



HORSE SPORT

IRELAND



2023 BUDGET SUBMISSION



The overall goal of the Strategic Plan of Horse Sport Ireland is to lead the sector to enable it to realise its potential, in being a top breeding nation, winning medals and growing participation. During 2022, we have witnessed phenomenal success at European level with Junior and Young Rider Teams in Show Jumping and Eventing. Our International High Performance Show Jumping team are the first Irish team of any sport to qualify for the 2024 Olympic Games, and they won the prestigious Aga Khan Trophy seven days later. Our breeders are breeding and producing some of the world’s best sport horses which contribute to total horse exports (inc. thoroughbreds) in 2021 of €394m. The activities of Horse Sport Ireland are primarily funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine, and by Sport Ireland.

To build on the recent successes Horse Sport Ireland presents its 2023 Budget Submission including requests for ten primary areas:

1. Inclusion of critical infrastructure for equine farming within the successor to TAMS – the On-Farm Capital Investment Scheme.
2. Industry wide upgrade to e-passporting
3. Integrity measures for production & breeding initiatives, including Anti-doping programme
4. A new capital investment grant scheme for equestrian centre upgrades
5. Skillnet funding for Equestrian Skillnet
6. Increase in high performance sport allocation
7. Increase in participation grants
8. Increase in breeding & production supports
9. Increase in international marketing supports
10. Irish-Bred Incentive Sales Voucher

These measures are within the context of the Horse Sport Ireland Strategic Plan 2019-2024 and ‘Reaching new Heights’ which is the Government approved 10-year vision for the sport horse industry. Horse Sport Ireland needs in excess of €12m per annum to deliver for the sector, deliver the ambition within the current strategic plan, and deliver on ‘Reaching New Heights’.

The 2020 Programme for Government states that “We will continue to support the horse sport sector, recognising the need for increased ambition in this area to exploit the enormous potential of the sector from the perspective of competitive sport, welfare, traceability, and breeding standards. The further implementation of Reaching New Heights, which underpins the horse sport industry, is critical to that endeavour. We will ensure there is greater coordination between government departments on the delivery of this strategy.”

MEASURE	AMOUNT
Inclusion of critical infrastructure for equine farming within the successor next to TAMS	€80,000,000 (Over CAP 2023-27)
Industry wide upgrade to e-passporting	€2,800,000
Anti-doping programme	€500,000
A new capital investment grant scheme for equestrian centre upgrades	€4,000,000
Skillnet funding for Equestrian Skillnet	€400,000
Increase in high performance sport allocation	€1,200,000
Increase in participation grants	€6,500,000
Increase in breeding & production supports	€15,500,000
Increase in international marketing supports	€1,500,000
Irish-Bred Incentive Sales Voucher	€1,000,000
TOTAL (excluding TAMS)	€33,400,000



1. INCLUSION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR EQUINE FARMING WITHIN THE SUCCESSOR TO TAMS - THE ON-FARM CAPITAL INVESTMENT SCHEME

The recent publication is HSI's 'The Business of Breeding 2022' examined the investment plans of sport horse breeders for the coming three years. It identifies a plan by the country's 9,000+ active sport horse breeders to invest €342 million over the next three years in capital projects and supports within the successor to TAMS will be required to ensure that these plans by equine farmers are realised.

The report was based on investment sentiment analysis and surveys carried out during June 2022 of sport horse breeders nationwide. The research was conducted at a time when the challenges of Brexit, climate change and rising inflation were well known. This is a significant and large scale of on-farm investment in equine premises across the country, in every county of the country, with the potential to contribute significantly to the rural economy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM 'THE BUSINESS OF BREEDING 2022' REPORT

- 57% are somewhat or very optimistic about the future of the equine breeding sector
- 55% estimate their equine income will stay the same or increase in 2022
- 78% say that increasing costs is the greatest challenge facing their equine business with the most significant costs increases seen across feed, fertiliser and fuel.
- 69% have sold a horse outside the Island of Ireland
- 78% have undertaken at least one environmental measure in the past three years such as tree planting or muck-heap management.
- 83% of breeders have less than 10 horses
- 48% have another farming enterprise with the majority having a beef or sheep enterprise.
- 79% of breeders who did not have a second farming enterprise either had not heard of TAMS or had limited understanding of it
- 71% believe that Brexit has affected the transportation of horses
- On average equine breeders farm 65 acres of land
- 56% say an On-Farm Capital Investment programme will encourage them to invest in their enterprises.

