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Research Project:

The Influence of Health and Management Factors on Racehorse Performance

The Irish Equine Centre is pleased to announce that it will soon commence work on a research project entitled 'The Influence of Health and Management Factors on Racehorse Performance'. This project is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) under the Equine Technical Support & Equine Breeding Schemes 2019/2020.

The objectives of this project are:

- To identify horse health and management factors associated with poor performance in Irish racing yards.
- To determine the change in racing performance in a number of training yards following an assessment and recommendations by the IEC.
- To determine the correlation between laboratory test results and racing performance in a number of racing yards.
- To educate stud and stable staff on elements of equine health and welfare.

The first objective will be achieved via an in-depth questionnaire study of all aspects of racehorse health and management. Performance will be assessed using published performance figures from each yard and the relationship between performance and the various health and management factors will be determined.

Historical records of yard assessments and test results will be used to meet the second and third project objectives. This data will be used to calculate assessment scores, test scores and overall yard scores. The racing performance of horses from that yard will be determined based on published performance figure. The relationship between the various scores and performance will be assessed statistically.

The IEC will develop a range of educational resources for industry staff which will cover a range of topics relating to equine health, welfare and management. The education of staff in the thoroughbred racing and breeding industry in these areas has the potential to improve standards of care both in the short term, as part of their daily job, but also in the long term, as these individuals progress with their careers.

This project is reliant on engagement of racehorse trainers, vets and their staff to ensure successful completion of this project. The IEC is in an excellent position to carry out this research due to its existing close links with both racehorse trainers and equine vets.

Outputs from this project will be freely available on the Irish Equine Centre website with preliminary results expected in early 2021.