

November 2019

Sam Houston Race Park Announces Major Purse Increase

Sam Houston Race Park will kick off its 2020 live racing season on Friday, January 10, with an expanded 39-day Thoroughbred meet continuing through Saturday, March 28. Several exciting changes are in store for the upcoming live season including a substantial boost in purses thanks to legislative action earlier this year. House Bill 2463 was passed by the 86th Texas Legislature and is expected to add \$25 million annually to the Texas horse racing industry.

Sam Houston is the first of the Texas racetracks to host a live meet in 2020 and will offer overnight purses of approximately \$200,000 per day with several notable purse increases:

- Maiden races will be offered at \$36,000, compared to \$20,000 at the 2019 meet;
- Claiming race purses will be approximately 80 percent higher than the 2019 meet; and
- Allowance races will start at \$37,000, compared to \$21,000 in 2019.

The 2020 Thoroughbred stakes schedule will offer more than \$1.75 million in purses, up from \$1.1 million in 2019. The Houston Racing Festival will feature two graded stakes on Sunday, January 26: the \$300,000 Houston Ladies Classic (G3) and the \$200,000 John B. Connally Turf (G3). Midnight Bisou, who won the 2019 edition of the Ladies Classic, is currently the top distaffer in North America and a leading Horse of the Year candidate.

Additional upgrades to the 2020 Sam Houston Race Park stakes schedule include:

- The new \$200,000 Texas Turf Mile for 3-year-olds that debuts on the Houston Racing Festival undercard.
- Texas Champions Preview Day, formerly Texas Stallions Day, scheduled for



Coady Photography

Sam Houston Race Park will feature maiden purses of \$36,000 when racing returns in January.

Saturday, February 22. Two stakes have been added to the card for a total of four stakes for Texas-bred or Texas-sired horses, each with a purse of \$75,000.

- An additional Texas-bred stakes for Texas Champions Day on Saturday, March 21, for a total of seven stakes, each for a purse of \$75,000.

Frank Hopf, Sam Houston Race Park's senior director of racing operations, acknowledged the positive impact the purse increases will have for the upcoming meet.

"To be first out of the gate to begin the process of improving racing in Texas is certainly an opportunity to which we look forward," Hopf said. "Our new purse levels and stakes program have generated interest and enthusiasm about our 2020 live racing season. These are exciting times for the Tex-

as horse racing industry."

James Leatherman will serve as racing secretary for both the Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse meets at Sam Houston Race Park in 2020. The Vinton, Louisiana, native has a 29-year tenure as a racing official in Ohio, Colorado, Nebraska and New Mexico and became Retama Park's racing secretary in 2005. Leatherman was the racing secretary for the 2019 Quarter Horse season at Sam Houston Race Park and will continue to oversee the Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse meets at Retama Park as well.

The Sam Houston barn area will open on Tuesday, December 3, with training hours set to commence on Friday, December 6. The first condition book is available at equibase.com and further information about the season can be accessed at shrp.com. ■

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Texas Horsemen Applaud Improvements at Lone Star Park

The Texas Thoroughbred Association, on behalf of the owners and breeders it represents in the state, commends Lone Star Park for a number of significant improvements recently announced at the Grand Prairie track.

On November 4, Lone Star Park management and the Grand Prairie Sports Facilities and Development Corporation reached an initial agreement to share in the costs of major improvements to the track's facilities, including items requested by horsemen. The enhancements will focus on amenities for horsemen on the backside and the safety of racehorses and jockeys.

The impetus for these projects comes from the passage of House Bill 2463 during the last Texas legislative session that directs up to \$25 million annually to the state's horse racing industry through the diversion of sales taxes on horse feed, tack and other equine-related items and services.

"With the passage of this bill, we are hopeful that Texas can once again be a leader in the horse racing industry," said Mary Ruyle, executive director of the TTA. "We are excited about not only raising the bar for purses and incentives for breeding and racing Accredited Texas-breds, but also raising the bar for the health and welfare

of our racehorses. These improvements at Lone Star Park will go a long way in accomplishing that goal."