Our sport horse industry is estimated to be worth more than €1bn annually to the Irish economy. Supports for future capital investments on-farm will be welcome. The top most requested items for any future on-farm capital investment programme are fencing, all-weather turnout areas, young stock housing, arenas, stables, and muck heap management. Other items where support was sought include weigh-scales and walkers.

This type of future investment support will encourage breeders to retain and produce their young stock, in doing so adding value and profit margins to their breeding enterprises whilst generating increases in Exchequer returns into the future.

2. INDUSTRY-WIDE UPGRADE TO E-PASSPORTING

EU Legislation governing the identification of equines allows for provision of an e-passport solution to work in parallel with or indeed to replace the existing paper based passports.

An e-passport, a digital alternative to the traditional paper-based passport, will enhance the registration process, and also enables smart data and efficiencies of recording at farm level. The cost per Passport Issuing Organisation to migrate to an e-passport solution could be as much as €300,000-400,000. Allied to this cost,



Horse Sport Ireland recognise that the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine will need to upgrade its internal HorseID database to enable seamless integration, compatibility and immediate data flow between individual PIO's and HorseID.

Horse Sport Ireland are seeking funding for DAFM to upgrade its own HorseID database of €2m, and in consultation with Passport Issuing Organisations (PIO) that a funding is made available up to €500,000 if necessary for each PIO to enable migration to one preferred nationwide e-passport solution across the thoroughbred and sport horse sectors.

3. INTEGRITY PROGRAMME

For Budget 2023, Horse Sport Ireland is seeking financial support for the Integrity Programme including the National Equine Anti-Doping Programme. The HSI Equine Anti-Doping Programme is in existence since 2012. To date, the revenue available to the programme has been dependant on levies within the Horse Sport Ireland affiliate structure.

The monetary investment is low due to the available revenues and as a consequence this is reflected in the overall sampling levels year on year. Horse Sport Ireland exclusively manages the administration of the EAD-CM Programme across the industry. Horse Sport Ireland results manage and administer any alleged violations and disciplinary issues arising.

DAFM currently fund the following competitive programmes through Horse Sport Ireland: Breeding Supports for Events • HSI Development Series • Events utilised for Lanaken and Le Lion, FEI WBFSH World Championships for Young Horses. To date, the Equine Anti-Doping Programme has not been in a position to extensively reach such activities, and as consequence the performance outcomes are not benchmarked against Clean Sport Principles nor is there assurance for food chain status.





Our request is that DAFM specifically stipulate funding to be earmarked for integrity measures, as this would be instrumental, give the programme real presence within the industry and ensure that both the breeding production and food chain are operating to robust standards. We are concerned that it is only a matter of time before a focus is placed on the programme and the lack of investment therein.

Horse Sport Ireland is seeking wholesale financial support from government to administer a prolific EADCM Programme within the Sport Horse Industry. Funding of €500,000 is sought for anti-doping & integrity measures in 2023.

4. A NEW CAPITAL INVESTMENT GRANT SCHEME FOR EQUESTRIAN CENTRE UPGRADES

There are in excess of 163 AIRE Approved Equestrian Centres scattered across Ireland, mainly in rural or peripheral to urban areas. These centres provide employment throughout the year by hosting lessons, equestrian events, competitions, horse sales, demonstrations and so forth.

As largely privately owned centres, mainly in small family owned SME businesses, Equestrian Centres are exempt from consideration under the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGSM)'s Sports Capital and Equipment Programme (SCEP). While the SCEP is recognised as the primary vehicle for government support for the development of sports and recreation facilities, equestrian centres have not benefited from such supports. Many of our equestrian centres are in need of support to undertake capital investments so as to ensure that riders and owners retain horses for competition in Ireland instead of moving them to other nations. It is imperative that our young people have world-class facilities in all sports including in equestrian sports.

Since the scheme's inception over 13,000 projects have benefited to the tune of over €1 billion transforming the landscape of Irish Sport, especially field sports, but unfortunately none has gone to improving facilities to support participation in Equestrian sport. Horse Sport Ireland is seeking eligibility for Equestrian Centre upgrades and capital improvements as part of the 2023 Sports Capital Programme with at least €6m in funding allocated specifically for equestrian centres.

5. SKILLNET FUNDING FOR EQUESTRIAN SKILLNET

In July 2022 Skillnet Ireland opened a funding call for new Skillnet Networks to join the 70+ existing Skillnet Ireland supported industry training networks. Horse Sport Ireland provided workplace training to 344 participants in 2021. Horse Sport Ireland will be submitting a business case for an Equestrian Skillnet during this open call process.

