

# Robust New York-Bred Program Continues to Grow

By **John Scheinman**  
NYRA.com



Peachtree Stable's Amberjack's attempt to sweep the Big Apple Triple series Wednesday in the \$150,000 Albany for New York-bred 3-year-olds spotlights the enormous rise in success of the state's breeding program in recent years.

Amberjack will earn his connections a \$250,000 bonus if he wins the 1 1/8-mile Albany, having already captured the Mike Lee on June 1 at Belmont Park and the New York Derby on July 20 at Finger Lakes.

While Amberjack is a symbol of New York thoroughbred breeding success, the robust performance of the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga New York Bred Preferred Yearling Sale on August 10-11 tells a more tangible story, as does the rise in purses for state-bred races at the New York Racing Association Inc. (NYRA) tracks.

"We set records with this sale," said Jeff Cannizzo, executive director of the New York Thoroughbred Breeders. "This year's sale included a catalogue that was not only of quality in terms of pedigrees, but the physical component that went along with that was improved. Buyers commented all weekend, how visually they noticed an upgrade in physical presentation for the yearlings in this sale."

A total of 196 horses sold for \$14.2 million at the sale, up from 138 horses for \$8.6 million in 2012. The average price rose to \$72,480, up from \$62,551. Only 124 horses were sold at the sale in 2011.

The sales topper went for a record \$430,000 and 43 yearlings sold for in excess of \$100,000.

Amberjack is a graduate of the 2011 Preferred Yearling Sale and went for \$185,000.

Driving the bullish run at the sale is a rise in purses NYRA announced in 2011 and instituted last year, said Cannizzo and P.J. Campo, vice president and director of racing for NYRA.

"As of Monday, we've run 402 races and given away \$22.5 million; last year, we ran about 584 New York-bred races and gave away about \$34 million - it's a very strong program," Campo said. "You see the sales are up two years in a row, tremendously. The fact that you've got Amberjack going for the sweep, I think you have a better quality of horses, and it's exciting to see the program growing."

The New York State Equine Industries Economic Impact Study conducted by the Innovation Group in 2012 found the impact of equine activities in the state reached \$4.2 billion with 33,000 full-time equivalent jobs. Racing's direct impact on the state economy was \$965.5 million, with 13,700 different horse owners in racing.

"The key driver is purse structure, hands down," Cannizzo said. "When horses can run for the purse money that's available here in New York, it drives everything. New York-breds are running for lucrative purses, and the demand for them has gone up with that."

Campo, who has worked at NYRA for the past 16 years, is excited about the future.

"When you have better purse money, it drives people to breed a better horse," he said. "Purses are up, sales are up, breeding is going in the right direction - positive, positive, positive."