UK THOROUGHBRED HORSE PRODUCTION: RACING TO THE KNACKERMAN’S YARD?

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Background

83 517 horses were needed for Thoroughbred racing in Britain in 2008. These horses generated £2.86 billion for the British economy overall with the direct economic impact of British racing being £870,000,000 (2006)\(^1\).

It has been suggested that surplus horses produced by the Thoroughbred industry contribute significantly to the number of unwanted horses in the UK.

Surplus and unwanted horses are at the highest risk in regards to their welfare.
Aims of today

• Establish the number of surplus horses generated by the Thoroughbred industry
• Determine the impact of the economic downturn on the demand for Thoroughbred horses
• Identify the level of responsibility demonstrated by T’bred industry
Production – UK and Ireland

Thoroughbred Foal Production

10 June 2009
Pre training surplus

Excess Broodmare population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total No of Mares</th>
<th>Totals foals</th>
<th>Excess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>30000</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>-20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>30000</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>-20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>30000</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>-20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>30000</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>-20000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre training surplus

• 1980 foal crop entering training 62% (Jeffcott et al., 1982)$^3$
• 1999 foal crop entering training 55% (Wilsher et al., 2006)$^4$

• Estimate for 2008 between 38 – 45% did not entering training

• Pre training surplus 2008 estimate
  - UK + Ireland  6968 – 8253
  - UK          2250 - 2664
Post racing surplus

- Limited Data
- Approximately 4000 leaving racing (Retraining of Racehorses)\(^5\)
- RTR state 4% of horses are rehomed

  *This would be 3700 horses leaving racing (2008)*

- BHA 2006 figures 19% horses leaving racing are retired to stud\(^6\)

  *Mare plus 1\(^{st}\) year stallions for 2006 = 1436* (19% = 7558 total)
Approximate total numbers of surplus Thoroughbred horses annually

- Excess broodmare populations: 12,339
- Foals not entering racing: 6,968 – 8,252
- Horses retired from Racing: 3,700 – 7,558
- Horses retired from breeding: 3,978
  - Mares deceased or retired

- Total: 23,007 – 28,150
- Total less excess Bm populations: 10,668 – 15,811
What is being done by the industry

- Horserace Betting Levy Board
- 10% levy on gambling

- Total levy 2007 - 08: £116,500,000
- Expenditure for retraining/rehoming racehorses: £58,000
- % spend on retraining racehorses: 0.05%
- % spend on administration by HBLB: 3%
- National Stud and grants to breed societies: £389,920

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Retraining of Racehorses

- Expenditure 2007 – £550 000
- Does not directly retrain or rehome ex racehorses
- Claims four funded charities rehome 4% of horses coming out of racing.
## Charities which work directly with horses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charity</th>
<th>Rehomed ‘08</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greatwood</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>£514 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEROS</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>£285 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorcroft</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>£310 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T'bred Rehab Centre</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>£413 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>148</strong></td>
<td><strong>£1 524 200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*148 @ 4% = 3700 individual horses

Rehoming and expenditure figures
Outlines what relevant organisations can do to reduce the incidents of equine welfare problems.
The BHA regulates horseracing in the UK and this specifically includes the welfare of horses under the control of those it regulates. Those regulated include owners of horses in training, jockeys and trainers, but do not include thoroughbred horse breeders, or those who keep thoroughbred horses retired from racing, except those in the care of licensed trainers.
GDP Growth – National Statistics

Percentages


1q 4q
Economic Downturn in Racing Industry

Aggregate (Gns) Tattersalls 1998 - 2008

£0.00
£50,000,000.00
£100,000,000.00
£150,000,000.00
£200,000,000.00
£250,000,000.00
£300,000,000.00
£300,000,000,000.00
£250,000,000,000.00
£200,000,000,000.00
£150,000,000,000.00
£100,000,000,000.00
£50,000,000,000.00

Economic Downturn in Racing Industry

Average Number of Horses Presented for Sales and Sold - Tattersalls 1998 - 2008
Economic Downturn in Racing Industry

Tattersalls 1998 2008 -% Horses Sold

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Economic Downturn in Racing Industry

Change (%) in major Thoroughbred Sales from March 2008 - Feb 2009 against previous years sales

% Change in Average Price of 18 major T'bred Sales
Linear (% Change in Average Price of 18 major T'bred Sales)
Industry response to economic downturn!

Percent change in stud fees 2008 - 2009
British Stallions*

* British Horseracing Authority – 115/132 listed British stallions with covering fee over £1000. 17 removed from data as no 2008 fee listed or currency discrepancy between 2008-2009.
Conclusions

• Thoroughbred registrations ------424 437¹⁰
• Horses in training UK ---------------15 349
• Balance --------------------------409 088 non racing Thoroughbreds
• Budget to retrain/rehome all horses coming out of the system approximately £118m?

• Exact numbers of surplus Thoroughbred horses needs to be established (transparency)!
• The destination of these horses need to be know!
• Responsible and efficient production considering demand and economic situation!

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Think before you breed!

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Sources of information