The Irish equine industry competes and wins at a global level. Our riders, grooms, stable staff, and backroom teams need constant upskilling to maintain those winning streaks. Employers in the industry recognise that they too have a role too to play in upskilling staff in order to maintain the existing workforce and encourage new entrants to the equestrian sector.

6. INCREASE IN HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT ALLOCATON

Horse Sport Ireland currently manages 14 high performance programme across youth and senior in the Olympic, Paralympic and FEI Disciplines. The Irish presence on the global stage is evident from documented podium success year on year. Each High Performance programme is bespoke and tailored for the discipline.

The structure is carefully curated in the context of medal success and a high conversion rate from youth to senior for international participation at Olympic level. Sport Ireland have provided a welcomed investment annually to the HP programme. However, the investment does fall short as equestrian sport is so unique, given the horse and rider combination. The financial investments and supports go beyond what a standard investment in a human athlete requires.

Further, the holistic connection between the breeder, the owner and the athlete needs support so that a continuous output of Irish horses and Irish Riders is achieved. The programmes have achieved success on a modest budget thus far and the ask now is that sizeable investment is made in this area so that both the breeder in the context of the rural economy is encouraged to breed the product so that the athletes with the talents and supports are available to showcase the Irish product and ultimately bring home continuous medal success.



7. INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION GRANTS

Horse Sport Ireland have 24 national affiliates that work tirelessly in the area of grassroots membership and support for domestic participation. Horse Sport Ireland have a strong track record of supporting quality participation initiatives that target and support the recreational and leisure side of the industry.

The grant system is finite and oversubscribed, year on year. The projects support diversity and inclusion and are targeted neatly at increasing the overall participation numbers in equestrian sport through the affiliate network and AIRE registered riding centres.

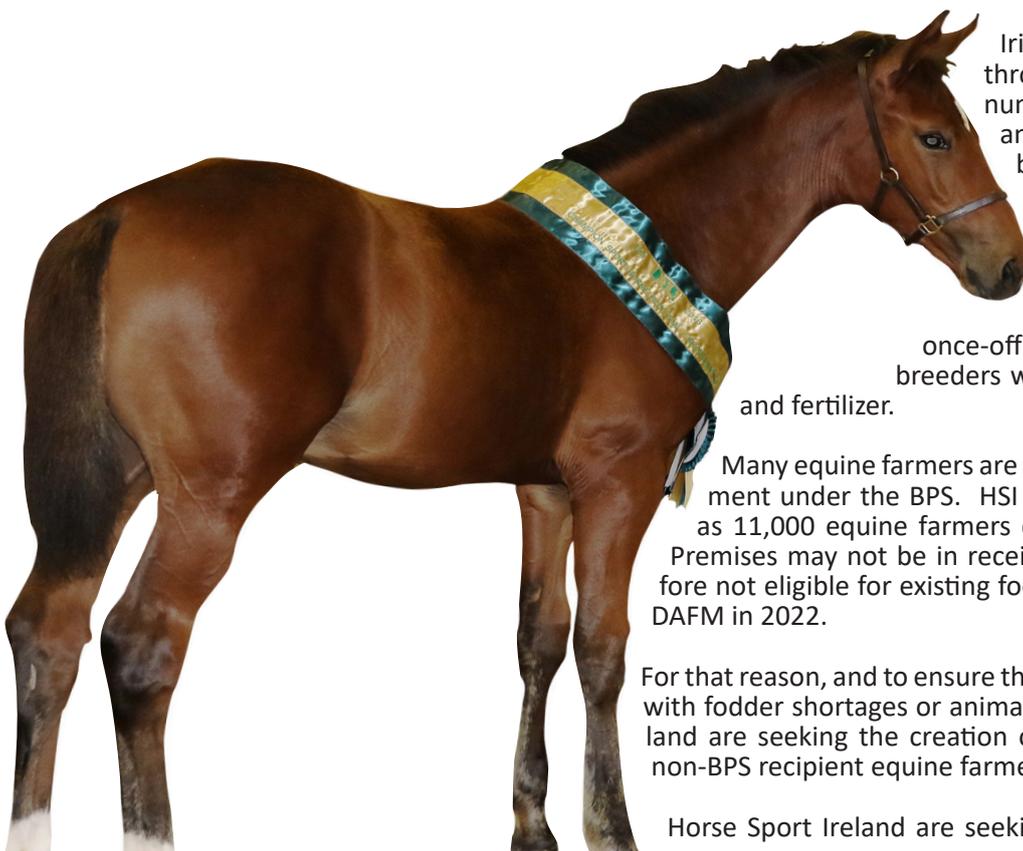
Horse Sport Ireland holds a strong governance record to administer further funding to the sector in this space. The ask for further investment in this area will support leisure participation which ultimately leads to a conversion to competitive riding and onwards to HP, where supported. Further, the leisure side of the sport horse industry supports the rural economy and contributes to the key metric of 14,000 FTE jobs in the sector through employment in riding schools, livery yards and equine businesses throughout Ireland.

