a couple times and then got off a little bit with a little problem with her knee,” Lohmeyer explained of the three-week gap between appearances that included Ideal Nuggets missing the NJSS opener. “We had to work on that and we’ve got it good.”

Still, Lohmeyer remains cautious for Ideal Nuggets’ 2015 debut.

“I trained her the other day here at Magical Acres in 1:58 and a piece, with a last half in :57, but I don’t think that is going to be enough for her to be tight,” said Lohmeyer. “I wanted to get her in the last leg because if she got any money she’d be in the final. Whatever she does she does, but she seems real good now and sound.”

Bred and owned by Bob and Lauren Tucker, Ideal Nuggets is a daughter of Western Ideal out of the Art Major mare Rough Sketch, who was a winner on the New York Sires Stakes circuit as well as champion of the 2009 Fall Harvest final at Yonkers. Ideal Nuggets won just once in 15 starts last year—a 1:50.4 effort in a Bluegrass division at The Red Mile—but was close several times, including a third-place finish behind Stacia Hanover in the 2014 NJSS final. Overall she posted a first-year resume of 15-1-4-6 and $198,917 in earnings.

Besides the $48,100 she picked up with her Bluegrass score, Ideal Nuggets took home a second-place check of $40,755 for her third-place finish in The Three Diamonds final at Woodbine. She also crossed the wire first in her Breeders Crown elimination at the Meadowlands with Tetrick driving, but her number was taken down by the track judges, who placed her sixth for causing interference. She still found a spot in the $500,000 final, where she closed out her rookie campaign with a fifth after starting from post 10.

“She fits in non-winners of two, but I don’t think I’ll put her in there,” Lohmeyer said with a laugh. “She’s not the best filly but she’ll get in there and beat you once in a while if she gets a good trip. I’m looking forward to having a good year with her.”

Also on Saturday, a single $25,000 NJSS division for 3-year-old colt pacers will go postward. While Artspeak, who won his NJSS split last time out in 1:49, will sit this one out, Hurrikane Ali, who scored a 1:50 victory in the second division, will attempt to go back-to-back for trainer John McDermott Jr. and driver Yannick Gingras.

Filly trotters and colt trotters will also go with single $25,000 divisions on Friday night at the Meadowlands. Mission Brief, who won the filly trot in 1:53.4 in her season debut, is off this week. Included in that field is Riley’s Dream, runner-up not only last time out in the NJSS opener but also runner-up in her other four attempts this year. Her five seconds also include the Lady Suffolk and Simpson.

On the colt side, opening-leg winner Guess Whos Back (1:54) is back for round two, but peer French Laundry gets the week off from trainer Jimmy Takter. Takter will start (and drive) Canepa Hanover from post 8, with the colt coming off a third in the NJSS opener to Guess Whos Back. Trainer Ake Svanstedt will send out four, including first-timer Code Bon, whose lone freshman win was an impressive 1:55.3 effort in a late-closer last fall at The Red Mile.— By Gordon Waterstone
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“I’m not focused on losing races, I’m focused on the way, but the goal is to win the Fan Hanover,” said Johansson. “I’m not focused on losing races, I’m focused on winning races. So I’m not going to be anxious or worried about it. It is what it is. As long as she performs well, both I and her owners (3 Brothers Stable) will be very happy with her.”

Because Johansson does not want to race JK She’salady on a half-mile track, the filly had no starts last year on the NYSS circuit. But with Tioga Downs being a five-eighths oval, it gave Johansson the perfect opportunity to get the filly underway in 2015. JK She’salady is also familiar with Tioga, having won a division of the Tompkins-Geers there last August.

JK She’salady won both her qualifying starts earlier this month at the Meadowlands, winning the first by a head in 1:53.3 and the second by one length in 1:51.3, closing out her miles with final quarters of :26 and :25.4, respectively.

“It’s nice when she goes out and qualifies the way she has,” said Johansson. “It’s not like she just went out there and won qualifiers, she was super impressive. I don’t know how many people called and texted me about how impressive she was when she qualified last weekend.

“She’s about as good as a racehorse could be. I’m very happy where she’s at. She’s taken her qualifiers well. She didn’t do anything crazy there so she’s just as good as she was before she qualified. She should be ready for Monday.”

Yannick Gingras directed JK She’salady to her first 10 victories, but when he opted to remain loyal to first-call trainer Ron Burke with Sassa Hanover for the Breeders Crown eliminations at the Meadowlands, Johansson turned to Tim Tetrick. Without missing a beat with her new driver, JK She’salady won her elim and then capped off her freshman year with a victory in the $500,000 final. Tetrick was behind JK She’salady in both her qualifying attempts this year.

“(Tetrick) gets along really well with her,” Johansson said “I think he’s a little bit in shock how good she really is. Obviously you expect her to be good, but I don’t even know if he expected her to be as good as she is right now, and she hasn’t even started yet.”

Johansson said she is unsure of JK She’salady’s immediate schedule after Monday’s race as she aims for the Fan Hanover eliminations on June 13 at Mohawk, where she won last year’s She’s A Great Lady final and an Eternal Camnation division.

