

Report of the Expert Group on the eradication of prohibited substances and practices from the Irish equestrian sector

Chaired by Dr Gordon Holmes

6th March 2009

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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Traditionally equestrian sports were the prerogative of the amateur. The position of the horse in Ireland has always been unique. The care and lavish attention shown to all types of equines has been, for generations, a hallmark of Ireland's approach. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that as equine sports become more competitive and therefore more professional, standards would change. The difficulty we encountered was that attitudes did not change to keep pace with this.

The competitiveness, the financial rewards and the overall cost of equestrian sports have multiplied in recent years. Considering the value of the bloodstock involved and the rewards for success, it is perhaps not surprising that this should be so.

While Horse Sport Ireland encompasses a number of affiliated bodies and activities, for the purposes of this report we have focused on the FEI disciplines.

It has come as a deep shock to the authorities in this country that in the last two Olympic Games success by Irish riders was marked with unsavoury controversy and it was against this background that we commenced our task.

It is, I think, fair to say that all of the organisations with which we dealt were aware of both the problems that beset the sport and the task we had to resolve them. It is all the more upsetting that some occurred in the Olympic Games, the taking part in which should be every athlete's dream.

It is interesting to observe that in athletics any athlete who is caught using prohibited substances is virtually ostracised. He is heavily penalised and the Irish Sports Council has done a magnificent job in dealing so firmly and so effectively with these issues.

In equestrian sports we need to change attitudes so that those who deliberately attempt to enhance the performance of horses through the use of prohibited substances and practices are virtually ostracised by their peers. With the exception of the Olympic Games, the publicity attracted by breaches of the rules is virtually nil and the intention of this report is to ensure that strict compliance with all medication and anti-doping rules and regulations are strictly adhered to and this should be the attitude of every person participating in equestrian sports. I was helped in my task with a frank meeting with Ireland's Chef de Mission for the last Olympic Games – Mr Dermot Henihan, who subsequently attended a meeting of the Group. A number of his suggestions are embodied in our report and we are grateful for his input. Unfortunately, despite my best efforts, I failed to meet with the President of the Olympic Council whose views on the issues had been trenchantly expressed and I hope that many of the Olympic Council's misgivings will be put to rest by our recommendations.



Dr Gordon Holmes

Our investigations revealed that the systems in operation by bodies affiliated to Horse Sport Ireland for dealing with the problems of medication and anti-doping control programmes were ineffective. This in turn resulted in these problems not being addressed with the focus required. I hope and trust that this report will go a long way to alter this situation so that all riders will realise how serious the issue is, how unfair it is to take improper advantages in equestrian events, particularly when compromising the welfare of the horse, and why it is necessary to remove the stain of such practices from the very fabric of equestrian events in which Ireland has competed so successfully for so long.

First of all, my thanks must go to every member of the Expert Group, all of whom, in different ways, brought their own expertise to bear on the subject. Their support was generously given and their expertise freely available to me whenever sought. I also thank them for their forbearance in dealing with a chairman who depended upon their expertise because of the paucity of his own.

The Chairman of Horse Sport Ireland requested this report as a matter of priority and as a result we addressed the issues very promptly. I most sincerely thank all those who met with me and the Group and helped hugely with the conclusions we arrived at.

At the start of our deliberations we advertised for submissions. I would like to thank all those who gave submissions, thus showing their dedication to the sport which they follow.

Frequently these submissions revealed some new issues and we were very appreciative of them.

I was somewhat surprised, I may admit, that we did not receive any submissions from any Animal Welfare Group but the wellbeing of the horse, as can be seen from our recommendations, rated high on our agenda and our recommendations go as far as they can in ensuring that this wellbeing continues.

To Damian McDonald, Triona Connors and Alison Corbally and the executive and staff of Horse Sport Ireland, my thanks for their help, for their corrections of my more blatant errors and for their cheerfulness throughout.

We have reached a crossroads and a fresh start must be made to deal with modern and ever-changing problems. I am sincerely grateful to the affiliated organisations for their acceptance of this and for the willingness they have shown towards implementing change.

To the Chairman and members of the Board of Horse Sport Ireland, thank you for your help which, tempered with a sense of urgency that you generated, makes me and every member of my Group most anxious that this report will achieve beneficial and lasting change. As the new Governing Body for the sport, Horse Sport Ireland now has an opportunity to address this issue and leave the past behind us.