8. INCREASE IN BREEDING & PRODUCTION SUPPORTS

Numerous national breeding initiatives have been established and maintained by Horse Sport Ireland to develop the quality of Irish horses and competition production classes are available to breeders to improve their sustainability within the equine market. It is crucial to the sector that the spend continues to be increased for programmes and breeding initiatives to develop the quality of Irish horses and the young horse production pathway.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) has been supportive to HSI since its establishment in 2008, and support on an annual basis scheme and initiatives to drive breed improvement programmes in Ireland. The objective of these programmes is to enhance the value and performance of sport horses bred and produced in Ireland. This is evidenced by increased equine market value, improved WBFSH studbook show jumping rankings from number 14th in 2020 to 7th in 2021, and increased number of Irish bred horses in top 100 FEI rankings annually on the international stage.

In 2022 funding for breeding initiatives to improve horse quality is €4.5m. Additional funding is needed within this grant scheme to just keep pace with inflationary pressures and costs of Brexit on Irish breeders. Horse Sport Ireland are seeking €6m for these measures in 2023, rising to €8m in 2024.



Irish-bred horses are desired throughout the world in growing numbers. Supports for breeding and production ensure that our breeders are supported to produce a quality, desirable and sought-after horse.

For 2023, Horse Sport Ireland are also seeking an additional once-off top-up payment to assist Irish breeders with the rising costs of fuel, feed and fertilizer.

Many equine farmers are not in receipt of a basic farm payment under the BPS. HSI research indicates that as many as 11,000 equine farmers of the 27,000 registered Equine Premises may not be in receipt of such payments and therefore not eligible for existing fodder support measures taken by DAFM in 2022.

For that reason, and to ensure that the equine industry isn't faced with fodder shortages or animal welfare issues, Horse Sport Ireland are seeking the creation of a specific Fodder Scheme for non-BPS recipient equine farmers.

Horse Sport Ireland are seeking €100 per horse for up to 10



horses for each non-BPS recipient equine farmer to support the purchase of feed. The entire scheme could cost up to €9m for equine farmers outside of the Basic Payment Scheme.

9. INCREASE IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

In 2021, Irish bred horses sold in export markets accounted for €394m in export sales. The continued improvement in Irish breeding is reaping benefits in international markets for small producers across rural Ireland.

To continue to grow the share of Irish bred horses sold to overseas markets requires continued investment to ensure that the customer is aware of the benefits of owning Irish-bred horses. With that in mind an increase from the expected €850,000 in 2022 to €1.5 million in 2023 is needed.

This includes marketing the sale of Irish bred horses at a greater number of international shows, and through deepened engagement with Irish sales and auctions. A key tenet of the international marketing of Irish sport horses in 2023 will include the addition of a number of pilot trade missions to key export markets.

10. IRISH-BRED INCENTIVE SALES VOUCHER

Horse Sport Ireland is seeking €1m to create a sales incentive voucher scheme to encourage and support the ownership of Irish-bred sport horses. The sales of Irish Bred Sport Horses has been impacted by increased challenges and customs arising from the implementation of Brexit. In a recent survey of Irish breeders 54% are reporting sales into the UK, which is the largest market for Irish-bred horses.