The approved enhancements include the following:

- A cooling down area for horses, located about 100 yards beyond the finish line, where horses can be bathed and cooled down just moments after unsaddling
- Video surveillance cameras in all barns
- A new state-of-the-art Duralock moveable turf rail
- Construction of round pens (as space permits) for horses to spend time outdoors
- Replacement of damaged stalls (to be done in phases)
- Landscaping, dorm renovations and beautification (to be done in phases)

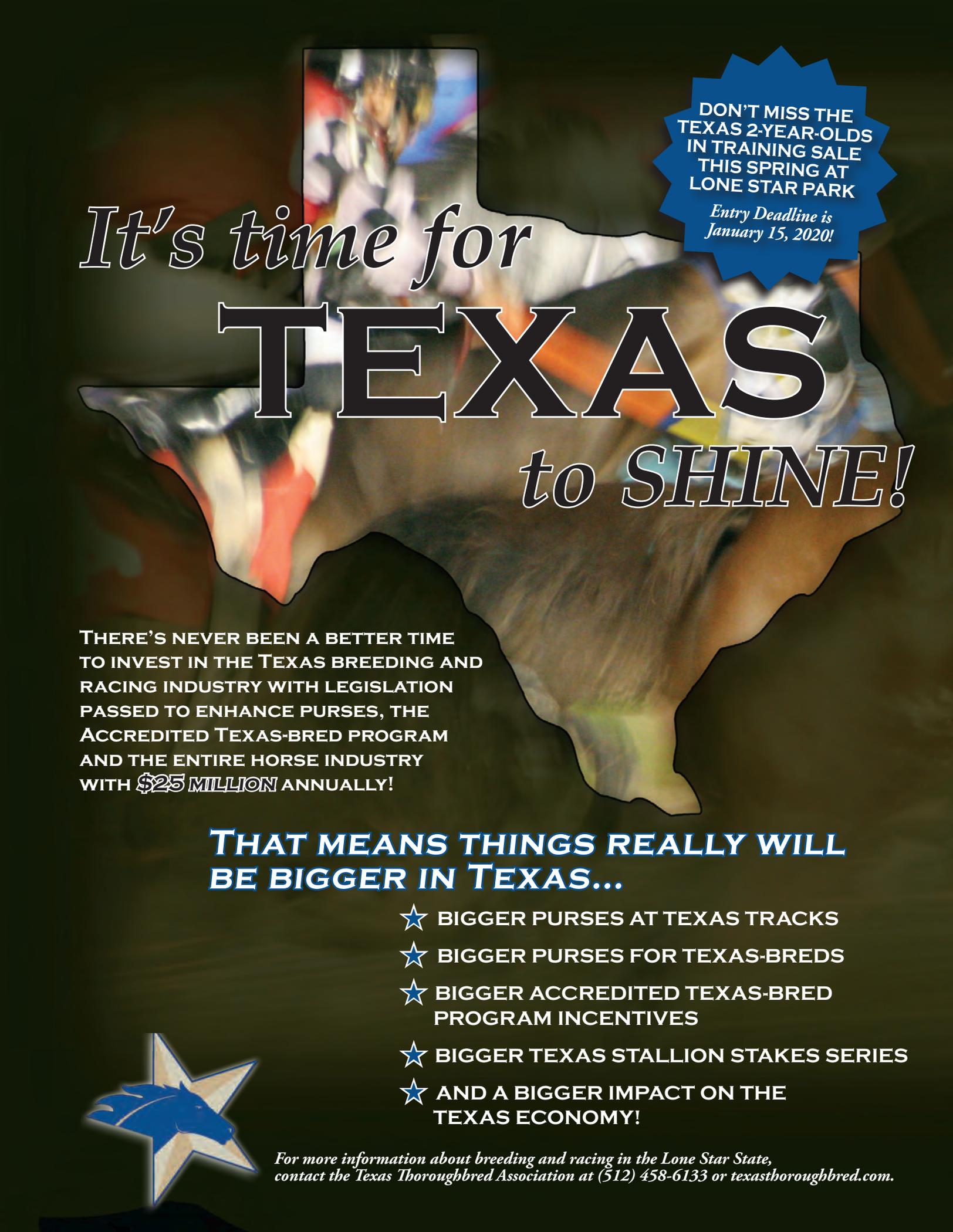
"The city of Grand Prairie has been an integral part of Lone Star Park's success from the track's inception," noted Scott Wells, president and general manager of Lone Star Park. "Their leadership has enabled us to make much-needed renovations on the frontside in areas open to the public, from the suites levels to the ground floor. This move toward improving conditions for horsemen and horses is just another example of our mutual commitment to keeping Lone Star Park a truly world-class facility."