EXPERT GROUP MEMBERS

CHAIRMAN DR GORDON HOLMES

Co-founder, managing partner until recently and now Chairman of Holmes O'Malley Sexton, the largest law firm in the Mid-West. Dr Holmes brings a wealth of expertise and experience to the Group. Chairman of An Garda Síochána Complaints Board since 2002, Chairman of the Parole Board, Chairman of the Betting Appeals Board, Chairman of the Independent Complaints Panel and Chairman of the Commission on Intoxicating Liquor Licensing. He is also a Director of University of Limerick Foundation, the J.P. McManus Charitable Foundation and the Hunt Museum as well as numerous boards of commercial companies including the Irish entities of the prestigious Paris-based reinsurer SCOR. Dr Holmes served as State Solicitor for Limerick for 11 years and also acted as Solicitor to the Attorney General for a number of years. He has also served for 24 years on the rules committee of the Superior Court of Ireland. He has a keen interest in racing having acted as a steward of the Turf Club and currently is Chairman of the Turf Club's Referrals and Regulations committees.

PROFESSOR TOM BUCKLEY MSc, FIBMS

Head of Forensics at the Irish Equine Centre in Co. Kildare and the author of many noted works on equine science, one of which won the Richard Hartley Clinical Prize awarded by the Equine Veterinary Journal in 2007. Professor Buckley is also Adjunct Professor, Department of Life Sciences, University of Limerick.

DR UNA MAY

Head of the Irish Sports Council's Anti-Doping Programme since 2001. Dr May has a PhD in exercise physiology and a BSc (Hons) in sports science from John Moores University, Liverpool. She has been a member of a team of independent observers appointed by the World Anti-Doping Agency to monitor the anti-doping programmes at the UCI cycling world championships (2001), the Olympic Games in both Athens (2004) and Turin (2006). Dr May also chaired the team of independent observers at the World Athletics Championships in Helsinki (2005).

DERMOT FORDE MVB, MRCVS

FEI testing veterinarian for Ireland and a Veterinary Inspector in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food. Mr Forde is also a noted breeder and producer of Thoroughbred and Irish Sport Horses. Member of the Council and the Equestrian Committee of the Royal Dublin Society. He also served as Irish Chef de Mission, World Equestrian Games in 1998 and 2002.

RONAN CORRIGAN

Board member and current Chairman of Showjumping Ireland, Mr Corrigan comes from Prosperous in Co. Kildare where he runs his own equestrian business. He has extensive knowledge of show jumping through his involvement as a rider both nationally and internationally and his work in various capacities with the Show Jumping Association over the years. He is also intimately familiar with the administration side of the sport, having acted as Director General of the Show Jumping Association of Ireland in a temporary capacity for a number of months.

BERNIE BRENNAN

Board member, Chair of Horse Sport Ireland's International Show Jumping Management Committee, Past Chair of the RDS Equestrian Committee and Past Chair of the Show Jumping Association of Ireland.

EXPERT GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

This Expert Group has been established by the Board of Horse Sport Ireland to advise on what measures, procedures, controls and sanctions should be put in place to ensure that prohibited substances and practices are eradicated from Irish equestrianism.

- To examine what measures, procedures, controls or sanctions should be put in place to ensure, in so far as possible, that prohibited substances or practices are eradicated from Irish equestrian sport.
- To look at what measures, procedures, controls or sanctions should be put in place to ensure, in so far as possible, that riders are not engaging in the use of prohibited substances or practices while representing Ireland.
- To look at what measures, procedures or controls Horse Sport Ireland should put in place to ensure, in so far as possible, that riders are not using treatments, remedies or other products containing prohibited substances on their horses.
- To look at what measures, procedures, controls and sanctions can be put in place to ensure that prohibited substances and practices have no part to play in preparing horses for sale, showing or other competitions.
- To make recommendations to the Board regarding what changes, if any, Horse Sport Ireland should propose in relation to FEI regulations or procedures.
- The Expert Group shall be entitled to request any other powers that it deems it requires from the Board.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

FEI	Federation Equestre Internationale
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
HSI	Horse Sport Ireland
OCI	Olympic Council of Ireland
ISC	Irish Sports Council
PR	Person Responsible
RDS	Royal Dublin Society
SJI	Showjumping Ireland
TOR	Terms Of Reference
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency

CHAPTER I

MEDICATION AND ANTI-DOPING CONTROL PROGRAMMES

1. For the purposes of this Report, it is appropriate that we should commence by setting out the Medication and Anti-Doping Control regimes for horses that apply at equestrian events in Ireland, comment on them and indicate in the clearest possible way the steps that should be taken to ensure that an effective system is put in place.
2. International Equestrian events in Ireland are run under the auspices of the FEI and all National events are run under the auspices of the relevant Horse Sport Ireland affiliate body or section. While Showjumping Ireland has a testing programme in place, the other affiliated bodies do not have any such regime. We were both surprised and disappointed at this discovery.
It is noted that the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) has its own testing system in place for National competitions at Dublin Horse Show although its powers are restricted to sanctions relating to RDS participation. The recommendations in this report, however, may ensure that one regime only is in place.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND THE FEI SYSTEM

3. The system operated by the FEI appears to us to comply with best practice and all reasonable standards. The samples are collected by the FEI appointed Testing Veterinarian who is an extremely experienced Veterinarian in these matters. He is primarily responsible for taking all samples at International events. He adheres strictly to internationally recognised procedures regarding the selection of horses for sampling, the methodology of taking samples, ensuring the security

and proper dispatch of same to the appropriate laboratory for testing.

4. The FEI employs a limited number of laboratories throughout the world. Where Europe is concerned the laboratory that is used is in Paris and this laboratory has earned for itself an extremely high reputation in all aspects of forensic equine testing. The Testing Veterinarian is, therefore, responsible for the taking of the samples, for the guarding and protecting of the samples and for the dispatch of the samples under the appropriate safeguards to the laboratory in Paris.
Once the samples reach the laboratory, standard strict laboratory procedures apply and the result of the test is made known within a short period of weeks and then transmitted to the National Equestrian Federation of the Person Responsible (PR) for the horse/pony concerned.
5. The laboratory in Paris tests for a wide range of prohibited substances. That range changes regularly as practices and methodology throughout the World change. The Paris laboratory and the other laboratories used by the FEI remain at all times at the forefront of best international practice and adopt most recent research advancements in detection methodologies.
6. Whilst no system is absolutely foolproof, nonetheless, the system operated by the FEI appears to measure up to best practice and there are only a small number of points which we felt should be addressed:
 - a. For example, there is no comprehensive published list of proscribed substances such as that issued for human athletes under the WADA code. The publication of such a list, which would require

frequent review, should bring a greater degree of clarity to equestrian sport rules. We would strongly recommend the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) should follow the systems under the World Anti-Doping Agency code. Whilst the identity of the prohibited substances can be determined from the FEI website, it is rather complicated to do so and it would be preferable if a clearer list were to be applied, such as the WADA prohibited list International Standard.

- b. While the FEI Disciplinary process does differentiate between medication and doping offences, it would appear that the general public does not differentiate between the two and views all offences as doping and hence as cheating. However, in a situation where riders are permitted to medicate their horses outside of competition there will always be some level of positive cases as is the case in horse racing. However, it must be clear that there is a major difference between a residue of a legitimate medication being found in a horse's system and a substance being found which is used deliberately, and in some cases cruelly, to enhance performance.
- c. At the Olympic Games in Hong Kong the FEI provided a pre-event screening facility where National Federations could submit a sample taken from their Olympic horses to the FEI who would then test it for a number of medications to ensure that, accidentally, there was no residue in the horse's system. The recommendation at 4.1 will render this very effective. This test does not cover "doping" substances because the FEI rightly feels that if a rider uses such substances, he exposes himself to the full rigour of subsequent tests. This screening facility should be welcomed and utilised to the full.
- d. The Emergency Treatment procedure which exists under the FEI rules is a somewhat confusing rule because it can permit horses to compete in events even when there are prohibited substances in the horse's system, albeit residues of legitimate medications. These prohibited substances may have been administered to the horse prior to and not during the event. Such a rule, as it stands, tends to pose more problems than solutions. The decision in relation to whether or not a horse can then compete is ultimately made by the Ground Jury at the relevant show on veterinary advice. If this rule is to remain it should be further clarified by detailed centralised instruction from the FEI to try and ensure consistency.

NATIONAL EVENTS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SHOWJUMPING IRELAND

