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**SUBMISSION FROM THE BREEDERS
ON THE RACING CALENDAR FOLLOWING CHANGES TO HORSE BIRTHDAY**

A. THIS SUBMISSION

This submission comes from four members of the NZSBA Executive (Cathie Shaw, Katrina Price, Jay Abernethy and John Mooney). Colin Hair and Brad Reid are involved in the process already.

We are commenting on publicly available material. We note your comment to John Mooney, and the CEO's video, that more detail will be available on the next round.

We look forward to participation in the next round.

We make the observation that we believe this process needs a solid confirmed outcome before October in our view. Owners and trainers need to know ASAP when and where they are preparing horses to race.

Finally, with a change of this magnitude HRNZ needs to establish, publish and report on performance measures and targets. A monitoring system needs to report progress or otherwise to the board, management and the sport. Changes can then be made if required to build on benefits and reduce harm.

B. STRONG SUPPORT FOR BIRTHDAY CHANGE & OPPORTUNITIES IT BRINGS

NZSBA is strongly supportive of the change of birthdays and using the opportunity for three purposes:

- a. Improving the structure of the racing calendar for the optimal utilisation and earning capacity of horses;
- b. increase the effectiveness of the racing season in using the horses that are available;
- c. increasing the number of horses that start a racing career - we still have less than 50% of registered fillies and slightly more than 50% of colts getting to the races.

An important factor in handicapping, programming and stake setting is the profitability of wagering from our product. This has an impact on the funding of our sport agreed through Racing New Zealand. As this is outside the brief of the Working Group, we ask that this is referred to the HRNZ board to consider when reviewing the group's recommendations. It may well be a separate large body of work that needs to be completed soon.

C. NZSBA & FUNDING

- a. We appreciate that the funding of changes and new initiatives depends on funding that comes from Racing NZ and the stability of that funding.
- b. Turnover is up and has been maintained during the COVID era, but will that continue? We support HRNZ board policy of building up reserves.



WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE & WHY?

- a. We ask that the next phase of consultation establishes clarity on the desired objective of change, and perhaps options for achieving the desired outcome;
- b. What are the costs and benefits of the recommended changes, both fiscal and economic?
- c. Does all changes recognise where the population of owners, horses and other participants are located? For example, Southland represents about 25% of the sport, Canterbury just over 50% and the balance being North Island. Looking to the future where should we be seeking to “future proof” the sport? Are there region specific strategies we should be adopting in the placement of races, meetings and stakes that consider land prices, employment, costs and access to support services? Maybe that comes in the next phase of work?
- d. What is the evidence that the changes proposed will achieve the set objective? How will success be measured and over what period?

E. DO NO HARM

- a. While there is an understandable desire for change we have to be careful to ensure that those parts of the system which fulfill a beneficial purpose now are not discarded or harmed unnecessarily We need to keep the good and build on it.
- b. Do the changes recognise the opportunities to get the best use out of a venue in its totality for the benefit of the sport.
- c. We need to ensure all regions are given the opportunity to remain strong. For example, the new open class proposal could deprive Country Cups fields of open class horses - what impact will this have on local owners, fans, trainers & clubs?

F. SPECIFIC CATEGORIES NEED MORE

We recognise that developing the detail of the following proposals is noted as future work for the committee. While we understand there is a need for a set of aspirational races at the top, that is not where the vast major of owners and horses are. Breeders are named as owners in over 50% of the horses that race. Yearling sales account for a quarter of the crop only. Breeders will bred, sell and race if they see opportunities for enjoyment from racing and potential for a sale. They will definitely:

- a. support for trotting if there is a more equitable distribution of stakes races, especially F&Ms; and
- b. support increased racing for F&Ms generally; and
- c. an equitable regional distribution of racing that enables them to access racing in a grade appropriate to their horse’s ability; and perhaps in
- d. conditioned racing for lower fee stallions, especially “colonial” ones.



G. OPEN CLASS RACING

- a. A large part of the discussion is about the proposal to increase opportunities for open class pacing horses. Is the group convinced that the increased allocation of prizemoney is justified given the small incremental return of an increase of four horses in the pool?
- b. What about trotting?
- c. It is not clear that the proposed set of dates takes account of the opportunities for the better horses to exploit key feature races in Australia?
- d. We are also conscious that these races could be exploited by three or four top horses with the rest just running for place money? In the last two years the favourite has won 50% of all races with a stake of \$30,000 or more.
- e. Consideration should be given to conditioning some open class races to allow a greater spread of stake distribution & competitiveness in the R80+ band.
- f. What specific measures will be made to retain intermediate and progressive horses in NZ? The small population of Open Class Horses is affected more by the lack of horses progressing through to Open Class, possible due to handicapping system's generous drop back provisions, than the export of horses once they reach open class. Exports will continue.

G. CARNIVAL CONCEPT

- a. These are not carnivals as proposed, they are 'seasons' in 3 locations, one being a very short one down south.
- b. The two other "carnivals" are too long in one region; high cost to trainers to relocate and staff two locations; owners will not be happy with trainer away from home base for extended period; there is potential for integrity issues/lack of oversight at both bases; there is unnecessary additional cost to owners for horses when away and travel to see their horse.
- c. Why no premiers in Canterbury for eight months where there are over 50% of horses and participants. The Working Group has an objective of people being able to see horse race? Why only lower grade at the centre of harness for eight months, then?
- d. We need to be conscious that racing season is being extended and not just deferred. For example, 2YO trotters won't have any feature races until September, giving a four-month season. We see no need to have the majority of premier racing at the backend of the year, and mostly in Canterbury.
- e. Attention needs to be given to the number of feature racing required for late 2YO/early 3YO horses. There could likely be a short period of concentrated feature racing for each crop. Is this the most beneficial distribution of stakes? Horse well-being? Previously, there was criticism that the 3YO Sires Stakes run on Cup Day was just a re-run of the 2YO field the previous May. The proposed 2YO Harness Millions in December & 3YO Harness Millions in February is an even shorter turn-around, limiting opportunity for different horses to make the field. There must be opportunities in the South Island in the first half of the year for top grade age group racing.

Thank You