Ron Jensen, the mayor of Grand Prairie, added: "The city of Grand Prairie and Lone Star Park management have a unique and productive partnership. Thanks to the actions of the Texas Legislature this past session, horse racing in Texas is back on an upward trajectory. We want Lone Star Park to lead the way in providing the best and safest facilities for our customers, our horsemen and their horses."

Lone Star Park's next Thoroughbred meet, which is expected to feature a boost in purses compared to last year, will commence in the spring. ■

Lone Star Park will implement major facility improvements thanks to HB 2463.





DON'T MISS THE
TEXAS 2-YEAR-OLDS
IN TRAINING SALE
THIS SPRING AT
LONE STAR PARK

*Entry Deadline is
January 15, 2020!*

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THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME
TO INVEST IN THE TEXAS BREEDING AND
RACING INDUSTRY WITH LEGISLATION
PASSED TO ENHANCE PURSES, THE
ACCREDITED TEXAS-BRED PROGRAM
AND THE ENTIRE HORSE INDUSTRY
WITH **\$25 MILLION** ANNUALLY!

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- ★ BIGGER PURSES AT TEXAS TRACKS
- ★ BIGGER PURSES FOR TEXAS-BREDS
- ★ BIGGER ACCREDITED TEXAS-BRED PROGRAM INCENTIVES
- ★ BIGGER TEXAS STALLION STAKES SERIES
- ★ AND A BIGGER IMPACT ON THE TEXAS ECONOMY!



*For more information about breeding and racing in the Lone Star State,
contact the Texas Thoroughbred Association at (512) 458-6133 or texasoroughbred.com.*

New Stallions Now Calling Texas Home

With the passage of legislation in Texas that is expected to inject \$25 million annually into the racing industry, several new stallions came calling to make the Lone Star State home.

Tyree Wolesensky's Leadem Farm in Gainesville, Texas, welcomes two new stallions for the 2020 breeding season with **Aikenite** and **Leadem in Ken**. Aikenite will stand for a fee of \$3,000, and Leadem in Ken for \$2,000 as property of Wolesensky.

Aikenite, who stood last season at the famed Calumet Farm in Kentucky, brings a race record that includes a pair of Grade 2 wins in the Commonwealth Stakes and the Churchill Downs Stakes. The son of Yes It's True banked \$875,385 in 24 starts while also earning placings in six other graded stakes, three of them at the Grade 1 level.

Through mid-November, Aikenite has sired the earners of more than \$1.2 million with four stakes horses, including multiple graded stakes placed Pony Up. Aikenite is out of a Saint Ballado mare.

The versatile Leadem in Ken will stand his first season at stud after a racing career that included 15 wins in 40 starts and earnings of \$445,203. A winner going long and short and on the dirt and turf, the son of Sky Mesa earned his first stakes win at age 4 and then rounded out his resume with stakes wins at 8 and 9, including in his final career start in the Stonerside Sprint Stakes this past January at Sam Houston Race Park.

Bred by Ken and Sarah Ramsey, Leadem in Ken is out of the Catienus mare Last Kitten, whose dam Kitten's First produced multiple Grade 1 winners Precious Kitten and Kitten's Joy, the latter being a champion grass horse and leading sire.

Tyree and Bob Wolesensky said they are excited about the opportunity to be a part of the Texas breeding and racing industry and to stand two very versatile and durable stallions who had successful racing careers that spanned several seasons.

Another Texas stallion fresh off the track is **Cu Rahy**, who joins Texas Bling on the

roster at HFT Racing Stables in Aledo. The son of Curlin retired with five wins from 28 starts with earnings of \$122,794 and a pair of stakes placings.

