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Hagyard Equine Medical Institute Congratulates 2020 “Hagyard Challenge Series” Leading Rider

Lexington, KY: Hagyard Equine Medical Institute wishes to congratulate Celso Ariani and his mount, Ukulman De La Nutria on their victory in the \$50,000 Betsy Grand Prix, earning the 2020 Leading Rider award.

On August 4, 2020 Kentucky Horse Shows, LLC and US Equestrian announced the cancellation of Bluegrass Festival (Aug. 11-16), KHJA (Aug. 19-23), and USEF Junior Hunter National Championship – East Coast (Aug. 23-24) scheduled to take place at the Kentucky Horse Park. The Bluegrass Festival and KHJA were to be part of the 2020 Hagyard Challenge Series Events. With the changes, the events comprising The Series were as follows:

- > Kentucky Summer Horse Show – July 23rd
- > Kentucky Summer Classic – July 30th
- > Kentucky National Horse Show/The Betsy Grand Prix – September 20th

Because The Series was further reduced to three events from its usual seven, Hagyard announced that the “Leading Rider Award” would be reduced, proportionately, to \$15,000. Hagyard had announced a similar reduction in the prize when The Series was originally reduced from seven to five events.

“We’re thankful for everyone’s dedication,” said Elise Jackson, Tour Experience & Event Coordinator for Hagyard. “The competitors were flexible and brought their best to the events that are able to be held, and we believed they should be rewarded for Going the Distance.”

In the Hagyard Challenge Series, competitors Celso Ariani, riding Ukulman De La Nutria took the championship in the \$50,000 Grand Prix, earning him enough points to become the 2020 Leading Rider. Just behind him, Reserve went to David O’Brien riding Ideal, and third place to Jessica Mendoza riding Casanova.

Previously, Hagyard announced that the theme for the 2020 event would be *Going the Distance*. “We have worked with the Kentucky Horse Park to go the extra mile this year and find ways to put on the event in spite of some challenges,” Jackson had explained. “These new changes weren’t going to deter us.”

One other group has also been willing to “Go the Distance” this year, the Hagyard Challenge Series sponsors. In a year marked by changes an economic uncertainty, title sponsor MWI Animal Health, Audi of Lexington, Central Kentucky Ag Credit and Hagyard Pharmacy continued to honor their commitment.

“As we’ve mentioned before, the Leading Rider Award money is tied to our sponsors,” said Jackson. “This year, it would have been easy – and very understandable – if they had dropped out. We can’t thank them enough.”

About Hagyard Equine Medical Institute: *With more than 50 veterinarians and 144 years behind it, Hagyard Equine Medical Institute is the oldest and one of the largest private equine veterinary practices in the world. Based in Lexington, Kentucky, the facility, located across the street from the Kentucky Horse Park, boasts superior ambulatory services, the world-renowned Davidson Surgery Center, McGee Medicine and Fertility Centers, Hagyard Laboratory, Hagyard Sports Medicine & Podiatry Center, and hyperbaric medicine facilities. For more information, visit hagyard.com.*

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