

New York Breeders Have Reason To Celebrate 2013

LATHAM, N.Y.—New York breeders and owners have plenty to celebrate when they look back on 2013. State-bred horses excelled in national competition and topped the yearling sales. The state continued to attract exciting new stallion prospects and the state government guaranteed supplemental purse revenue, both signaling the future strength of racing in the Empire State.

On the track, New York-breds made a strong impression this year, led by Hambletonian champion Royalty For Life. This son of RC Royalty also scored in the Stanley Dancer, Zweig Memorial and Canadian Trotting Classic on his way to eclipsing \$1.6 million in career earnings.

A Breeders Crown title went home with Artiscape daughter Shelliscape when she scored in the most prestigious event for aged mare pacers on her way to more than \$850,000 in lifetime earnings. In addition, New York Sire Stakes Champion He's Watching made sure everyone will be watching this undefeated colt when he returns next year after equaling a 1:52.2 world record for 2-year-old pacing colts on a half-mile track in his last of eight perfect starts in 2013. This son of American Ideal etched his name into the record books at Yonkers Raceway during the Night of Champions.

But New York also found success in the breeding shed. A total of 1,434 mares were bred this year, up slightly from 2012, to 60 registered stallions. New York-eligible yearlings led all states with the highest average price at both of the largest select yearling sales in the U.S., boasting a vigorous \$48,097 average at the Lexington Selected sale and \$39,664 in Harrisburg.

Nationally, three of the top five sires ranked by earnings of 2-year-old pacers were from New York (Art Major, American Ideal, Bettor's Delight) and three New York stallions were in the top ten list of 3-year-earnings (Credit Winner, RC Royalty, Crazy). On the list of national money winning sires of 2013, Bettor's Delight and Art Major ranked first and third, respectively, among pacers and Credit Winner and Conway Hall were fourth and ninth among all trotters.

The state also attracted several new stallions for the 2014 breeding season, notably Breeders Crown Champion and winner of \$1.6 million, Betterthancheddar. Three trotting stallions will be relocating from other breeding programs, including Muscles Yankee, a proven sire whose progeny earned \$5.7 million this year, is moving from Pennsylvania. He will be joined by Lucky Chucky, whose first crop of New York-eligible yearlings sold well this fall and is returning to the state after one year in Pennsylvania, and Muscle Mass, whose offspring earned \$3 million this year and will be coming from Ontario. Pacer Rockincam will be retiring from the track after competing in the top open ranks in the country and collecting nearly \$800,000 in career earnings.

With more than 200 Standardbred breeding farms in the state contributing to New York's agricultural economy, the state also made the move this year to guaranteed revenue from VLTs at the racetracks in the recently passed casino amendment to the state constitution. This means that purses for the New York Sire Stakes program and overnight purses will be preserved for the future with no less than current VLT contributions, providing security for breeders and horsemen.

In addition, Harness Horse Breeders of New York State is also excited to be working on a project with partners to bring a retirement and rehabilitation program for racehorses to New York in the near future. This program will help horse owners and breeders provide care and services for horses that are looking to retire or those transitioning to another career.

For more information on breeding and racing in New York State, or to pre-order a 2014 Stallion Directory, contact Harness Horse Breeders at 518-785-5858 or email info@hbnys.org.

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