

Approved under EU and Irish law as Ireland's modern and progressive sport horse studbook focused on all three Olympic disciplines

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2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

We started 2020 on a very difficult note with the sudden passing of our friend and colleague **Arnold Kootstra**. Many WSI breeders met Arnold in his role as mare and foal inspector on WSI's Mare Inspection Committee. Many more breeders in the wider sport horse community met Arnold as a trainer in events we held across the country. At the anniversary of Arnold's death we remember him and wish comfort to his wife Elise.

Later in January the World Health Organisation (WHO) announced a global health emergency because of the **SARS-CoV-2 virus**. The next day WSI announced the suspension of all events. When the WHO declared the COVID-19 pandemic on 12 March, WSI affirmed that no events would be held until further notice.

While mare and stallion inspections could not be held at equestrian centres, WSI inspectors performed video assessments of mares that resulted in valuable feedback. We also offered guidance to owners of a dozen stallions based on videos of their stallion's conformation, movement, loose-jumping, and jumping under saddle. Based on this guidance several stallions were gelded, several are not proceeding with the Approval process, and others are being prepared for 2021 stallion inspections by undergoing clinical and radiographic exams, genetic and genomic testing, and training under saddle. The **2021 stallion inspections** are scheduled for the first two weeks of March, depending on public health restrictions in place at that time.

WSI's pro-active **WFFS1** policy continues to be the most comprehensive testing and surveillance programme of any studbook in the world. We are pleased to report that the genetic mutation has not been found in the Irish Warmblood population. In the future, if a breeder with a non-carrier mare were to use a stallion that is a carrier, there is a fifty percent (50%) chance that the resulting foal will be a carrier. So it is possible that, in the future, a carrier will be born into the WSI population. But our comprehensive policy of determining the status of every foal means that breeders and purchasers can make informed decisions.

WSI's **genomic selection** program continued in 2020 with more horses being tested for the genes associated with osteochondrosis (OC). DAFM provided partial funding that allowed WSI to offer a free genomic test to every testable foal registered in 2020. Approximately 98% of foals passed the test and were awarded the D-OC predicate. These results surpassed our long-term pass rate of 92% for stallions, mares, and young horses. And having the D-WFFS1 and D-OC predicates printed in the foal's passport and zootechnical certificate are valuable signals to purchasers of the foal's genetic health. All of the free tests have been used, but please contact WSI if you'd like to order the DNA-OC test for your Irish Warmblood horse or your Approved Mare or Studbook Mare. The results of our WFFS1 and OC testing show that the Irish Warmblood population is very healthy, and that our breeders produce healthy horses suitable for high level sport and breeding.

In June WSI became the first studbook in the world to become **carbon negative**. "Carbon negative" means that WSI goes beyond achieving net-zero carbon emissions by actually removing from the atmosphere more carbon dioxide than we create. WSI purchased offsets equal to more than four times WSI's estimated carbon production. So for every tonne of carbon WSI's activities produce our offset programme removes over four tonnes of carbon. The offsets were used to support high quality international carbon reduction projects, mostly in developing countries, that are independently certified as reducing carbon emissions and contributing to a healthy environment. We further reduced carbon emissions by investing in LED lighting and by ensuring that all the electricity we purchase is sourced from 100% renewable generation such as wind and solar.

Finally, thank you for providing us with bright spots by sending us photos of your foals and updates on your youngsters and horses in sport. In these challenging times horses remain a constant reminder that hope and caring for others (human and equine) endure. **We hope to see you at a WSI event in 2021.**