

Subject Horse racing
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Overview

This bill would establish a thoroughbred racehorse residency, aftercare, and benevolence pilot program administered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA).

Under this pilot program, beginning in calendar year 2023 the MDA would accept applications and compile a voluntary registry of thoroughbred race horses that spent at least 120 days at Canterbury Park during the previous calendar year. (Canterbury Park is a class A racetrack in Shakopee that primarily conducts thoroughbred and quarter horse racing and is licensed by the Minnesota Racing Commission.)

At the end of each racing day, Canterbury Park would award \$750 to the current owner of each registered thoroughbred that started a race at Canterbury that day. After the racing season concludes, MDA would fully reimburse Canterbury Park for these awards. MDA would also award grants to certain organizations that retrain or repurpose retired registered thoroughbreds, and those that develop or deliver mental health and education services to stable workers or others in the Shakopee area.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Thoroughbred racehorse residency, aftercare, and benevolence pilot program.
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This section establishes the three-year pilot program.

Subd. 1. Definitions. Defines key terms, including “racetrack,” “racing day,” and “racing season.”

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Subd. 2. Establishment. Establishes the program to stimulate the state’s agricultural and equine industries and support the mental health and education of stable workers and their local communities.

Subd. 3. Minnesota resident thoroughbred registry. Requires MDA to compile and maintain the voluntary registry. Specifies that once registered, a racehorse’s registration does not expire. Requires owner-applicants to pay MDA a nonrefundable \$100 registration fee, which MDA must deposit in the program’s dedicated account.

Subd. 4. Residency awards. Requires the racetrack, in calendar years 2023 and 2024, to award \$750 to the current owner of each registered racehorse that entered a race at the track that day. Requires MDA to reimburse the racetrack for these awards upon application to MDA.

Subd. 5. Repurposing grants. Requires MDA to award grants to eligible organizations to retrain or repurpose retired registered thoroughbreds.

Subd. 6. Mental health and education grants. Requires MDA to award grants to organizations that develop or deliver mental health or education services to racetrack stable workers or others in the racetrack’s local community.

Subd. 7. Account; appropriation. Establishes a dedicated account for the pilot program and appropriates money in the account (i.e., the \$7 million transferred in section 2, plus interest) to MDA to issue awards and grants. Requires MDA to issue at least \$500,000 of repurposing grants each year, and a like amount of mental health and education grants. Appropriates revenue from the nonrefundable application fee to MDA to offset the agency’s costs incurred to administer the pilot program.

Subd. 8. Expiration. Sunsets the pilot program effective July 1, 2025.

2 **Transfer.**

Transfers \$7 million on a onetime basis from the general fund to the new thoroughbred racehorse pilot program account.



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