

# Equine Anti-Doping Report

For The Six Months Ending 30th June 2023

Issue 5 - July 2023

## Executive Summary

In the first six months of 2023 a total of 2,891 samples were taken from horses by the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB) team. Racedays will always be the largest source of samples taken, and Pre-Race Testing accounted for 268 (15.7%) of the 1,707 samples taken throughout the 174 racecourse fixtures from January through to the end of June. The increase in Pre-Race Testing is a further layer in our integrity processes on a Raceday and will be followed with the introduction of 'On Arrival' testing in the second half of the year.



There was also a strong focus on risk-based out of competition testing in the first half of this year. On over a third of the premises selected for testing by IHRB staff so far this year, the sampling preceded major race fixtures in Britain or Breeze-Up Sales on both sides of the Irish Sea.

## Update on Dr. Suann recommendations

Following the independent review of the IHRB's Equine Anti-Doping Programme by Dr. Craig Suann, the IHRB has retained a focus on implementing where possible the principles and specifics of his 18 recommendations, which as he stated are "capable of enhancing the robustness of the programme's processes, capabilities and capacities". Fourteen of the recommendations have been addressed or implemented, with additional funding/collaboration needed for the remainder and plans are in place to operationalise these remaining recommendations when resources allow.

Key recommendations from Dr. Suann's review already in place include enhancement of our Raceday sampling and Out of Competition strategies and the introduction of CCTV coverage in the IHRB

Sampling Units. With CCTV functional across all IHRB Sampling Units, and the veterinary team having received training in June as to how to operate it, live footage is streamed onto a tablet for stable staff to watch their horse being sampled, which means that they can safely undertake their obligations to witness the sampling without needing to be in the box. The system also allows for review of any of the camera angles in real time or playback should an anti-doping concern arise during the day. This has greatly enhanced our wherewithal to deter, detect and/or evidence inappropriate activity.

Other recommendations achieved are enhanced security of the arrival, storage and dispatch of samples from the IHRB and complete digitisation of all equine anti-doping operations.

## Memorandum of Understanding between IHRB and Veterinary Council of Ireland



*The Memorandum of Understanding between IHRB and VCI was signed on 7th February 2023*

On the 7th February this year, Darragh O'Loughlin, IHRB CEO and Vivienne Duggan, President Veterinary Council of Ireland, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the IHRB and the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI). The MoU is intended to assist and support both the Veterinary Council of Ireland and the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board in performing their individual regulatory functions, and to enable the sharing of information as relevant between the two organisations in the public interest.

### Objectives of the agreement are:

- a) to promote cooperation between the two organisations in areas of strategic and high-level operational interest;
- b) to facilitate co-operation on cross referral of concerns where one organisation believes it falls within the remit of the other;
- c) to work together to promote knowledge and understanding of all matters concerning the safe and appropriate use of medicines in horses; and
- d) to collaborate on communication and information sharing activities.

## Veterinary Council of Ireland position on intravenous injections and blood sampling in horses

In their Spring 2023 Newsletter<sup>1</sup>, the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) published an important position statement relevant to equine antidoping and medication control, which all Trainers and Handlers should note, extract as follows:

'The VCI considers that the administration of a veterinary medicinal product via an intravenous injection to a horse; the taking of blood samples intravenously from a horse and the performance of upper respiratory tract endoscopy in horses are all procedures that constitute the practice of veterinary medicine as defined by section 53 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended.

This means that these procedures can only be carried out by a veterinary practitioner or a veterinary nurse working under the direction of a veterinary practitioner. The VCI does not consider that any of these procedures fall within any of the exceptions in the Veterinary Practice Act or in Regulations made under the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013. As such, under no circumstance should any of these procedures be performed by persons who are not on the Register of Veterinary Practitioners or the Register of Veterinary Nurses.'

The IHRB will continue to work with participants to ensure understanding of and compliance with the position of the VCI.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.vci.ie/getmedia/1fd87c9c-a249-47ed-82ab-524332edd751/VCI-Newsletter-Issue-36.pdf>

## IHRB Operational Activity

The following is a sample of the raceday and out-of-competition activity carried out in the six months ended June 2023.

### Raceday

#### JANUARY TO JUNE

RACES	RACE URINE	RACE BLOOD	RACE HAIR	PRE RACE TESTING	TOTAL	ADVERSE ANALYTICAL FINDINGS
1,285	1,131	252	56	268	1,707	3

### Point-to-Point

#### JANUARY TO JUNE

RACES	RACE URINE	RACE BLOOD	RACE HAIR	TOTAL	ADVERSE ANALYTICAL FINDINGS
435	0	438	0	438	2

### Out-of-Competition/Inspections

#### JANUARY TO JUNE

VISITS	URINE	BLOOD	HAIR	TOTAL	ADVERSE ANALYTICAL FINDINGS
92	1	312	433	746	0



Darragh O'Loughlin and Dr Lynn Hillyer in discussion with Minister Martin Heydon and Minister Charlie McConalogue at the Punchestown Festival