7. Showjumping Ireland (SJI) is responsible for all National Show Jumping events. All testing, therefore, for National Show Jumping events is under their remit save for the National classes at the RDS. All riders and owners are members of Showjumping Ireland which gives them the entitlement to compete in National events. This can give rise to potential disciplinary challenges which are referred to later in this report.
8. Although there are definite weaknesses in the testing programme currently operated by Showjumping Ireland, they argue that the resources under which they operate are limited. This has resulted in a lack of emphasis on the application of a strict testing programme to date.
9. The testing of samples on behalf of Showjumping Ireland is done by the Irish Equine Centre in County Kildare – an experienced and well run organisation. However, Showjumping Ireland merely tested for two substances: Phenylbutazone and Flunixin Meglumine. A more comprehensive analysis could have been carried out for relatively modest additional expenditure.
10. The cost of running such tests is €40 for each substance tested. Thus, to run tests for a whole range of prohibited substances would impose on Showjumping Ireland a cost of hundreds of euros per test and they found themselves unable to fund this. The actual laboratory costs incurred were therefore €80 per test.
11. It is clear that such a system is inadequate. It was not surprising that investigations revealed that out of the last 96 tests taken, none had proved positive. It is equally not surprising that this is so, because the testing was only done in respect of two classes of substances and, given the nature of a small organisation such as SJI, it is likely that experienced competitors would be knowledgeable as to the basis of the testing and the substances for which horses were being tested.
12. A number of questions were raised about the retention, control and supervision of the samples from the time they were taken until the time the laboratory test was carried out. However, as the focus of attention for the Group was on the analytical processes and the respective weaknesses of that aspect of the programme, the Group did not examine the chain of custody procedures in any detail.
13. We, therefore, wish to make it absolutely clear that while it is argued that Showjumping Ireland is not resourced sufficiently to carry out detailed and acceptable testing,

a small amount of additional expense would have enabled a more effective system to be put in place. The system operational at present cannot be described as effective. Additional resources will be required to put a more rigorous system in place.

OTHER AFFILIATES

14. The bodies affiliated to Horse Sport Ireland are set out in the Third Schedule hereto. The other affiliated bodies responsible for running the other FEI disciplines in Ireland, Eventing Ireland, Dressage Ireland, Para Equestrian Ireland, Carriage Driving Ireland (now the Carriage Driving Section of HSI) and the Irish Long Distance Riding Association, do not appear to carry out any testing at the events run under their auspices.
15. This is of great concern as there have been positive cases recorded by the FEI against Irish competitors competing Internationally in eventing in recent years. While we are not aware of any positive cases involving Irish International riders in the other FEI disciplines, there is no way of knowing if the use of prohibited substances is prevalent in these disciplines in Ireland.
16. While we are placing a lot of emphasis at National level it is not unrealistic to expect that a lax regime at National level could contribute to an Irish rider falling foul of the rules at International level. In the course of researching the current status of medication practices in Ireland, concerns were expressed by various representatives of the equestrian community about the culture which has crept in at National level and this needs to be addressed firmly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 At International events where the FEI testing system is in operation it is accepted that proper procedures are being followed and will continue to be followed and that the methodology in use is satisfactory. We are also satisfied that those concerned in the testing are perfectly aware of the legal and other consequences of the chain of possession of the samples until tested and we are satisfied that all reasonable steps are taken to adhere to these principles.

1.2 Where the FEI disciplines in Ireland are concerned, we recommend as follows:

- (a) That all testing and all anti-doping control/ medication programmes at National level be carried out under the auspices and control of Horse Sport Ireland and that Horse Sport Ireland sets up the necessary steps to carry this into effect.
- (b) That testing for equestrian sports should be carried out in accordance with the principles laid down by the FEI and the testing should be carried out in the same manner. Obviously, the highest regard must be had for the chain of possession of the specimen taken until same is tested. Samples should be analysed for the detection of all prohibited substances and all riders should be fully aware that comprehensive tests are carried out. The penalties that should be imposed and the procedures that should follow positive testing are dealt with later in this report.
- (c) The affiliated bodies must change their rules to provide that testing at events under their control will be dealt with by Horse Sport Ireland and their members subject to being disciplined accordingly.
- (d) Horse Sport Ireland should engage an internationally recognised laboratory fully conversant with its responsibilities and fully able to fulfil the terms of reference entrusted to it by Horse Sport Ireland so that the testing will be carried out in accordance with the highest possible standards.
- (e) The Veterinarians engaged to carry out the task of collecting samples will be fully trained individuals who will carry out their duties in strict accordance with FEI procedures. Whilst it will be necessary to appoint more than one Veterinarian to carry out all of these tests throughout the country the number of approved Veterinarians should be limited and they should be reviewed on a regular basis.
- (f) Obviously, the operation of such anti-doping regimes will be at a cost and it is not inappropriate that a small sum should be levied annually on all members or entries of the affiliated bodies and sections. This will help to defray the costs involved to ensure the standard of the programmes and to involve the individual members in those programmes, giving a renewed sense of ownership and commitment to the responsibility of restoring prestige in the Irish Equestrian sector.