“After this we will see if I can find an overnight or qualify her. It’s hard to find overnights for her because obviously they don’t write non-winners of a million dollars or non-winners of 12, which she would be eligible to because one race she won last year was not a pari-mutuel race,” she said with a laugh.” The Meadowlands writes 3-year-old filly races but it’s hard to fill them when the Pennsylvania Sires Stakes are going and the New Jersey Sires Stakes are still going. But I’m not that concerned about it because she always races well off a layoff.” — By Gordon Waterstone
Shake It Cerry Takes On Males In Graduate Opener

After a year off the racing schedule, the Graduate Series returns in 2015. Originally for older pacers, the revamped Graduate Series is now for 4 year olds only, and includes trotters.

With estimated total purses of $1 million, the Graduate Series is now for 4 year olds only, and includes trotters.

Although trainer Jimmy Takter could have started the 2014 Three-Year-Old Colt Trotter of the Year Father Patrick in the Graduate opener, he will instead race in the $150,000 Maxie Lee Memorial on Sunday at Harrah’s Philadelphia.

Takter will start Shake It Cerry, the 2014 Trotter of the Year and 3-Year-Old Filly Trotter of the Year, against her male peers. Although Shake It Cerry won 15 of 17 starts in 2014 and 3-Year-Old Filly Trotter of the Year, against her male peers. Although Shake It Cerry won 15 of 17 starts in 2014 and 23 career wins in 28 starts while surpassing the $2-million mark in career earnings, her 4-year-old season has gotten off to a shaky start. With just one winning (1:55.1) qualifier under her belt on April 18 at the Meadows, Shake It Cerry finished fourth six days later as the 3-5 favorite in the $51,100 Meadows Maturity, tiring in the stretch after leading at the first three calls.

Trainer Jimmy Takter said a minor cut on Shake It Cerry’s foot may have been the culprit behind Shake It Cerry’s late fade, but the daughter of Donato Hanover then went out and finished sixth behind Classic Martine as the even-money choice in the $86,500 Miami Valley Distaff at Miami Valley on May 3. On May 16, Shake It Cerry finished third at odds of 6-1 again behind Classic Martine in an Open at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono.

Takter drove Shake It Cerry in the Pocono open, and he said he liked what he saw and felt.

“I raced her myself and she was absolutely super,” said Takter, who got away slowly with Shake It Cerry from post 7 on her way to year-end honors, and 23 career wins in 28 starts while surpassing the $2-million mark in career earnings, her 4-year-old season has gotten off to a shaky start. With just one winning (1:55.1) qualifier under her belt on April 18 at the Meadows, Shake It Cerry finished fourth six days later as the 3-5 favorite in the $51,100 Meadows Maturity, tiring in the stretch after leading at the first three calls.

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“She was third... and she went like her old self.”

—Jimmy Takter on Shake It Cerry

“Cerry” then rallied from fifth at the three-quarters with a last quarter of :27.4 to finish 4 ½ lengths behind, race-timed in 1:54. “She was third, I raced her from behind, and she went like her old self. I was very happy with her,” added Takter.

Takter said failed attempts to get Shake It Cerry in foal likely also played a role in the filly’s performances thus far in 2015. “We tried to get her in foal and that wasn’t so good,” stated Takter.

Two $37,500 divisions will be raced on the pacing side. Last year’s Little Brown Jug winner Limelight Beach, coming off a fourth-place finish in the Confederation Cup final at Flamboro Downs on May 17, drew the outside post 6 in one split. The race also marks the return after a two-month absence of Rockeyed Optimist, whose seven wins thus far in 2015 include the finals of the Sonsam and Clyde Hirt series at the Meadowlands. Tim Tetrick drives from post 2 for trainer Steve Elliott.

Elliott starts a pair in the second division for pacers, including Doo Wop Hanover and Rock Out. Also in that split is Lyons somewhere, who won in 1:49.4 last year at Tioga on his way to a $410,812-winning campaign. — By Gordon Waterstone

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**GRADUATE 4YO OPEN TROT**

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<td>A. McCarthy/N. Daley</td>
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<td>3—Doo Wop Hanover</td>
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<td>4—Sweet Rock</td>
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<td>5—Rock Out</td>
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<td>6—Mattamerican</td>
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<td>7—Lyons somewhere</td>
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**GRADUATE 4YO OPEN PACE**

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<td>5—Bushwacker</td>
<td>J. Morrill Jr./C. Ryder</td>
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<td>6—Limelight Beach</td>
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Elitlopp Prep Features Maven, Creatine

With last weekend’s Finlandia Ajo, another horse joined those invited to the May 31 Elitlopp. It was not, however, the winner of the race, Bret Boko, who was a big upset winner. Instead, Elitlopp organizers invited third-place finisher Univers de Pan. That brought the number of horses invited to 11, with a total of 16 invitations to be handed out so there will be two eliminations with eight horses each.

