

ASMUSSEN FINED \$10,000; NEW YORK COMMISSION FINDS FOUR VIOLATIONS FROM PETA VIDEO

by [Natalie Voss](#)

Courtesy PaulickReport.com



Steve Asmussen

Over a year and a half after the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals released a controversial video accusing top trainer Steve Asmussen and his employees of mistreating horses, the New York State Gaming Commission released a report on the incident on Monday afternoon.

Of 14 alleged violations the animal rights group detailed in three letters to the commission dated between March and May of last year, the commission sustained four points, and fined Asmussen \$10,000. The report determined that Asmussen had indeed administered synthetic thyroxine, a hormone produced by the thyroid gland, to horses in his care. The report further determined that the administration was not medically necessary, and that it had occurred within 48 hours of a race, resulting in the fine.

According to the commission's ruling, Asmussen will be ineligible to race if the fine is not paid by Dec. 8. If the trainer does not pony up by Dec. 23, he could incur interest or late charges, in addition to other collection charges.

The fourth allegation the commission sustained as a result of the evidence gathered by PETA was that veterinarian Dr. Joseph F. Migliacci allowed partially-completed furosemide eligibility forms to be finished by third parties in his presence. This is not considered a commission violation.

The remaining, more serious points were deemed unfounded by the commission. The commission noted that some of the accusations by PETA were not violations of any regulation.

A copy of the ruling against Asmussen is available [here](#).

In addition to the findings against Asmussen and his veterinarian, the commission drafted a set of rule changes with assistance from the Association of Racing Commissioners International to address concerns raised from PETA's letters.

The commission recommended that any horses with visible external bleeding as a result of exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage (EIPH) should go on the veterinarian's list, and subsequent owners of the horse should be informed of any history of significant episodes of EIPH. Further, horses with a history of EIPH episodes should undergo periodic endoscopic exams.

As to thyroxine, the commission recommended a rule that would prohibit any drugs impacting metabolism (including thyroxine) to be prohibited within 30 days of racing, and possession of these drugs would be "restricted" at the track. Additional rule recommendations suggested that veterinarians should only renew prescriptions based on "their own medical judgment," and that they may not administer drugs to horses without a diagnosed medical disorder or as an accepted preventative measure. Trainers would be required to keep an administration log of all dispensed medications. Finally, an additional drafted rule states that "no drug or substance that could abnormally affect a horse administered unless in course of reasonable, good-faith care."

"We understand at the staff level, that several of these recommendations may be controversial to the potentially regulated parties. The staff requests that the commission allow the nine recommendations to be released to allow comment in advance of rulemaking consideration," said Robert Williams, acting executive director at the commission.

Williams, reading from a statement, noted that the investigation took so long to complete because the commission had to wade through interviews with dozens of people, more than seven hours of video, and thousands of pages of material. Part of the delay was condensing the information into a digestible, 176-page report, also released Monday.

The recommended rules are now open to public comment in advance of further consideration. It is expected that commissioners will discuss the report and potential new rules at their next meeting, which is anticipated to take place some time in December.

Find a full copy of the New York State Gaming Commission report on the Asmussen case [here](#).