CHAPTER II

DISCIPLINE

1. A coherent, transparent and effective system of imposing discipline in all equestrian events must be established and maintained. The imposition of discipline by any sporting body gives rise to challenges. The sporting pages of every newspaper have highlighted the difficulties encountered by such efficient organisations as the GAA.
2. The present system in operation is that each of the affiliate bodies elects a Committee whose responsibilities include all disciplinary matters that may arise within the respective organisations.
3. In such cases the person being disciplined will be a member of the self-same organisation as those serving on the disciplinary committee. This can present challenges of conflict of interest and the assurance of transparency. Persons serving on these Committees are effectively sitting in judgement of the persons who elected them to those positions. It is extremely difficult to be objective and to be seen to be objective, in dealing with members of an organisation to which oneself belongs.
4. It is no harm to contrast this system with the system that operates in other sports. The Turf Club does not discipline its own members. It disciplines trainers and jockeys or riders to whom it grants licences.
5. The disciplinary system within Rugby Union seems to be very effective in both the Heineken Cup and the Six Nations Championship. The Tribunal sitting in judgement is wholly independent and drawn from a pre-appointed panel most of whom have a legal background. The Chairman selects from a panel the appropriate Tribunal members for each case.
- 2.2 When dealing with a person who is a member of any of the affiliate organisations, none of their members should sit on the tribunal to deal with a given case involving a fellow member, i.e. if the allegation is against a rider in a particular discipline, then the HSI tribunal dealing with the matter should not include a member from the affiliate involved (except perhaps in an advisory capacity).
- 2.3 A totally independent Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Disciplinary Body should be appointed. Obviously, some members of the appeal body would need to be conversant with the discipline involved and once an independent chairman is appointed, he or she can select the appropriate members to sit from a pre-appointed panel.
- 2.4 An Appeals Committee should also be set up by Horse Sport Ireland which should also be independently chaired. It is to be noted that the Irish Sports Council similarly has an independent chairman to deal with such appeals.
- 2.5 Indeed, it might be better if the Appeals Committee was entirely independent. Such a Committee will need full advice from some member who is very conversant with the sport involved. Such a member should, obviously, not be a member of the affiliate which runs the discipline but an expert in his/her field with knowledge of this sport on the Appeals Committee is vital. In order to meet this requirement consideration should be given to bringing in people with expertise from Equestrian Federations in other countries.
- 2.6 This system will, therefore, provide for one appeal and one appeal only. The Appeals Committee should be able to call on persons from other jurisdictions to sit on the appeal. This is a matter which should be left to the Chairman of the appeals body in serious cases and it is something which Horse Sport Ireland can consider.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 First of all, it is clear that all matters involving prohibited substances should be dealt with by a Disciplinary Committee set up by Horse Sport Ireland. Since it is under these recommendations, the body responsible for testing should also be responsible for the consequences of that testing. We, accordingly, recommend the setting up by Horse Sport Ireland of a Disciplinary Body to deal with all disciplinary matters relating to Anti-Doping and Medication Control Programmes and other serious issues, in particular those that relate to the welfare of the horse.
- 2.7 While each affiliate body will continue to have its own disciplinary body to deal with less serious (non-doping) disciplinary matters, they should utilise Horse Sport Ireland's appeals body to hear all appeals against their disciplinary bodies' findings.
- 2.8 These recommendations require rule changes by Horse Sport Ireland and its respective affiliate bodies.

CHAPTER III

LICENSING AND EDUCATION

1. Since almost all of the problems associated with the use of prohibited substances in the equestrian field are related to competitors, there are a number of issues which seriously need to be addressed.
2. First of all, a general ethos of carelessness seems to have crept into the sport. Perhaps, this has been caused by an absence of strict and stringent controls. However, modern problems call for modern responses and it is perfectly clear that the sport must now be more tightly controlled. Under the current membership system, a competitor can join one of the affiliated organisations and through this membership is entitled to compete in National events. This is considered unsatisfactory in the context of the current problems faced by the sport. There are no obligatory courses which prospective competitors must take before competition. It is noted that the Irish Pony Club has a very good training and competency testing regime in place but no such system is in place for the FEI disciplines.
3. It is recommended that all persons who join the affiliated bodies and wish to compete in events run by that body should be licensed to compete. The licence granted can impose conditions in relation to training, teaching and education of new competitors. It is considered by the Group that such educational participation in the care of horses is a matter of greatest importance.
4. As an example, in the Turf Club, before a trainer can obtain a training licence he has to attend a course which will teach him all aspects of training race horses. It will teach him about ordinary obligations such as insuring staff, tax returns and will teach him about substance abuse, about the consequences of breaking the rules, about what the rules are, etc. No such obligatory courses are provided by any of the affiliates of HSI. It is suggested that such course attendance should be made mandatory and that new licences should be conditional on the completion of such courses within a specified time period. A licensing system such as this could be introduced on a phased basis such that existing members could be exempt where appropriate.
5. In all sports there are competitors who leave their sportsmanship behind them when a disqualification of any sort is imposed upon them, by seeking redress in the law courts. It is preferable that sporting matters

