



Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission investigating positive greyhound drug tests

By Katie Wiedemann, KCRG-TV9

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DUBUQUE — The Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission is looking into positive drug tests for dogs from two different kennels.

The greyhounds' owners are suspended while commissioners investigate positive tests for a potentially performance-enhancing drug.

According to test results from Iowa State University, Greyhound dogs from two different kennels in Iowa tested positive for ractopamine. Ractopamine is commonly used on farm animals to increase muscle and decrease body fat, but can also be used to increase the performance of racing dogs.

The dogs come from two different kennels: Stidham Racing in Pottawattamie County and Robert Hardison Kennel in Monona County.

Brian Ohorilko, administrator of the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, said it was possible the drug inadvertently entered the dogs' system. One explanation of a positive test is that a dog ate a product called 4-D meat, he

said.

The commission planned to investigate hearings in Dubuque on Thursday, but postponed the hearings until Monday because the kennel owners hired independent testing on the dogs that tested positive. Those results won't be complete until Monday.

A dog at one of the two kennels died Wednesday night. It was not one of the dogs that initially tested positive for the drug, but because that dog lived at one of the kennels under investigation, Ohorilko said the commission cannot rule out the possibility of ractopamine exposure as a cause of death.

Investigators are waiting for the results of a necropsy to determine how the dog died.

Cary Theil, President of Grey2kUSA, a non-profit organization based out of Massachusetts opposes greyhound racing for humane reasons. Theil said ractopamine can cause serious heart problems and even death in dogs.

"This is a serious case. It's a black eye for this industry. It is further proof that this dog racing experiment in Dubuque is a failure," Theil said.

Racing in Dubuque was allowed to continue independently after Governor Branstad [signed a bill last year](#) allowing the casinos in Council Bluffs and Dubuque to stop hosting the races.

The commission said all greyhounds are subject to random drug testing, but this is the first time Iowa dogs have had a positive test for ractopamine.