Cu Rahy is out of the Maryland champion Richetta, a four-time stakes winner who also produced Preakness Stakes (G1) runner Concealed Identity, also a winner of four stakes with earnings of more than \$460,000. Cu Rahy will stand for a \$1,500 fee.

ry on the synthetic surface at Arlington Park.

As good as his racing career was, it likely could have been even better if not for a knee fracture he sustained in the field as a yearling. Keep Up was confined to a stall for more than six months during his recovery and was not expected to ever make the races. He eventually did and debuted late in his 3-year-old year and then blossomed with his stakes wins coming at ages 5 and 6.



Aikenite (pictured) joins Leadem in Ken as new stallions standing at Leadem Farm in Gainesville.

Eureka Thoroughbred Farm in Fredericksburg has announced the addition of **Keep Up** for the 2020 breeding season. The multiple stakes-winning son of Unbridled's Song will stand for a \$2,000 fee with substantial discounts for mares that are foaling in Texas. Keep Up will stand as property of Mike Grossman, who also owns Eureka and stands stallions Mr. Besilu, Expect a Lot and The Hunk at the farm.

Keep Up won seven of his 18 career starts with two stakes victories, including the Grade 3 River City Handicap on the Churchill Downs turf course. An earner of \$300,545, Keep Up had a total of five wins on the grass, along with a maiden-breaking win at Gulfstream Park on the dirt and an allowance victo-

ry on the synthetic surface at Arlington Park. Keep Up's dam, the Deputy Minister mare Keeper Hill, earned more than \$1.6 million on the track with three Grade 1 victories, including the Kentucky Oaks.

From 26 starters to date, Keep Up is represented by three stakes horses, including In a Fog, a two-time stakes-placed earner of nearly \$140,000, and Ucantkeepup, a stakes-placed earner of almost \$125,000.

In other stallion news, **Revolving**, a winning son of A.P. Indy, has relocated within Texas and will now stand at Double S Thoroughbreds in Poynor. One of Texas' leading young sires with four crops to race, Revolving is out of Grade 1 winner Circle of Life and is a half brother to Grade 1 winner Circular Quay. ■

TEXAS IS TRENDING UP!

WITH \$25 MILLION ANNUALLY BEING INJECTED INTO THE TEXAS RACING INDUSTRY, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO BUY AND SELL AT THE TEXAS 2-YEAR-OLDS IN TRAINING AND HORSES OF RACING AGE SALE!

Last year's sale featured an average price of more than \$23,000!
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AUCTION: APRIL 3, 2020

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TTA SALES

For more information, go to www.ttasales.com
or call Tim Boyce at (972) 523-0332 or the Texas
Thoroughbred Association office at (512) 458-6133.

SAVE THE DATE – TTA AWARDS BANQUET SET FOR MARCH 21 AT SAM HOUSTON

The TTA's annual awards banquet will be held Saturday, March 21, at Sam Houston Race Park. With all the good things going in Texas racing, we anticipate increased attendance and encourage all members to join us for a night to honor the top Texas-breds of 2019 and reconnect with other owners and breeders.

The banquet will be held in conjunction with Texas Champions Day featuring increased purses with seven Texas-bred stakes at \$75,000 apiece. It should be a great event with some exciting races!

Look for more details about the banquet on the TTA website soon.

AMBER DOEGE JOINS TTA AS ACCREDITATION MANAGER AND RACING COORDINATOR

The Texas Thoroughbred Association is pleased to announce the hiring of Amber Doege as accreditation manager and racing coordinator. Doege is replacing Jennifer Gibbs, who is retiring later this year after 20 years of service at the Lone Star State's largest breed organization.

Doege, whose father, Glenn, was a long-time trainer based in Texas, brings nearly 20 years of experience in the industry. Her previous positions in horse racing include assistant racing secretary, stakes coordinator, horse identifier, paddock judge, placing judge and claims clerk at tracks around the region such as Retama Park, Lone Star Park, Delta Downs and Fair Grounds. She earned a bachelor's degree at Texas State University with a major in animal science.

Her responsibilities will cover the Accredited Texas-bred program, Clarence Scharbauer Jr. Texas Stallion Stakes and Texas Thoroughbred Futurity, as well as the two Thoroughbred sales held jointly by the TTA and Lone Star Park.