be dealt with by a referee, an umpire or a disciplinary committee. The conditions of the licence should be so drafted that they would enshrine the universality of all suspensions – suspended anywhere, suspended everywhere.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 We recommend that before being allowed to participate in any events that the relevant affiliate or section should grant to each competitor, who joins the relevant body, a licence. The licence should contain acceptances of all of the rules and conditions of the body involved and should contain an obligation on the part of the recipient to undergo whatever training courses are available so that all competitors will be fully conversant with all of the rules, the duties and the obligations that are appropriate to such competition.
- 3.2 As a transition mechanism, it is suggested that a licence at first instance is for a period of 12 months and that the recipient of the licence be given that period to attend the relevant courses. These courses are to be designated by the affiliate organisation with relevant input from HSI. If at the end of that time the recipient has successfully completed the relevant courses, then an appropriate ordinary licence is issued. It is suggested that each licence be an annual licence. The licence should contain such conditions as are appropriate to each individual discipline and enshrine in them the acceptance of the role of the disciplinary authorities involved. Appropriate interim arrangements will be required.
- 3.3 It should be the duty of the different affiliated organisations to ensure the provision of the courses, so that licensed riders are fully trained in the care and management of their horse and are educated fully in complying with Medication and Anti-Doping Control Programmes. Appropriate co-ordination in areas of mutual interest should be provided by HSI.

CHAPTER IV

RIDERS REPRESENTING IRELAND

1. A robust Medication and Anti-Doping Control Programme at National level will undoubtedly help to create a culture where riders are used to competing under a strict regime. This in turn will prepare riders better for International competition.
 2. However, the main reason this Group was established was due to high-profile cases involving Irish riders competing Internationally, particularly at the Olympic Games. It is therefore appropriate to look at what specific steps can be taken to reduce the risk, in so far as possible, of this happening again.
 3. Addressing this issue effectively is made more challenging by the fact that many of Ireland's top International riders are based abroad.
 4. One difficulty this leads to is that it is almost impossible for the team veterinarian to subject the riders to any significant level of supervision or even to be aware of what treatments/products they have administered to their horses.
 5. It is also the case that many such riders retain their own private veterinarians. Such veterinarians are frequently present where the Irish team is competing.
 6. It is also a legal fact that horses are private property as are riders' and grooms' equipment boxes. This is why the FEI is very clear that the person responsible in medication and anti-doping control cases is always the rider.
 7. In some cases it appears that riders relied on a manufacturer's claim that certain products "will not test positive". It is difficult to be over sympathetic with a rider who uses such products on his horse which then results in a positive test.
 8. If a rider sets out to deliberately use prohibited substances (and we are not suggesting that this has occurred in any previous case) it can be very difficult for the team veterinarian or any official to stop them.
 9. Notwithstanding this, it is clear that measures need to be put in place to improve the oversight team officials have over team members.
- HSI can require any International rider to produce the logbook at any reasonable time.
- 4.2 In the special case of an Olympic Games the riders in contention for selection will be required to submit a copy of their logbook to Horse Sport Ireland 60 days prior to the initial veterinary inspection for the relevant competition. This will then be forwarded to the Olympic Council of Ireland. Subsequent to the submission of the logbook, riders will be required to seek permission from the Team Veterinarian for any veterinary treatments for their horse. Similarly, the rider must seek such guidance if they would like to use new products or substances of any kind on their horse.
 - 4.3 In the case of selection for championships, riders will be required to provide this logbook or a copy of the relevant section to HSI, after they have been short-listed at nominated entry stage, and in advance of definite entry stage. After they have submitted the document they will be required to seek permission from the Team Veterinarian to give any treatments to their horse or pony or if they decide to use any new products.
 - 4.4 In cases of any official International team competitions, riders will be required to present this logbook to the Chef d'Equipe or Team Veterinarian in advance of the trot up. After this point in time riders will be required to seek permission from the Team Veterinarian for any veterinary treatments for their horse or pony. Similarly, they should seek such guidance if they decide to use new products of any kind on their horse or pony.
 - 4.5 In turn, the Chef d'Equipe, the Veterinarian, Horse Sport Ireland and the Olympic Council of Ireland will treat such a list as confidential unless it becomes necessary in the fulfilment of their functions to disclose any issue to any third party, i.e. that could arise for the purposes of seeking directions as to whether a particular substance is prohibited or not.
 - 4.6 It is further recommended that any omission or misstatement in the list of substances handed over should be an offence by the competitor concerned and should be punishable in accordance with the appropriate rules. Any attempt to mislead the Chef d'Equipe or the Team Veterinarian as to the substances administered should also be an offence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 All Irish International Riders shall keep a logbook in which they shall record all veterinary treatments, substances, ointments, feed supplements, shampoo or any other products used on their International horse(s).