### Monthly breakdown of Out-Of-Competition tests

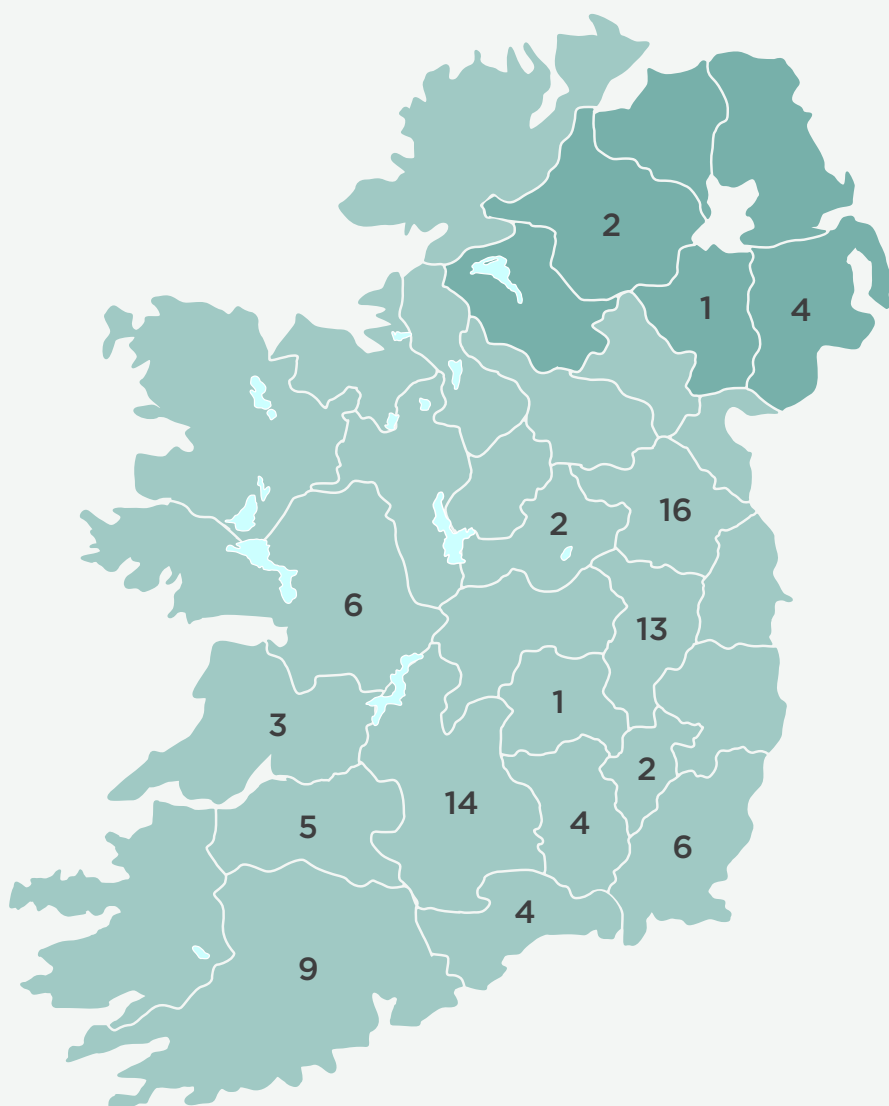
	URINE	BLOOD	HAIR	TOTAL
January	0	58	58	116
February	1	150	150	301
March	0	46	46	92
April	0	26	26	52
May	0	23	97	120
June	0	9	56	65
TOTAL	1	312	433	746

\*A further 5 miscellaneous samples were taken and tested by LGC Laboratories.

### Monthly breakdown of all Raceday and Point To Point samples

	RACEDAY		POINT TO POINT		RACE URINE	RACE BLOOD	RACE HAIR	PRE RACE TESTING	POINT TO POINT	TOTAL
	FIXTURES	RUNNERS	FIXTURES	RUNNERS						
January	23	1,919	9	403	144	33	1	0	54	232
February	19	1,694	15	726	126	40	18	25	90	299
March	26	2,182	16	746	172	28	11	86	98	395
April	33	2,805	19	1,117	219	55	1	55	124	454
May	36	3,434	10	699	241	48	25	42	72	428
June	37	3,058	0	0	229	48	0	60	0	337
TOTAL	174	15,092	69	3,751	1,131	252	56	268	438	2,145

## Map of Inspections and OOCT in 2023



“Equine anti-doping is a top priority for the IHRB, as it is for the sport, and we have no tolerance for any breaches of anti-doping rules. Swifter prosecution of adverse analytical findings and stringent penalties for breaches will continue to demonstrate our seriousness in this regard. Owners and Trainers who comply with the rules deserve to be protected from those who don’t.”



**Darragh O'Loughlin**  
IHRB Chief Executive Officer



**Dr Lynn Hillyer**  
IHRB Chief Veterinary Officer/  
Head of Anti-Doping

“Our focus in the first half of this year has been to broaden our pre-race testing with more of the team involved, more samples being taken and more analysis done per sample than to date – with no results of concern yet reported. Whilst our hair sample numbers are fewer than this time last year, our numbers of analyses from the hair have increased overall, with more segmentation to allow a better

understanding of the timing of any exposure to a substance. We continue to make as much information as possible available to participants via the Seminars available at [ihrb.ie](http://ihrb.ie), advice from our professional team on the racecourse daily and in the office via [equine@ihrb.ie](mailto:equine@ihrb.ie) or through the respective representative bodies.”