



Horse Charity appeals to racehorse owners to support voluntary €1.50 equine welfare levy

The Association of Irish Racehorse Owners is supporting the Irish Horse Welfare Trust (IHWT) request that all racehorse owners should be given the opportunity to make a regular donation towards the horse charity's running costs by adding a **voluntary €1.50 equine welfare levy** to the existing entry handling charge of €13.50. This would be charged at the same time as the regular entry handling charge and would therefore also be refunded in full (as with the rest of the charge) on any occasions when horses are balloted out.

The Irish Horse Welfare Trust (IHWT) is the only Registered Charity in Ireland dedicated to horses and ponies. Operating since 1999, the IHWT is now based in its own premises at Woodenbridge, Co Wicklow, its purchase being part funded through a capital appeal supported by all elements of the racing and breeding industry. The farm comprises 68 acres, stabling, an all weather arena and a house in need of renovation which it is intended to convert into an education/visitors centre in the future.

On average, **60 equines are accommodated at any one time**, although there were more than 90 equines on the premises over the Christmas period due to the increasing number of welfare cases. The numbers also include an average of 14 ex-racehorses which are in the country's only re-training for re-homing programme.

The key activities of the IHWT include the following:

- **Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-homing** of horses & ponies
(approx 50% thoroughbred horses and 50% other breeds and ponies)
- Ex-Racehorse **Re-training for Re-homing** Programme
(the only such programme in Ireland)
- **Promoting Equine Welfare & Education**
(including projects in inner city Dublin and Moyross in Limerick)

Operating costs at the IHWT are kept to an absolute minimum with a considerable amount of voluntary labour and donated supplies. However, annual costs amount to €300,000, of which roughly one-third is received in grants from industry bodies such as Horse Racing Ireland and the Department of Agriculture. **The balance of some €200,000 has to be raised** annually through fund-raising events and donations.

The IHWT appeals to owners to support the welfare of equines in Ireland by agreeing to pay this voluntary €1.50 levy per entry. (There is a similar and mandatory charge per entry in Britain). HRI has kindly agreed to administer the scheme and this forms which have been sent out to all owners should be returned **by post to Horse Racing Ireland , Ballymany, Curragh, Co. Kildare or Faxed to 045-455409**