- 4.7 Once a horse goes through the trot up at a team competition, where a Chef d'Equipe and/or Team Veterinarian is present, the rider shall not engage with any veterinarian other than the Team Veterinarian or the appointed FEI veterinarian without the express permission of the Team Veterinarian or Chef d'Equipe.
- 4.8 It is noted that HSI carried out its own testing on prospective Olympic horses prior to departure. This is a

good practice and should be continued. However, where possible, such samples should be sent to the same laboratory as will be used during the games and the samples should be screened for the full gamut of substances.

- 4.9 HSI also availed of the event screening made available by the FEI on arrival in Hong Kong. All such opportunities should be availed of again in future.

CHAPTER V

PENALTIES

1. The application of penalties for medication and anti-doping related offences can be quite an emotive issue and it is clear that strong views are held on the matter. Although strong consideration was given by the Group to recommending a totally new system, it was concluded that the penalty structure applying for offences committed in Ireland should mirror those applied by the FEI internationally.
2. The imposition of penalties imposed on Irish Riders in International Events, must of necessity cast a cloud over the integrity of the Irish Equestrian World. Two points, however, are worth noting. Several other riders from other jurisdictions were similarly caught using prohibited substances during the Olympic Games and it is clear that the methods used in testing are getting more and more sophisticated and the testing laboratories are much more agile than previously in dealing with the problems that modern pharmacology brings.
3. Where an offence is committed while representing Ireland in an individual or team event, the matter can be referred by Horse Sport Ireland to its disciplinary body who shall, notwithstanding any other penalty imposed, consider whether the rider should be banned from the Irish team for a specified period.
4. An offence of "aiding and abetting a breach of the Medication and Anti-Doping Control rules" should be enshrined in HSI's rules.
5. An offence of "bringing equestrian sport into disrepute" should be enshrined into HSI's rules.
6. Later in this report other potential offences that can arise will be listed, some of which require serious penalties to be imposed. All this is to improve the reputation enjoyed by equestrian sport in this country.
7. It is to be hoped that the penalties laid down for these and other offences reflect the gravity of the offence and the object of these recommendations is not to aid detection of offences but rather to act as a deterrent to these offences occurring in the first place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As part of the new Medication and Anti-Doping Control regime set out in this report it is recommended that the penalty system would mirror that of the FEI as amended from time to time.
- 5.2 Where an offence is committed while riding Internationally for Ireland in an individual or team event, in addition to any other penalties imposed, the matter shall be referred to the disciplinary body who shall determine whether or not such a rider shall be banned from the Irish team for a specified period.
- 5.3 The offences of "aiding and abetting the breach of Medication and Anti-Doping Control rules" and "bringing the sport into disrepute" should be introduced.