As of May 22, those receiving invitations and confirmed to start are Maven, Wind Of The North, Univers de Pan, Timoko, On Track Piraten, BBS Sugarlight, Support Justice, Nahar, Voltigeur de Mytr, Magic Tonight, Ustinof du Vivier and Nuncio.

Yes, Nuncio! Nuncio was invited after an impressive win, but his trainer, Stefan Melander, already had an Elitlopp starter in Digital Ink and said he was reluctant to start the 4-year-old Nuncio. Then on Friday morning (May 22), Melander announced that Digital Ink was not 100 percent and he would be racing Nuncio in the Elitlopp instead.

Wind Of The North arrived in Malmo, Sweden, with his ears up on Wednesday night, May 20, accompanied by Brad Sawyer and Tina Duer. He flew from New York to Amsterdam and then journeyed on to Sweden, with his final stop the training farm of Stig H. Johansson.

Meanwhile, Maven is making her final start before the Elitlopp on Saturday at the Gavle track in an Elitlopp qualifier. The winner automatically is invited. The one-mile race includes several U.S.-breds including Creatine, who now races for Diamond Creek Racing and Bob and Lynda Stewart. Bob Stewart trained the son of Andover Hall in the U.S., when Creatine pulled off unexpected victories in the 2013 Kentucky Futurity and 2014 Allerage Trot at The Red Mile. Diamond Creek’s Adam Bowden and the Stewarts have been hoping Creatine could make an Elitlopp appearance this year but with this only his second race, it’s a tough assignment.

Also in the Elitlopp qualifier at Gavle but not yet invited to this year’s edition of the race is Panne de Moteur. He finished second to Timoko in the 2014 Elitlopp final after winning an elimination in 1:50.4.

Trained by Stefan Hultman for a syndicate group that is managed by Margareta Wallenius-Kleberg’s Menhammar Stud, Panne de Moteur suffered an injury following last year’s Elitlopp and never made another start in 2014. His start at Gavle is just his second of 2015 and comes after a third-place finish behind 2013 Elitlopp champ Nahar and Knows Nothing on May 9 at Gavle.—By Kathy Parker
The Friday night program at Scioto Downs will feature the 4-year-old debut of **IL SOGNO DREAM**, 1:53.2 ($436,851) in Race 2 (post time 6:50 p.m.). The winner of the Circle City and third-place finisher in the Kentucky Futurity will face a seasoned field that includes **RAGAZZO DOLCE**, who has five wins (all at Dover) in 13 starts this year. Ragazzo Dolce was purchased for $30,000 at the Tattersalls January Mixed Sale and has earned $32,560 for his new owners.

Also at Scioto Friday night, in Race 5 (7:50 p.m. post), **JJ HALL**, a 1:53.1 winner at Scioto, takes on a field that includes **BOFFIN**, who has seven wins in 13 starts; the stalwart Ohio free-for-aller **SOUTHWIND PEPINO**; and **COUNT ME IN**, a winner of four of seven starts this year for the Burke Stable.

Indiana Sires Stakes action got underway Wednesday night at Hoosier Park and Hoosier-sired 3-year-old pacing fillies compete in three divisions on Friday night—Race 11 (8:35 p.m.), Race 12 and Race 13.

Saturday morning qualifiers at the Meadowlands have entries by two notables from the 2014 season—2014 Peter Haughton Memorial champion **CENTURION ATM** and **SOMEBWHERE IN LA**. Trainer Ake Svanstedt had entered his world champion trotter **SEBASTIAN K**, but co-owner Tristan Sjoberg reported the horse would not start because of stomach ulcers.

On Saturday night, in addition to New Jersey Sires Stakes at the Meadowlands and eliminations for the Art Rooney Pace at Yonkers, an overnight at Mohawk Racetrack offers another preview of this year’s 3-year-old pacing colt division. Race 3 (post time 8:05 p.m.) features **DUDES THE MAN**, **PIERCE HANOVER** and **REVEREND HANOVER**. Also worth watching is Race 11 at Mohawk, when **THINKING OUT LOUD** (post 1) and **VEGAS VACATION** (post 7) line up behind the gate for the $34,000 Preferred Pace.

Sires Stakes are also on the Saturday schedule at Vernon Downs and Hoosier Park.

New York-sired 3-year-old filly trotters will be featured in three divisions at Vernon (Races 7, 8, 9), with 2-year-old filly trot champion **BARN DOLL** in Race 8. The first division appears the most competitive on paper as it includes **HOLLYWOOD JESS**, **LADY WINONA** and **SHAAOLINE**, 1:55.2, 1:54.3 and 1:55.1f.

At Hoosier Park, you can catch the undefeated 3-year-old pacing colt **WIGGLE IT JIGGLEIT** in Race 12 (post time 8:55 p.m.), one of four divisions of Indiana Sires Stakes. Wiggle It Jiggleit, who is undefeated in seven starts this season, will start from post 1 with regular driver Montrell Teague in the sulky. Defending Indiana Sires Stakes champion **FREAKY FEET PETE** will make his first start of the season in Race 11, starting from post 8.

