



For Immediate Release: Alberta Breeders' Fall Classic to Celebrate 30th Running

August 31, 2026

EDMONTON, AB — The Alberta Breeders' Fall Classic will celebrate its 30th running on Saturday, September 12, 2026, at Century Mile Racetrack and Casino, continuing a tradition that has showcased the very best of Alberta-bred Thoroughbreds for nearly three decades.

Seven races offering a total of \$420,000 in purses will put Alberta-bred Thoroughbreds in the spotlight while recognizing the breeders, owners, trainers and horsepeople whose investment and dedication sustain Alberta's Thoroughbred breeding and racing industry.

The milestone race day will also expand its celebration of Alberta with the inaugural Alberta Heritage Series Showcase and an Alberta Made Market featuring more than 30 local businesses, bringing Alberta agriculture, horse racing and local enterprise together.

Thirty Runnings of Celebrating the Alberta-Bred

The Alberta Breeders' Fall Classic was created with a straightforward purpose: to provide a major race day devoted to celebrating and promoting the Alberta-bred Thoroughbred.

The idea originated with four Alberta racing leaders — Les Butler, Race Manager at Northlands; Jim Thompson, President of the CTHS; John Fowlis, Race Manager at Stampede Park; and Rennie Gellner, General Manager of the CTHS Alberta Division.

Originally known as the Alberta Fall Classic, the inaugural event was held September 27, 1997, at Northlands Park in Edmonton, with seven stakes races for Alberta-breds offering more than \$300,000 in purses.

Thirty runnings later, the tradition continues at Century Mile, providing Alberta-bred Thoroughbreds with a major stage of their own and demonstrating the quality of horses bred and raised in this province.

Remembering Founder Rennie Gellner

This year's milestone carries additional significance following the passing of Rennie Gellner on July 31, 2026, at the age of 90.

One of the four key people behind the creation of the Fall Classic, Rennie served as General Manager of the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society (Alberta Division) for almost 20 years, from 1988 through 2007. Throughout his career, he worked to strengthen Alberta's Thoroughbred industry and create opportunities for breeders and owners.

Rennie understood that a strong racing industry depended upon a strong breeding industry and that opportunities needed to exist for operations of every size. In a 2000 interview, he described one of his goals as being *"to try and make things a little better for the small breeder."* The Fall Classic

helped put that philosophy into action by creating a high-profile race day specifically for Alberta-bred Thoroughbreds.

Rennie entered the Thoroughbred industry with Canadiana Farms in 1971 and later managed Elmbrook Farms near Edmonton before becoming CTHS Alberta General Manager in 1988. His contributions were recognized with the Lloyd and Mary Wilson Special Appreciation Award in 1999 and the Ken Cohoe Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006, making him the only person in the history of the Alberta Thoroughbred industry awards to receive both honours.

Thirty runnings after Rennie and his colleagues established the Fall Classic, every Alberta-bred entering the paddock on Fall Classic day remains part of the tradition they set out to create.

Alberta Heritage Series: Where Alberta-Bred Meets Alberta-Made

The Alberta-bred Thoroughbred's story begins on an Alberta farm, supporting an industry that Horse Racing Alberta's most recent comprehensive economic impact study estimated generated \$312 million in provincial economic activity and 1,506 full-time-equivalent jobs in 2019.

For its 30th running, the Fall Classic will celebrate those agricultural roots with the launch of the Alberta Heritage Series, bringing horse racing, Alberta-made whisky and local enterprise together. Bridgeland Distillery, Burwood Distillery and GrainHenge Whisky will showcase premium whiskies, with guests selecting one for a planned limited-edition Heritage Series release celebrating Alberta grain, craftsmanship and Thoroughbred heritage.

An Alberta Made Market featuring more than 30 local businesses will round out the event, making the 30th Fall Classic a showcase of what Alberta grows, produces, creates — and races.

A Tradition Built in Alberta

The vision behind the first Alberta Fall Classic continues 30 runnings later, celebrating the Alberta-bred Thoroughbred and the people who breed, raise, own and race them. On September 12, another generation of Alberta-breds will step onto the track at Century Mile Racetrack and Casino and become part of that tradition.

Everything World Class Begins Somewhere Local.

Media Contact:

Lindsay J. Ward
Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society (Alberta Division)
403-229-3609
wardlind@cthsalta.com
www.cthsalta.com