

LAZARUS – DOWNUNDER SEASON 2019/20

Club Menangle wishes to brief the harness racing industry on the disappointing first season down-under for the Champ, Lazarus.

Lazarus had an enormous first season at stud in North America at Deo Volente Farms. Lazarus was able to obtain an 80% “in foal” outcome, with 136 mares bred and 109 positives.

On commencing his stud season down-under, he arrived from North America in the picture of health and ready to commence his first season at stud in the Southern Hemisphere.

The initial examination of his fertility under the supervision of the veterinary staff at Charles Sturt University and Dr Angus McKinnon, Goulburn Valley Equine Hospital, indicated his semen was well above average and did not indicate anything untoward.

Yirribee Stud were delighted with his willingness to breed and his semen production. During the early part of the season his positive returns were 86%.

Into the season, reports of “in foal” positives tapered off and subsequently became more problematic.

As the return of negatives increased, Dr McKinnon arranged for further testing at the University of Sydney and the University of Newcastle.

Following consultation with Club Menangle’s North American owners, Taylor Made Stallions, a further independent review of the circumstances was undertaken by Dr Andrew Grierson, Woodlands Stud NZ.

Dr McKinnon provided a report to Club Menangle on 31 January 2020 advising that what appears to have occurred were changes to spermatogenesis (the production of mature sperm), associated with travel. Acute thermal stress from a fever, scrotal insulation or trauma are well-documented associations with subfertility. This subfertility is not a permanent condition. A regime will be in place to monitor his temperature at every point on his way to quarantine, on arrival in Australia, travel to Yirribee and every day while in Australia to minimise the risk of this occurring again.

Both Dr McKinnon and Dr Grierson have indicated that prior to his return trip to North America, Lazarus appeared to be on the improve, based on morphological changes.

This has been supported by initial testing by Dr Charles Scoggin of Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital, Lexington, upon the return of Lazarus to the United States. After analysing the results Dr Scoggin stated; “Given the past circumstances surrounding this stallion, his sperm quality has rebounded and improved from comparative tests done in December 2019. He appears poised to have another successful Northern Hemisphere season. From what I’ve seen thus far, I would have no issue using this semen to breed mares”.

During the North American breeding season, Club Menangle and Taylor Made Stallions will closely monitor Lazarus’ North American breeding results.

While Club Menangle would have wished to provide an earlier update to the industry, the existence of veterinary evidence on which to base any public advice, was unavailable.