The Saturday night Pocono card features the season debut of the now 9-year-old **HOT SHOT BLUE CHIP**, 1:51.2, who is known for his blazing speed but also a mindset that caused him to break stride. Hot Shot was retired from racing because of a knee injury in early 2014, but has been brought back by trainer Jonas Czernyson.

Hot Shot Blue Chip failed to enjoy his newfound leisure time, so Czernyson decided to bring him back for some work on the training track. “He was getting mean to the other horses he was turned out with, he was kicking at people,” Czernyson said. “I said let’s bring him in and put him back in training and see what happens. We did that in the beginning of February and slowly I got him trained down. He kept on going and kept on going.

“It was a bone in the knee, it wasn’t in the joint or anything, and everyone just said he needed more time,” Czernyson said of the injury that had sidelined Hot Shot. “But when you have an 8 year old, it’s tough to give him time. So we gave him a year off and it looks like it’s healed.”
Breeders Crown Champ Tamla Celeber A Mom

Because of colder and longer winters, the breeding season in Scandinavia generally doesn’t hit its peak until a few weeks later than North America.

One of the most notable foals of this year was born just a few minutes before midnight on Tuesday night, May 19. Tamla Celeber S, the Cantab Hall daughter who won the 2012 Breeders Crown Mare Trot in 1:55.2 at Woodbine after starting from post 10, gave birth to a colt by Muscle Hill. The colt is Tamla Celeber’s first foal and both mare and foal were reported to be very good following the birth.

With the Hambletonian winner Trixton, a world champion filly in Mission Brief, and other big winners in his first two crops, it’s no surprise that Muscle Hill’s 2015 book is full. In addition to breeding 140 mares in North America (the limit per U.S. Trotting Association rules), Muscle Hill was bred to 105 mares in nine different countries in Europe in 2014, with Tamla Celeber one of those mares. His frozen semen did its job pretty well too, with an 80 percent conception rate.


I must also share that there were a few mares on the list by sires that even my years of studying European bloodlines couldn’t help place. Do you know the pedigree of Western Winner, the sire of broodmare Gardy Burgerheide? Western Winner is by Glass Hanover, who is a son of Florida Pro-Gidget Hanover. I also had no idea about the parentage of the broodmare Nuit de Busset, who is owned by noted Swedish horseman Lufti Koligini. She is by the French sire Vittel, who is a son of the Star’s Pride stallion Florestan. (Nuit de Busset has a 3-year-old Muscle Hill colt out of the mare who is racing for trainer Roger Walmann, who conditioned Tamla Celeber.)

Earlier this year I wrote a story published in The Horseman And Fair World about Varenne’s possible influence as a broodmare sire. We’ve seen it already in world champion Mission Brief, who is out of the Varenne-sired Southwind Serena. Four European-based mares by Varenne were bred in 2014 and conceived.

The pedigrees of the Varenne daughters mated to Muscle Hill in 2014 are interesting to review. One is Laurel America, out of Armbro Voice (by Garland Lobell). A second, the German-owned Dodoma (out of Tabora, a daughter of Pine Chip-Premium Yankee), combines three of Yankeeeland Farms’ most notable maternal families as Muscle Hill is by Muscles Yankee (out of Modern Yankee) and out of Yankee Blondie, and Dodoma has Premium Yankee as her second dam. Thus both the dam of Muscles Yankee and the maternal family of Dodoma trace to the Yankeeeland foundation mare Hoot Yankee.

The other two Varenne mares which got in foal to Muscle Hill from the 2014 breeding season are Elaine (whose grand-dam is Silksyse Kash, by Nevele Diamond) and Rotation Bi.

In addition to noting Muscle Hill’s success with a Varenne mare, specifically Southwind Serena, I’ve got to point out another family that is enjoying success thanks to Muscle Hill. That’s the Yankeeeland Farms family. Although Yankeeeland closed its doors as a Standardbred breeding farm in 2006, the Yankeeeland family has a top Hambletonian contender this year in Muscle Diamond, who finished second in a New Jersey Sires Stakes last Friday night, trotting his final quarter in :26.1.

Muscle Diamond was bred by Dana Parham’s Odds On Nourrir but is now owned by Charles “Charlie” Keller III, Charles “Chaz” Keller IV, and Brett Bittle and Dan Bittle, nephews of Charlie Keller, thus all descendants of Yankeeeland Farm founder Charles “King Kong” Keller, who was a famous slugger for the New York Yankees before he turned to breeding Standardbreds. The Keller clan bought Muscle Diamond as a yearling for just $40,000 because he was the last American-born foal from Windylane Hanover, who they also campaigned and won the Hambletonian Oaks with in 2002.

Windylane was sold to Danish owner Panamera Racing (Jens Hansen) and she was one of five mares Panamera bred and had in foal to Muscle Hill. Unfortunately, all five lost their foals due to a virus.