CHAPTER VI

PROHIBITED PRACTICES

1. While the focus of this report to date is on prohibited substances, there are also a number of improper practices that can be used to “prepare” horses for competition. The practices compromise the welfare of the horse and must be eradicated.
2. Horse Sport Ireland will cause to be prepared a list of practices, the use of which in preparing horses for competition or sale are unacceptable and prohibited. Any person who engages in such practices shall be guilty of an offence and shall be dealt with by the disciplinary bodies established by these rules.
3. These practices can take place at equestrian events or at home during training.
4. With regards to the prohibited practices at events, there is a clear need for a review of the stewarding system that applies at shows/events.
5. While it is not intended that this report go into great detail, it is highly recommended that a National supervisory stipendiary steward be employed who would oversee the stewarding system in Ireland, and who could be available themselves to officiate at the bigger National shows/events.
This steward should also be entitled to attend at any National event run by any affiliate and should have full stewarding powers while on the grounds.
6. The supervisory stipendiary steward should prepare a report including recommendations/procedures for Horse Sport Ireland. All other stewarding shall follow the directions of the stipendiary steward who shall be a person of sufficient integrity, that his evidence before any disciplinary body shall be accepted without question.
7. The affiliate bodies should also consider using stewards from other countries for their more prominent shows/competitions. This would help to ensure impartiality and would help to benchmark the culture in Ireland with that of other countries.
8. The system for following up on incidents at shows or events needs to be robust. In this regard, all stewards, regardless of the FEI discipline, should be entitled to report any incident directly to Horse Sport Ireland, who, if appropriate, will commence a disciplinary process.
9. If, upon receipt of evidence, including through his/her own observance, a stipendiary steward becomes aware of any breach of these rules, he/she shall immediately bring it to the attention of the Ground Jury, the relevant affiliated body and Horse Sport Ireland.
10. The years have seen huge changes on course design. Gone are the days when obstacles were made of heavy wood and the cross poles rested in fairly secure cups which made them hard to dislodge. Now course obstacles are made of the lightest possible materials, and any touch whatsoever will cause them to fall.
It is noted that other countries, notably Germany and Italy, have expressed concern about this, and it is also our view that the FEI should revisit course design and fence material and issue definitive and constructive guidelines on it. It is recommended that HSI should make known to the FEI the concerns expressed in relation to course design, materials and construction and the whole matter should be reconsidered by the FEI to get consensus approval.
11. Where Horse Sport Ireland, on receipt of a bona fide complaint or through some other channel, has reason to believe that either (a) improper methods of training for jumping are being used in any training ground or (b) that those responsible for any registered horse who may be failing in their duty in the care, maintenance and wellbeing of that horse or (c) that any methods in the training may cause that horse distress, should have the right to appoint a duly qualified veterinarian as their inspector to investigate the matter on their behalf. That inspector shall have the right to attend any training ground being run by or with the assistance of a duly licensed rider or a registered owner. At present the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food and An Garda Síochána alone have that power.
12. It is hoped that such powers will never have to be exercised but, unfortunately, in the past improper methods are known to have been used in the training/preparation of animals for competitions. If Horse Sport Ireland had the power to carry out inspections, this would go a long way to alleviating the problem.
13. It is known that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food is presently preparing legislation dealing with the welfare of animals and it is recommended that Horse Sport Ireland make whatever representations are appropriate to the Department to include in the proposed legislation, the outlawing of all such improper practices that cause undue distress to a horse.

14. While emphasis to date in this report has been on competition, concerns have been expressed to the Group about prohibited substances and practices being used in the preparation of horses for sale. The Group notes the commitment of Horse Sport Ireland to introduce an approved list of suppliers and sellers of horses who would be obliged to observe the code of conduct. This issue should be dealt with in the code of conduct which is in the course of being prepared.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That a National supervisory stipendiary steward be employed.
- 6.2 Horse Sport Ireland will cause to be prepared a list of

practices, the use of which in preparing horses for competition or sale are unacceptable and prohibited. Any person who engages in such practices shall be guilty of an offence and shall be dealt with by the disciplinary bodies established by these rules.

- 6.3 That affiliate bodies should consider inviting stewards from other countries for their more prominent shows.
- 6.4 That the system for following up incidents at shows be more robust.
- 6.5 That a right be enshrined in the rider licence allowing Horse Sport Ireland, through their duly appointed inspector, to attend any training ground.
- 6.6 Horse Sport Ireland will seek to have the improper practices specified in 6.2 made illegal under the forthcoming Animal Health & Welfare legislation.

APPENDIX

LIST OF THOSE WHO MADE SUBMISSIONS OR WERE MET BY THE CHAIRMAN OR THE EXPERT GROUP.

Col Ned Campion	- Past Secretary General of Equestrian Federation of Ireland and past Officer Commanding of the Army Equitation School
Edward Doyle	- Chairman of The Showjumpers Club
Damian McDonald	- Chief Executive of Horse Sport Ireland
Phillip O'Connor	- Member of the FEI Tribunal
John Treacy	- Chief Executive of the Irish Sports Council
Robert Splaine	- Horse Sport Ireland Senior Showjumping Team Manager
Marcus Swail	- Horse Sport Ireland Team Veterinarian
John Wright	- Chairman of Eventing Ireland and HSI Board member
Patricia Furlong	- Former Board member of HSI and former Chair of Showjumping Ireland
Charles Maudlin	- Showjumping Ireland Steward
Professor Tim Morris	- Director of Equine Science and Welfare, British Horse Racing Authority
Denis Egan	- Keeper of the Matchbook, Irish Turf Club
Dermot Henihan	- Ireland's Chef de Mission for the last Olympic Games
Dr Mary Flannery	- HSI Anti-Doping Officer