

## IRISH GREYHOUND BOARD



Mr Lenihan

Responses to your questions attached.

In reference to Stanozolol and other substances in your interview with Mr. Tony Walsh yesterday, you might be good enough to point out to your listeners that contrary to his assertion that a slap on the hand and a mediocre fine was the norm when these substances were found, that fines as high as €7,500.00 were imposed by IGB last year when stanozolol was found to be present in greyhounds.



## Responses to Press Queries from Barry Lenihan, RTE, Drivetime Programme

**Might there be any detailed information on the progress IGB has made towards achieving the financial targets which are set in its own Strategic Plan?**

The strategic plan was updated with the publication of the IGB's reply to Indecon recommendations on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2014. This reply was accompanied with financial projections outlining IGB plans for 2015 to 2017 and principally addressed the proposals to repay bank debt. While the time frame of the Indecon reply and the original strategic plan remain the same, both expiring in 2017, the fundamental change is that IGB are now projecting a more aggressive strategy in respect of permanent debt retirement which now encapsulates an asset disposal strategy.

IGB are following the detailed plans and timeframes included in the reply as referred to above. These plans along with the additional allocation from the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund are the standards that IGB are measuring actual performance to.

Some of the achievements to date include:

- The number of race meetings was calibrated by 5.5% during 2015 which has been maintained to date. While some headline turnover figures were reduced as a result the overall costs of these meetings resulted in an improved return from those tracks affected.
- By the end of December 2016 bank debt will have been reduced by circa €2.0 million
- Through a subsidiary company, Abargrove Ltd, the transfer of food & beverage operations has been completed for 9 stadia and is operating under the trade name Events and Hospitality Services (EHS). Among the many objectives supporting this decision was the ability to increase the flexibility in the offerings that is provided to customers.
- Funding proposals towards the resolution of the liability in the defined benefit pension scheme have been accepted by the Pensions Authority in September 2016. Implementation of these proposals will be completed by the end of 2016.
- In conjunction with Horse Sport Ireland three "Jumping in the City" events were held in Limerick, Cork and Shelbourne Park stadia. Not only were these events of commercial benefit, it showcased the alternative uses greyhound facilities can accommodate. These events introduced the three greyhound venues to patrons who did not visit greyhound stadia previously.
- The anticipated income from the internationalisation of Tote is now live with ongoing co-mingling wagering from several US based customers.
- Furthermore, the contract for the broadcast of TV pictures from Mullingar, Youghal & Tralee was signed in June 2016 and has been a regular income stream since February 9<sup>th</sup> 2016 with returns being made to the wider greyhound industry.



## Outlook statement

Bord na gCon have progressed and delivered an integrated programme of measures that has led and continues to increase returns from racing activities which include

- i. Results from track activities have improved by delivery of alternative sources of income at stadia level with the advantage of the flexibility offered through a consolidated food and beverage service along with central control of expenditure.
- ii. Race grants have been increased by 25% since January 2016, along with other supports paid to greyhound racing participants it is forecast that an additional €1.3m will be paid in race grants by the end of 2016.
- iii. Further investment into the digital platforms developed is to continue in line with the changes in the customer of the IGB

## **When will the IGB publish its annual report for 2015; and what is the reason the board has not produced this report to date?**

The 2015 annual report was passed by the Board on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2016, following the completion of the required field audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General. It is expected his auditors certificate will issue very shortly and its approval by that body.

## **When does the IGB intend to publish its annual report for 2016?**

IGB will be working to a June 17 2017 sign off but that timing will ultimately be determined by the timing of C & AG audit and sign off by C & AG.

## **Who is currently carrying out the internal auditor's role for the IGB?**

As has been conveyed to the Public Accounts Committee and that Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine, this function is being carried by external consultants, currently by Mazars, accountants and financial consultants.

## **The Oireachtas Committee recommended that the ongoing issues concerning the breeding of greyhounds with dogs deceased for two years or more, registered in the stud book by the ICC, must be addressed immediately.**

The IGB introduced amending legislation in 2014 removing the two year rule in relation to Artificial Insemination pending a study by an Animal Quantitative Geneticist on whether AI has an effect on the gene pool of greyhounds and inbreeding. The report is complete however it is currently being translated into a scientific journal format for submission for peer review. It might also be helpful to note that the results of such a study suggest that the rate of accumulation of inbreeding is currently within international guidelines.

In the interim the position is that a greyhound registered in the Irish Greyhound Stud Book is said to have complied with the AI regulations.



### Additional Information

The IGB has repeatedly warned owners and trainers who do not comply with anti doping and medication control regulations that they will be targeted and severely sanctioned from the sport. Since its response to the Indecon Report in October 2014, the IGB has introduced a comprehensive suite of new statutory instruments and regulations designed to strengthen compliance within the industry and to facilitate the imposition of severe sanctions against the small minority within the sport who breach anti doping protocols. Specifically

The IGB has introduced new regulations which enable it to :

- Publish all laboratory results where there is an adverse analytical finding
- Prohibit a greyhound from racing when an adverse analytical finding has been made until such time as a test for prohibited substances has been carried out and the result of the test is negative
- Publish all Control Committee decisions
- Undertake out of competition testing at kennels

There has been a significant ramping up of Bord na gCon's testing regime and of the sanctions it imposes, using the existing legislative framework. These include:

- Random testing at races
- Out of competition testing
- Testing at greyhound sales and trials
- Prosecutions under the Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011
- Stricter licensing conditions on trainers' licences
- Investigation and prosecution of cases involving anabolic steroids
- Revocation of licences of trainers found to have committed anti-doping breaches
- Issuing of Disqualification Orders of the involved Greyhounds;
- Establishment of list of laboratories for independent analysis of the "B sample on request from owners and trainers

From January next year, all owners and trainers will be obliged to maintain medical records for all greyhounds.

In additional initiatives, Bord na gCon has established a Scientific Committee of national and international experts to advise it on matters relating to doping and medication control. The findings of the Scientific Committee will be the basis of annual briefings for industry stakeholders. A National Greyhound Consultative Forum has also been established bringing all stakeholders together on a wider variety of greyhound related matters, including anti-doping and medication control. The IGB has also led the establishment of an operational regulatory stakeholder group on the Management of Intelligence and Drugs Action in Sports (MIDAS) to share best practice on rules, research and intelligence in so far as is permitted within existing legislation.