Other mares who were scheduled to deliver foals by Muscle Hill in Europe this year include:

Affinity (Victory Dream), out of Nicegirlsdont, a granddaughter of Panty Raid;

Mystical Sunshine (Yankee Glide), a $1.7 million winner and dam of Power Play and Odds On Amethyst;

Bell Power (Pine Chip-Nara), dam of million-dollar winners Lantern Kronos and Going Kronos;

Chieftess (Credit Winner), out of Judge Judy, dam of Yonkers Trot champion Judge Joe;

Scully FBI (S.J.’s Photo-Sissy De), dam of Federal Flex;

Moonlight Kronos (Viking Kronos-Bell Power). — By Kathy Parker
Jim Lawson Wants To Bring Backstretch Mentality To Running WEG

When the new CEO of Toronto’s Woodbine Entertainment Group (WEG) was a boy, he remembers being upset if he awakened on a weekend morning and found his father had already left for the racetrack. The chief attraction for Jim Lawson was a trip to the backstretch.

“That’s where I like to hang out... I’m still that way. I came (to the Woodbine backstretch) last Sunday morning because I just enjoy it so much,” Lawson said. “There’s nothing better than being around a racetrack in the morning and seeing everyone. They love their job. They just love being around the horses, but they love being part of the community. That’s what means a lot to me.”

He admits that’s the selfish part of the reason he’s set up a satellite office in the Woodbine Thoroughbred backstretch where he hopes to be present a couple of mornings a week.

Lawson’s backstretch office is a powerful symbol in an age where racetrack executives are increasingly from the business and gaming worlds and lack the knowledge and passion for horse racing.

Lawson said it’s part of a culture shift he’s trying to lead at WEG, which already had a high concentration of people with a strong horse racing connection serving on its board of directors, yet was criticized nonetheless for not having enough horsepeople in positions of influence.

Lawson, who officially replaced outgoing CEO and president Nick Eaves on April 1, said he hopes to change that by working more with breeders and owners.

“I know that people having confidence in the future of racing and having confidence in Woodbine Entertainment is going to encourage people to continue to make further investments in the horse racing industry,” he said.

“Horse supply is a big issue, not just for us, but across North America. That’s, in part, why you’ve seen the consolidation and the short fields. Racetracks rely on their pari-mutuel commissions and... (we know) there’s a direct correlation between large horse fields and gaming. We as an industry need to do not only a better job overall, but be completely focused on attracting new people to this industry. Not only as fans, but also as people that are prepared to be part of the game.”

Whether that is with Standardbreds or Thoroughbreds is immaterial, Lawson said.

“It’s our mandate to make this industry work both for Thoroughbreds and Standardbreds. I don’t really distinguish. I just want to make this work for everyone,” he said.

Lawson comes to WEG from both a Thoroughbred and Canadian Football League (CFL) background. In 1943, his father, the late Mel Lawson, was the youngest quarterback to lead his team to a Grey Cup championship. Mel later poured his sporting passion into Thoroughbreds. He established the Jim Dandy Stable and, in 2010, was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame. Jim followed in his father’s footsteps in both football and horses. A lawyer by training, Jim was appointed chair of the CFL in 2013 and served as interim commissioner of the league from January to April of this year when he took on the CEO post at WEG.

Jim said he “needs to come up the learning curve” when it comes to Standardbreds, but fondly remembers time spent at the family’s cottage at Long Point in Lake Erie near the harness racing hotbed of Tillsonburg, Ont.

“Our best friends were from Tillsonburg and were in the harness racing business, so I used to hear about it while fishing every weekend,” Jim said. “I think their trainer was (Cam Fella’s first trainer) Doug Arthur.

“I really enjoy going to the harness races. It’s the same feeling (as Thoroughbreds). People are so passionate about it. I need to learn more. I want to learn more and that’s because I like it. It’s for the same reason. It’s about the people. I love the people in the industry. So, I’m excited about that, too.”

What can WEG do to help sustain and grow a horse racing industry that has its struggles?

“I think the easy answer — and it’s not the only answer by any means—is we have to continue to offer a world-class product in the Standardbred industry and the Thoroughbred industry,” Jim said. “We have to create that dream that if you want to breed a horse or buy a horse, that you’re doing so with a view of racing in the North America Cup, or you’re doing so with a view of running in the Queen’s Plate.

“Purse size will attract not only investment, but it will attract horses from elsewhere in North America to come up to Mohawk and come up to Woodbine.”

He has some ideas how to make that happen, but for now, let him get settled in both his backstretch and corporate offices.

Dave Briggs was the editor of The Canadian Sportsman for 18 years and is an award-winning journalist. His column appears in HarnessRacing Weekend Preview in part through the advertising support of Hanover Shoe Farms and Woodbine Entertainment Group. Any opinions expressed in this column are his own and not necessarily those of the Horseman Publishing Company and its publications or its advertisers.
Guess Whos Back Looks For NJSS Repeat

Most trainers would be happy if their prized pupil started their 3-year-old season with an impressive win, but Nik Drennan continues to describe Guess Whos Back as a work in progress.

