

County Fair Racing In Arizona

County Fair racing has been conducted in Arizona since 1949 when racing was conducted at the State Fairgrounds in Phoenix. In 1950 County Fair racing expanded to Graham County, Navajo County, Pima County and Yavapai County in addition to racing at the State Fairgrounds. At this time, 15 of Arizona's counties are awarded county fair racing dates. Ten county fairs conduct racing at their own facilities. Two of those county fair associations conduct commercial racing meetings in addition to the county fair racing days. Five counties race their Commission-approved race days at commercial facilities.

A.R.S. § 5-101 provides the following definitions relating to County Fair Racing:

"County fair facility" means any place, enclosure or track constructed in accordance with a permit issued by the Commission for the purpose of running county fair horse racing dates as well as any commercial dates for horse racing that may be awarded by the Commission in reference to such a location.

"County fair racing association" means an association duly authorized by the board of supervisors to conduct a county fair racing meeting for the benefit of the county.

A.R.S. § 5-111(E) states that:

"Any county fair racing association may apply to the commission for one racing meeting each year and the commission shall set the number of days and dates of such meetings. A racing meeting conducted under this subsection shall be operated in such a manner that all profits accrue to the county fair racing association, and the county fair racing association may deduct from the pari-mutuel pool the same amount as prescribed in subsection C of this section. All county fair racing meetings, whether conducted by county fair racing associations under the provisions of this subsection or by an individual, corporation or association other than a county fair racing association, are exempt from the payment to the state of the percentage of the pari-mutuel pool prescribed by subsection D of this section and are also exempt from the provisions of § 5-111.01.

County Fair Racing is supported by two fund sources:

County Fair Racing. These appropriated funds, used for the administration of county fair racing, are generated by 9% of all pari-mutuel receipts, license fees, and State unclaimed property up to \$450,000 annually.

County Fair Racing Betterment. These non-appropriated funds provide purse subsidy and betterment grants to every eligible county fair association for conducting county fair racing meetings. The fund receives 22% of all pari-mutuel receipts, license fees, and State unclaimed property up to \$1.2 million annually.

County Fairs are divided into three groups for the purpose of funding. Historically, the Department has worked with the Arizona Counties Racing Association, Inc. to establish the amount of funds distributed for the promotion and betterment of county fair racing meetings per A.R.S. § 5-113(B). Funds are normally distributed 45 days prior to the racing meeting.

Class I. Any organization, which is recognized by the Board of Supervisors in that county to operate an Arizona Department of Racing supervised County Fair Horse Race Meeting at a track maintained by that organization.

Class II. Any organization, which is recognized by the Board of Supervisors in that county to operate an Arizona Department of Racing supervised County Fair Race Meeting and a commercial meeting at a track maintained by that organization. This Class receives reduced funding for Betterment.

Class III. Any organization having contracts, leases or any other non-operating agreements through which Arizona Department of Racing supervised County Fair Horse Race Meets are run at tracks not maintained by that organization. This Class does not receive any funding. These county fair associations conduct their race dates at Turf Paradise or Yavapai Downs.