Why and How the Racing Industry Fails the Horse

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Play The Game 2009
British Racing Industry 2008
Concise Overview of Horses, Meetings and Money

• 18,500+ Foals Produced (Britain & Ireland)
• 15,000+ Horses in Training / 500 Trainers
• 9,500 Races at 1,400 Meetings a Year
• Levy yield £100,000,000 from £1,000,000,000 Bookmakers’ Profits on Horse Race Betting
• Corporate Dominance
Major Welfare Issues

• Only about half of all horses bred ever race: failures; over-production; insufficient owners; lack of racing opportunities
• Disposal of unwanted horses
• Stringent and demanding training/racing regime
• 1 in 35 race horses that start the season racing will die prematurely by the end of it
• 180+ horses consistently killed on British courses every year
• Use of the Whip - 833 Breaches of the rules (2008)
Five Problematic Areas

- Self-regulation of welfare - deficient audit procedures, no accountability and no transparency
- A limited racing calendar that does not allow all horses to meet their potential and race at an ability level that suits their needs
- Inadequate Levy system and grossly uneven distribution of prize-money
- Over-production of Thoroughbreds
- Closed gene pool with dominant, fashionable inbred-bloodlines
Self Regulation
British Horseracing Authority
International Federation of Horseracing Authorities

• Self-defined welfare
• No accountability
• No transparency
• Compliant workforce - vets
• Domination by corporate / commercial empires with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo (bookmakers; racecourses; breeders; owners, sponsors)
A limited racing calendar that does not allow all horses to meet their potential and race at an ability level that suits their needs

- Inadequate racing structure
- Inappropriate racing conditions
- Lack of ability to cope with race conditions
- Poor Handicapping (rating) System
Inadequate Levy System

- Funding dependent on bookmaker profits / negotiation
- Low Return to British Race Horse Owners
  - Britain 20% Free-market Betting
  - France 53% State Betting Industry
  - USA 56% State Betting Industry
  - Japan 69% State Betting Industry
  - Hong Kong 131% State Betting
Uneven Distribution of Prize-money

• £710,000 to Derby winner + stud fees
• £1,300 to a Hexham chase winner
• Most horses never win a race - therefore earn no money for keep-costs (£15,000)
Over-production of Thoroughbreds / Fashionable In-bred Bloodlines

• **Huge Commercial Interests**

• **Bred to Sell** at Bloodstock sales
  • Pin-hookers: to sell-on
  • Insufficient buyers/owners

• **Bred to race** but because of huge failure rate, horses are easily replaced leading to huge a surplus of horses

• **Any horse** can become vulnerable to failing the system
SOLUTIONS

• Independent welfare regulation - allowing rigorous audit procedures, accountability and transparency
• A diverse racing calendar that allows all horses to meet their potential and race at an ability level that suits their needs
• A balanced distribution of Levy funds - prize-money; retirement provision
• Greater diversity in bloodlines
• Reduction in the numbers of horses bred