“He was good and I was happy, just not 100 percent happy,” said Drennan in describing his colt’s win in last week’s opening leg of the New Jersey Sires Stakes at the Meadowlands. “He put in a few steps around the first turn so we’re just trying to work some things out. He has to get over his issues. We need to get him on a regular routine of racing so that we can build his confidence and get him stronger both mentally and physically.”

Guess Whos Back has been installed as the 8-5 morning line favorite in the second leg of the New Jersey Sires Stakes, co-feature on the Meadowlands 12-race Friday program. Brian Sears will drive the Muscles Yankee colt.

Guess Whos Back sold for $90,000 as a yearling at the Harrisburg Sale. His dam is a half-sister to the millionaire Breeder’s Crown champion Poof She’s Gone. He is owned by Joseph Davino in partnership with Brad Shackman, TLP Stable and J&T Silva Stables.

Drennan said he has never had a horse as good as Guess Whos Back, yet he is far from a finished product. He flashed major talent last year, winning the $100,000 New Jersey Sires Stakes final, but also frustrated Drennan by going off-stride in four starts.

“He was pretty big,” explained Drennan. “Last year he looked like a 4 year old and was racing against horses that were half his size. Now he probably looks like a 5 year old. He had to get over some aches and pains last year. It’s more mental than anything with him now. The next couple of starts will tell with him.”

Progress At The Red Mile

Work continues on the renovation of The Red Mile to accommodate Historical Racing gaming. These photos were taken May 19 and show (1) work along the homestretch and near Floral Hall (2) for parking areas; (3) construction which connects the clubhouse with the grandstand; and (4) construction near a loading dock, which is located at the site of the former race paddock, looking toward the stable area. (Horseman Photos)
Son Howard Remembers Jerry Taylor  
Howard Taylor has enjoyed many memorable moments in harness racing, but nothing in his past might compare to the emotions he will feel this weekend.

On Sunday, Harrah’s Philadelphia will present the inaugural $150,000 Jerry Taylor Invitational for older pacers, an event named in honor of Taylor’s late father. Jerome “Jerry” Taylor, a Philadelphia-based attorney who participated in harness racing for more than four decades, passed away in October 2013 at the age of 82.

“This is probably my biggest honor in harness racing,” said Taylor, who in addition to being an attorney himself has owned, trained and driven harness racing horses for more than 35 years. “Horses mean a lot to me, but they meant even more to him. He never, ever missed a race. He would go everywhere and he absolutely loved them.

“I remember friends of his would get mad at him because he would never make plans to go anywhere until after the draw came out. You couldn’t call him up to see what he was doing next weekend because he wanted to see if his horse got in to race. He knew what he was doing if the horse got in.”

Taylor developed his own passion for harness racing through his father, who bought his first horse in 1972. Jerry Taylor got into owning horses through a client who was a trainer and owned a number of successful horses over the years. Among the most notable was New Jersey Sire Stakes and Grand Circuit champion Devil’s Adversary.

He renamed a number of his horses to include “Devil” in the name because of the success of Handsome Devil a year prior to the arrival of Devil’s Adversary in 1983.

“That was his first really good horse,” Taylor said about Handsome Devil. “He thought that was lucky, so the next year he named all his horses ‘Devil.’ He changed the names of all of them.”

Jerry Taylor, who raced at Liberty Bell and Brandywine Raceway for years, was known for his sense of humor.

“He was a bit of a cutup,” Taylor said. “He had more one-liners and things to make people laugh than anybody.”

The Jerry Taylor Invitational features an eight-horse field that includes Levy Memorial Pacing Series champion Domethatagain, who is the 2-1 morning line favorite, as well as 2014 Canadian Pacing Derby winner Modern Legend and millionaires Clear Vision and Dancin Yankee.

“My father and I were very close,” said Taylor, who is probably best known for owning three-time Dan Patch Award-winning female trotter Buck I St Pat. “I worked with him my whole life because when I worked with the horses when I was younger they were his horses. When I became a lawyer, I went to work for him and then I became a partner in the firm. I spent more time with my father than anybody.

“I miss him terribly. It’s going to be an emotional day, but I’m looking forward to it. I was touched when I found out they decided to name the race after him. No one loved racing more than my father.”  

Modern Legend Heads South To Philly  
Dave Drew enjoyed his biggest thrill in harness racing last year when Modern Legend won the Canadian Pacing Derby. He hopes the horse can add to his legend with another strong campaign this season.

Modern Legend—the only horse Drew owns—races in Sunday’s inaugural $150,000 Jerry Taylor Invitational for older pacers at Harrah’s Philadelphia, where he will face a group that includes Levy Pacing Series champion Domethatagain and millionaires Clear Vision and Dancin Yankee. Modern Legend and driver James MacDonald will start from post 8.

Seven-year-old Modern Legend heads to the Taylor Invitational off a second-place finish by a nose to JK Endofanera in last Saturday’s opening round of the TVG Free For All Pacing Series at the Meadowlands. For the year, Modern Legend has posted two wins, a second and a third in four starts. He has won 21 of 67 career races and earned $916,192 for Drew, who also bred and trains the gelding.

