

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2007

TO ALL ICCPS SOCIETIES, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS.

Welcome to newsletter no. 2 for 2007 - 2008 season.

On behalf of the executive board of the ICCPS I would like to wish each and every member of the international groups of Connemara Pony lovers the happiest Christmas possible and that the year 2008 will not only be prosperous but will bring those things to you and your families that you privately wish to happen. In these wishes I hope that we do not forget the very reason for this period each year! From comments in our local newspapers this week when children were asked what Christmas was about not one mentioned that it was the birth day of Christ but that it was simply when Santa came; when we have a holiday, and when presents are given out!



The newspapers and TV news from around the world still show us that climate change must be challenged by all countries. Massive snow falls, blizzards, floods, depletion of the Arctic and Antarctic plateaus, and down here, a continuing devastating drought and so on. For a few days then perhaps let us remember, enjoy our families and the ponies and look to 2008 for some changes that can and will count!

In looking back over this year and past years at what has been achieved or not achieved I think that the best possible result on the stud book rules has been reached. I have been corrected in saying that the new 2007 rules have been accepted by all groups. I still believe that this is correct, and, whilst some EU groups have varied these rules to suit individual needs, the basic rules as debated for so long remain just that - a standard set of rules has been agreed and variations are allowed for EU groups so long as the EU principles are adhered to. We still of course have the "outsiders" who are working to their own programs based on the 1998 rules with the possible change over in later years when and if a change is seen as appropriate.

We are all aware just how long this task has taken to reach a climax. It all began way back in the late 1980s and then the draft set of stud book rules was produced by the CPBS in 1998, agreed to; was brought back to meetings for further variations annually until 2007 when the rules were finally set as the standard stud book rules.

The database project has been a long time coming to fruition - but - it is hoped, it too, will be able to be finalised in 2008 and thus provide a ready reference to those seeking to find the breeding lines etc that they wish to follow or research!

Standardisation of judges and inspectors has also been an agenda item for some time and has not as yet been finalised. A standardised veterinary inspection document is now used by all societies. Movement of ponies from and into any stud book society world wide is now recognised.

The Feely report has strongly indicated to all groups the deterioration of the genetic basis of the Connemara Pony herd with all societies being made aware of need to maintain those basic qualities of type, height and breed to ensure a strengthening of the genetic base worldwide.

It is an unquestionable statement that almost all of the work of the ICCPS since its inception in 1999 has been focused on producing a set of rules acceptable to all. I believe that this was the original role of the ICCPS - "a standardised set of rules to suit EU Council demands".

Subsequent to that function, it was wisely decided to develop an organisation that was to develop, maintain, support, promote and coordinate a system whereby the Connemara Pony could be developed as a distinctive breed worldwide.

With the obvious primary function of standardised rules being acceptance in 2007, I feel that the roles of the ICCPS must now change to encompass the wider requirements of the mission statement. I have drafted a proposal along these lines and sent it to the executive board for thought and comment. You will also find that an article on possible future roles of the ICCPS will appear in the 2007 edition of "An Capaillín".

There are a number of areas in which the ICCPS can now move to comply with the mission statement of development, promotion, support and co-ordination of the rules for registration as laid down by the mother society. It must ensure that the data base is finalised and available for all; that a standard system of inspections for all ponies worldwide is devised and accepted; the standardised training for all inspectors and classifiers to ensure that type and other areas of uniqueness of the pony is achieved; and the development of a worldwide promotion program and, I would hope, a register of performance ponies and their progenies is produced, updated regularly and available through the website to ensure that those who are looking for that unique performance quality can find the right types.

The register would show the names of those ponies that are competing - in what field of competition - performance details, the sire and dams of these ponies, and, as part of the register, both dams and sires listed and this list to then become the basis from which breeders and owners of performance ponies can refer to in their selection processes. This program could be further extended to provide a premium list of sires and dams.

These then are just my personal visions for the future of the ICCPS. I would ask that you think about them, please also see that these areas are discussed within your society and your delegates for 2008 are aware of your ideas. WHY? It is my intention, when drafting an agenda for 2008 to seek approval from the executive board, and your groups, to have these concepts as the basis of that agenda. A new start and role for the ICCPS and what the constitution requires.

Whilst on 2008 agenda - remember that the ICCPS meeting will be held on 27 March 2008. In a conversation with Tom MacLochlainn this week we briefly looked at what that week's program could encompass - Thursday ICCPS Annual and technical meetings; Friday - inspection; Sat-Sun - festival activities - show jumping, free jumping, dressage, harness etc. Monday - further inspections. Remember this is very much a reminder so that you can begin to think about

travel, accommodation etc. The CPBS has already forwarded a program of the Connemara festival for this period - 27 march - 2nd April 2008. If you do not have a copy for your members please contact the CPBS office ASAP.

I have received from several sources, comments as to the cost and presentation of the new Inspection DVD released in Clifden this year. I have spoken to Tom and it appears that there was some wire crossing in relation to the cost of the DVD. The cost of the unit was and is 20 euros, With copies still available at the CPBS office. The DVD has, it seems, been well accepted throughout Ireland and other areas.

I hope that all societies have forwarded their article for inclusion in "An Capaillín". What a wonderful idea if the ICCPS could give this publication greater support, both in content and financial support, to ensure that our mission statement was able to be further promoted through this source!

The afternoon coffee has just arrived - the Australia - New Zealand cricket match is now on TV so I again wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a Joyous and prosperous New Year and a wonderful crop of beautiful Connemara foals come your spring. (Just to crow a little - the Aussie team has just won the three match series!)

John Tennant

Chair, ICCPS