"I'm very excited to be joining the TTA team," Doege said. "I know that I have big shoes to fill but Jennifer has spared no effort to make sure this transition is smooth."

"I know I speak for countless TTA members in saying that we will miss the knowledge and passion that Jennifer brought to the position for many years, but we are also thrilled to welcome Amber to the team," said Mary Ruyle, executive director of the TTA. "She brings a wide range of experience in the industry, and she'll do a great job serving our membership, especially now with an increase in purses and Accredited Texas-bred program funds thanks to the recent passage of legislation."

TTA ONLINE STALLION SEASON AUCTION NOW OPEN

The TTA Online Stallion Season Auction is now open. Thanks to the generosity of stallion owners across the region, you have the opportunity to purchase 2020 breeding seasons while at the same time helping the TTA's Political Action Committee, General Fund, Texas Thoroughbred Educational Fund or Paddock Foundation. The second round of bidding opens December 2 and runs through December 20.

If you have a stallion season you would like to donate, contact Mary Ruyle at (512) 458-6133 or email maryr@texasthoroughbred.com.

The stallion auction can be viewed at texasthoroughbred.com.

TEXAS 2-YEAR-OLDS IN TRAINING SALE SET FOR APRIL 3

The Texas 2-Year-Olds in Training and Horses of Racing Age Sale will be held April 3, 2020, at Lone Star Park. The date was originally set for March 31 but has been pushed back to better fit with the national sales schedule and with the start of the Lone Star Park Thoroughbred meet. The breeze show will be held April 1. Presented by the Texas Thoroughbred Association and Lone Star Park, the sale will also include a horses of racing age session.

"We've already seen some added interest from consignors and potential buyers now that purses are on the upswing in Texas thanks to recent legislation," said Tim Boyce, sales director. "Sam Houston Race Park has announced a lucrative purse structure for their upcoming meet, and Lone Star Park is also expected to have larger purses this year. I expect there to be added demand for the Texas-breds in this sale now that buyers will have a chance to run for some nice money this summer, including the \$100,000-estimated Texas Thoroughbred Futurity in two divisions for sale grads."

The entry deadline for the sale is January 15, 2020.

For more information and an entry form, go to ttasales.com.



Happy Thanksgiving from the TTA

Deadline Reminders

Horsemen are reminded of the following deadlines:

December 31 is the deadline for accrediting yearlings (foals of 2018) for \$200. The fee to accredit foals of 2018 after December 31 is \$750 (non TTA-members add \$50).

This is the time of year to check the accreditation status of your mares in foal. If you are not certain if a mare is accredited, please check with the TTA office before she has a 2020 foal in Texas. If a mare is not accredited when she has a foal, the only way a mare owner will receive Accredited Texas-bred breeder awards on that foal is to pay the supplemental mare accreditation fee of \$150 during the foal's weanling year. If you accredit a mare before she foals, the fee is \$75.

December 31 is the deadline to nominate eligible foals of 2019 to the Texas Stallion Stakes Series for \$100 and to nominate eligible foals of 2018 to the Texas Stallion Stakes Series for \$500.

December 31 is also the deadline to nominate foals of 2018 that are graduates of either the 2018 or the 2019 Texas Summer Yearling and Mixed Sale; that are consigned to and pass through the ring at the 2020 Texas 2-Year-Olds in Training Sale; and Accredited Texas-bred foals of 2019 owned by original berth holders to the 2020 Texas Thoroughbred Futurity (\$100,000 estimated per division).

December 31 is also the deadline to nominate accredited stallions that will stand in Texas in 2020 to the Texas Stallion Stakes for the 2020 breeding season.

All forms are available on the TTA website at texasthoroughbred.com. Please call the TTA office with any questions at (512) 458-6133.

THE GRASS IS GETTING GREENER IN TEXAS!

With an additional \$25 million expected to be pumped into Texas racing and breeding each year, now is the perfect time to bring an in-foal broodmare in from out of state and then breed her back to one of the many top stallions standing in the Lone Star State. All you need to do is have her accredited and in the state before she foals, and you can take advantage of the new funds!

For more information, call the TTA office at 512-458-6133 or go to texasthoroughbred.com.