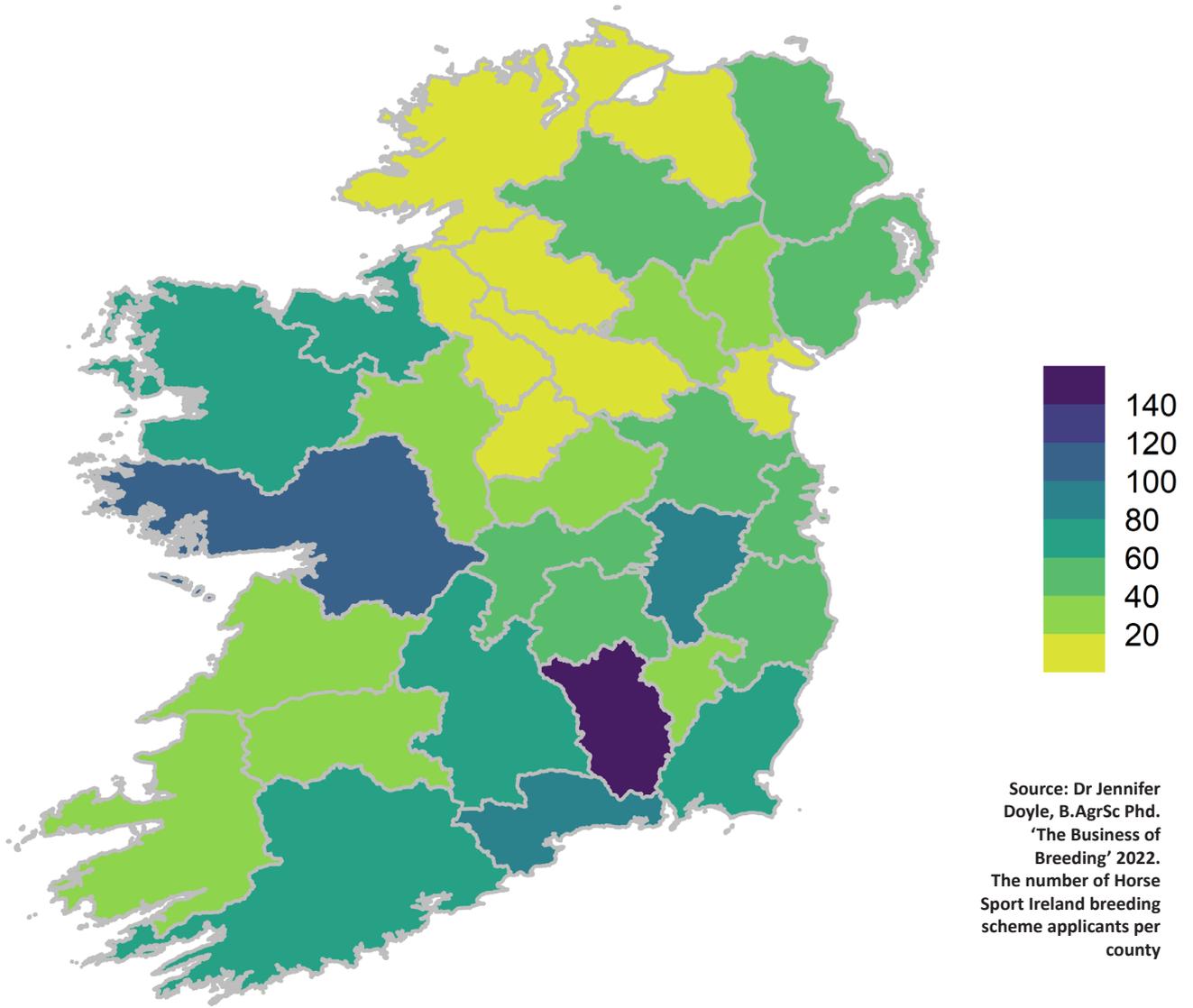
To support a market differentiation and increase sales into other EU markets, the Irish-Bred Sales Voucher is proposed to incentivise buyers to the Irish horse. It is a scheme designed to stimulate and strengthen Irish sport horse breeding and sales. HSI propose to create a sales voucher of €10,000 to 100 owners of Irish-bred winners at selected competitions (At CSIO2* or lower) in Jumping, Eventing & Dressage across Europe.

The owners of each eligible winner must be bred in Ireland and registered within a DAFM approved studbook at birth. Winners will have one year to spend their voucher in any public Irish sale/auction towards the purchase of any Irish-bred Horses. The scheme will be operated by Horse Sport Ireland and open to all Irish bred horses registered in a DAFM approved studbook. Horses purchased using the voucher must be purchased at a public sale/auction or online Irish platforms.



2021 Breeding Scheme Engagements

Total number of breeders and owners



Source: Dr Jennifer Doyle, B.AgrSc Phd. 'The Business of Breeding' 2022. The number of Horse Sport Ireland breeding scheme applicants per county



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