



HORSE RACING
IRELAND

26th October 2018

Mr Pat Deering, TD
Chairman
Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Dear Chairman

Thank you for your continued interest in our industry and the impact Brexit will potentially have on it.

As has already been recognised by this Committee, Brexit will have very serious implications for the Irish thoroughbred and racing industry.

Irish racing and breeding is heavily dependent on Britain as our main market is the UK and the sector is very exposed in the event of a 'no deal' or 'hard Brexit'.

The racing industries in Ireland and Britain operate as one, and together with France we have historically had a Tripartite Agreement between the respective Departments of Agriculture to facilitate free movement of thoroughbred horses between the three countries.

This Tripartite Agreement (TPA*) between Ireland, Britain and France, facilitates 27,000 movements annually between the three countries for racing, breeding and sales purposes. It is vital that this is retained.

Between them, the Irish, British and French thoroughbred racing industries are highly interconnected and worth €9.5 billion to the European economy.

A report completed by Deloitte last year, found that racing and breeding contributes €1.84bn to the Irish economy, and directly and indirectly supports 29,000 jobs in the country, most of them in rural Ireland.

Therefore, the discussions around Brexit are of paramount importance to our industry and we submit the following:

1. Racehorses, breeding stock, trainers and riders move freely and regularly between both Irish and British jurisdictions and any impediment would be extremely damaging.
2. There are many practical reasons why this would be so serious, and one of those is trade. 65% of Ireland's annual foal crop is exported and 80% of these exports are to Britain.

It is worth noting the impact any export restriction will have in rural Ireland: 92% of 6,777 registered breeders in Ireland have five mares or less, and there are breeders in every county in Ireland.

3. Ireland's thoroughbred exports are worth approximately €370m each year and any risk to trade flows would be detrimental to this. To put this figure into an agri-food export context: it is fifth in the table of Irish exports, ahead of poultry, cereals, sheepmeat and live animals.
4. Restrictions on movement will not just have east-west implications: horseracing and thoroughbred breeding has always been operated on an all-island basis in Ireland.

Practically, this means that all trainers in Northern Ireland are licensed by the IHRB (Turf Club) and all races in Northern Ireland's two racecourses are staged under IHRB rules. This would effectively mean that two of our 26 racecourses will be outside of the EU post-Brexit.

5. There are 22 fixtures in Northern Ireland each year and approximately 90% of the runners at these fixtures are trained in the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore foals born in Northern Ireland carry the (IRE) suffix rather than the (GB) one.
6. It makes sense then that Britain and Ireland operate as a single entity for stud book, purposes meaning foals born in Ireland or Britain are both registered in the same stud book.
7. Yet, while they are complimentary to each other, the industries in Britain and Ireland are also in close competition for global investment, sale of media rights and the location of bloodstock and training operations. The concern held by us is that once Britain leaves the EU it could offer taxation and other incentives which Ireland would be unable to match and would leave us vulnerable.
8. Britain relies heavily on Ireland to source its racehorses and up to 75% of runners in Britain are either Irish- or French-bred. However, an introduction of tariffs or regulations would increase the cost of business and reduce the free movement of labour and horses.

The support given to us by last year's report of the Joint Committee and the understanding of racing's concerns, has been very useful to the industry and we are grateful to the Committee for that.


Since then we have redoubled efforts with our international colleagues in Britain and in France, and across Europe, to provide solutions to the problems Brexit will pose.

The main tenet of our proposed solution is for an EU-recognised 3H (High Health Horse) status, which could be cost neutral for governments. We are requesting this to be formally recognised in EU Animal Health Law. This proposal has generally received a positive first reception, and France and Ireland have jointly written to DG Santé seeking separate delegated Acts for the movement of equines both within the EU and with third countries.

Horse Racing Ireland has met the European Commission and members of the European Parliament to enlist support for this proposal.

We would request the support of your Committee for this proposal and would be happy to explain the details of it to you if required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B Kavanagh', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian Kavanagh
Chief Executive