“I feel very good about him,” said Drew, a 63 year old from Ontario. “We’ll do our best with (the post position). He’s raced very well so far this year, so I’m certainly hoping for the best on Sunday in the Jerry Taylor.

“Having a horse like him, it’s something that’s beyond anything I could have expected in racing,” he added. “It’s just been a real thrill to have this horse.”

Drew owned horses while working fulltime at General Motors in Ontario for 33 years. He began training after he retired from GM a dozen years ago.

Modern Legend is a son of Modern Art out of the mare Ruby Cam. Drew and his brother, Greg, raced Ruby Cam, winning six of 11 races including the Middlesex County Pacing Series championship in 2003.

Last season, Modern Legend and driver David Miller captured the $583,280 Canadian Pacing Derby at odds of 66-1, winning by three lengths over Foiled Again.

“That’s absolutely the highlight of racing for me,” Drew said. “To have this horse and win the Canadian Pacing Derby was just outstanding. To be a part of this horse, he’s just a fantastic animal. He did a great job. I couldn’t be prouder of him.”

Drew is not alone. His wife Nancy and daughters Lisa and Stephanie are the horse’s biggest fans.

“They probably cheer the loudest of anyone when he’s racing,” Drew said. “They’re avid fans. And they’re very supportive of what I’m doing.”

Continues on page 13
Modern Legend, who was unraced at age 2 by design, put together an eight-race win streak bridging his 3- and 4-year-old seasons during which he swept the Autumn, Snowshoe and Cam Fella series. He was injured as the result of interference in the Cam Fella final and sidelined nine months, but returned to earn $229,469 at age 5.

Last year, he banked a career-best $405,514, with five wins in 23 starts, and established his career mark of 1:47.2. He won four of his final 11 races and in the seven remaining starts lost only once by more than 1-3/4 lengths.

“He closed out last year very well,” Drew said. “I took it easy with him over the winter, kept him jogging and swimming. Swimming is part of his regular routine. I was hopeful coming into this year. He’s probably started out at least as well as I would have expected for this season. I’m very happy with that.

“He’s staked somewhat comparable to last year. His next stakes engagement is the Ben Franklin at Pocono. Hopefully he’ll fit in there and be ready to go for that.” (HRC)

Test Results Reported To Ohio Commission

At the May 19 Ohio State Racing Commission (OSRC) meeting, discussion continued regarding a new study concerning the effects of cobalt on Thoroughbred and Standardbred racehorses.

Dr. James Robertson, consulting veterinarian, updated the OSRC on the progress of the OSRC/The Ohio State University (OSU) and Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Analytical Toxicology Laboratory (ATL)’s comprehensive cobalt research study, which focuses on what cobalt does to a horse’s system and its potential effect on racehorses.

The ATL currently tests post-race samples of equine urine and blood from all seven of Ohio’s pari-mutuel racetracks and the 65 county fairs that conduct pari-mutuel wagering on harness racing, and that the ATL’s objective is to protect horses through the detection of prohibitive substances and report their findings in a timely manner to the OSRC.

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Soobeng Tan, ATL Director, submitted the 2014 ATL annual report to the OSRC, discussing testing procedures and results from 2014. Last year, Tan said, 6,764 equine urine samples, 9,222 equine blood samples and 5,163 TCO2 tests were performed, for a total of 21,149 total tests. Those tests found 112 positives (52 Thoroughbreds and 60 Standardbreds), including those taken at Ohio’s county fairs. In addition, 62 human urine samples were submitted to the lab, of which ten (16.1 percent) were positive (the most common drug being marijuana).

In the equine sector, 71 percent of the 112 positives were either flunixin (Banamine) or phenylbutazone (Bute), a trend that had continued from 2013 of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medications being the most dominant pharmacological group of drugs detected, with a total of 79 positives.

In 2014 TCO2 testing was re-initiated by the ATL, resulting in seven TCO2 positives from 5,163 blood samples drawn. From 2007 through December 2013, TCO2 testing had been performed at each of Ohio’s seven tracks prior to each race. (edited OSRC release)

Heyden Appointed To Hall Of Fame Screening Committee

U.S. Harness Writers Association president Chris Tully announced Thursday the appointment of Robert “Hollywood” Heyden to the Hall of Fame Screening Committee to serve a six-year term.

Heyden, 58, was elected to the Communicators Hall of Fame in 2012.

“This is great,” said Heyden. “I follow everything closely and forget nothing. I have a real good idea who should and who shouldn’t be a serious candidate to the Hall of Fame. But regardless, I think it is wonderful for people to be involved, to talk about it, to wonder, to speculate, to compare numbers with those that are in, etc.

“The conversation that starts and ends with the Harness Racing Hall Of Fame in Goshen is all good. I welcome anyone and everyone who has an opinion, a case, a say, anything concerning the Hall of Fame. I really do. But everyone has to remember THE most important thing—the HALL OF FAME is THE highest honor—and is ultra-special. Only the very elite merit consideration. Joe DiMaggio was voted baseball’s greatest Living Player in 1969, yet he did NOT make the Baseball Hall Of Fame his first TWO years of eligibility.” (USHWA)
Standardbred Poll
Hambeltonian Society/Breeders Crown Poll compiled by Harness Racing Communications for the week of May 19, 2015

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<tr>
<th>Horse Name</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>UTR</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
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<td>1. Bee A Magician (27)</td>
<td>5m</td>
<td>3-3-0-0</td>
<td>$133,235</td>
<td>341</td>
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<td>2. Wiggle It Jiggleit (4)</td>
<td>3pg</td>
<td>7-7-0-0</td>
<td>88,242</td>
<td>255</td>
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<td>3. All Bets Off</td>
<td>4ph</td>
<td>3-2-0-0</td>
<td>102,328</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>4. Domethatagain (1)</td>
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<td>5. Artspeak (1)</td>
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<td>6. JL Cruze</td>
<td>4tg</td>
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<td>7. JK Endofanera (1)</td>
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<td>8. Habitat</td>
<td>3tc</td>
<td>2-2-0-0</td>
<td>81,810</td>
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<td>9. Mission Brief (1)</td>
<td>3tf</td>
<td>1-1-0-0</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>10. Melady’s Monet</td>
<td>6tg</td>
<td>11-6-0-2</td>
<td>133,011</td>
<td>64</td>
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Harness Racing Leaders
Compiled by the USTA—through May 19, 2015 (week difference May 12-19).

Leading North American-Based Money-Winning Horses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Starts</th>
<th>Wins</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Show</th>
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<td>$12,500</td>
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<td>Habitat</td>
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<td>Michael's Power</td>
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<td>Not Afraid</td>
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<td>9-3-2-0</td>
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<td>JL Cruze</td>
<td>4tg</td>
<td>13-11-2-0</td>
<td>155,513</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Leading Money-Winning Drivers

- **Jason Bartlett**: 964 starts, 190-184-125, $3,172,582 (254,169)
- **Corey Callahan**: 1,371 starts, 296-210-209, $2,985,107 (222,209)
- **Daniel Dube**: 845 starts, 151-126-106, $2,734,274 (177,613)
- **Brian Sears**: 773 starts, 135-121-112, $2,467,131 (209,132)
- **George Brennan**: 905 starts, 129-116-118, $2,465,601 (189,860)
- **Aaron Merriman**: 1,600 starts, 336-234-231, $2,163,149 (159,196)
- **Tim Tetrick**: 810 starts, 143-107-113, $2,066,954 (157,018)
- **Yannick Gingras**: 625 starts, 112-108-98, $2,059,076 (253,756)
- **Matt Kakaley**: 1,003 starts, 112-108-124, $1,850,715 (222,300)
- **Brett Miller**: 930 starts, 122-153-97, $1,822,997 (136,776)

Leading Money-Winning Trainers

- **Ron Burke**: 1,426 starts, 299-230-203, $4,908,795 (555,138)
- **Rene Allard**: 440 starts, 112-68-67, $1,782,592 (229,328)
- **Jeffrey Bamond Jr.**: 318 starts, 54-51-56, $1,462,376 (129,991)
- **Gilbert Garcia-Herrera**: 605 starts, 97-85-63, $1,236,529 (102,890)
- **Virgin Morgan Jr.**: 528 starts, 130-62-74, $1,041,410 (60,640)
- **Carmen Auciello**: 692 starts, 66-66-79, $995,577 (39,484)
- **Mark Ford**: 536 starts, 51-48-75, $820,015 (36,304)
- **Julie Miller**: 251 starts, 41-51-30, $811,355 (92,983)
- **Scott Di Domenico**: 308 starts, 53-47-43, $749,003 (63,370)

Leaders Of The Week
Ranked by wins for May 12-19 from results at major North American pari-mutuel tracks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Starts</th>
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<td>Aaron Merriman</td>
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<td>George Napolitano Jr.</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>22-12-15</td>
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<td>Bruce Aldrich Jr.</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21-12-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ronnie Wrenn Jr.</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>18-15-11</td>
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<td>Allan Davis</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17-9-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Switzer Jr.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17-9-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jason Bartlett</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>15-13-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yannick Gingras</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15-6-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dave Palone</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14-5-7</td>
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<td>Jim Morrill Jr.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>14-18-6</td>
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<td>David Miller</td>
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<td>13-11-12</td>
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<td>George Brennan</td>
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<td>13-9-8</td>
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<td>Bob McClure</td>
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<td>Brian Sears</td>
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<td>Josh Sutton</td>
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<td>Daniel Dube</td>
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<td>Eric Carlson</td>
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<td>Jim Marohn Jr.</td>
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<td>Scott Zeran</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Tetrick</td>
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Leading Breeders

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<td>Britanny Farms</td>
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<td>Perretti Farms</td>
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<td>White Birch Farm</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentuckiana Farms Gen Par</td>
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<td>Seelser Farms Inc.</td>
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