

Equine Young Breeders Programme (IRE)



**HORSE SPORT
IRELAND**



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



What is the Young Breeders Programme?

The Equine Young Breeders (IRE) programme, initiated in 2005, is facilitated by Teagasc in collaboration with Horse Sport Ireland and funded by Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM). A key focus is the assessment of conformation and athleticism traits of performance horses, though the programme delivers much more than that.

The programme has established itself as a mechanism for young people with aspirations to learn more about conformation and athleticism traits which are successful in competition and valued by the marketplace. This is achieved by harnessing the input of experienced breeders, riders and producers while accessing high quality demonstration farms and equines nationally.

The main activities of the programme involve the provision of training days, National Championships and participation at World Championships.

Is it for you?

Training is open to those aged 14 to 30 years of age, while competitive opportunities are reserved for those aged 16 to 26 years of age.

Participants do not have to be breeders themselves, or even necessarily come from an equestrian background. An avid interest and eagerness to participate and learn is all that is required.



Competitions

Platforms to demonstrate learnings and benchmark against peers at home and abroad are offered through both National and World Championship competitions. These provide an opportunity to test skills and knowledge learned and occur every second year.

National Championships serve as an initial selection for World Championship team participation.

What is involved?

1. Theory (multiple-choice questions on stable management, reproduction husbandry, nutrition, health and welfare, and international sport and breeding rankings).
2. Assessment of conformation
3. Assessment of athleticism (movement and jumping)
4. Presentation of a horse in hand
5. Turnout of horses (World Championship team discipline)

Championship Successes

Irish Sport Horse Studbook teams have enjoyed many podium rewards over the years at World Championships within overall studbook rankings, team rankings in the age classes, and across the individual disciplines. The most significant of these were achieved in overall studbook results (the full team, all disciplines) in 2009 when placed third at home in Ireland, in 2013 placed reserve studbook champions in Sweden, and in 2022 when crowned studbook champions in The Netherlands. So many other successes have been enjoyed and celebrated, these are simply the highlights.

Industry Collaboration

The programme's strength lies in the involvement and support of industry leaders including coaches, riders, producers, breeders and others who provide their experience, knowledge and guidance. Through the host farms, participants are exposed to quality performance horses. In so doing they can train their eyes to benchmarks for quality and understand the requirements of the sport, the marketplace, and breeding stock.

Benefits of the Programme

Training days provide access to high quality coaches, horses, and facilities across the country. Networking among peers and with potential future employers is of considerable benefit in building future career networks and identifying potential career pathways in the equine industry.

The skills and knowledge transferred through training events serves as a foundation for those with an interest in developing their knowledge of the horse, applicable to varying situations. Some examples include in the purchase or sale of equines, deciding on mares and stallions to use for breeding purposes, assessing the products of breeding, presenting equines at inspection, sale, show or competition in hand. As the quantity of horses viewed and discussed over time grows, the more confidence and knowledge builds.





Networking and Friendship

The friendships made can last a lifetime. Having fun while learning is important, and helps build confidence. Many participants travel to training activities on their own, however, everyone has a common interest, the horse, therefore it isn't long before conversations begin and new friendships form. So many participants in the programme over the years have expressed the value they place in the contacts made. Networking with peers both here at home and abroad, for those who are fortunate to compete at World Championship level, is a unique aspect of the programme. Friendships sustain over years. Some become confidants and mentors to each other. Many past participants continue to give back to those who follow in later years by helping out at training or competitive events, a testament also to the enjoyment they experience from doing so.



Testimonials

David Bourke, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow

David competed at World Championships (W.C.) Ireland 2009: *"Young Breeders gave me the tool kit to objectively assess my own stock, stand back and be critical. Contacts with other competitors from across Europe sustain to this day."*

Sarah Brashaw, Newtownards, Co. Down

Sarah competed at W.C. Austria 2019: *"Not coming from an equestrian background just goes to show anyone can do it if they are willing to put the work in."*

David Browne, Castledermot, Co. Kildare

David competed at W.C. Spruce Meadows Canada 2017: *"I learned an awful lot on training and competition days with the guidance and feedback from trainers and judges. The friendships which evolve are also very important."*

Michelle Dunne, Sandyford, Co. Dublin

Michelle competed at W.C. Austria 2019: *"I wanted to be more educated about how to assess a horse and not make silly mistakes when buying or waste money, and not looked back since, love it."*

Dan Geaney, Castleisland, Co. Kerry

Dan competed at W.C. Austria 2019 after winning the junior section at National Championships: *"Before the championships I hadn't attended training, it was a big learning curve and challenging but the only way to learn is to speak up and ask questions, it's very important to do that."*

Melissa Glynn, Crannaghmore, Co. Roscommon

Melissa placed at 2019 National Championships. *"I love the interaction of the training days, and discussing the assessment of each horse with trainers"*



and other attendees. Justifying the reasons behind the scores has really benefitted my critical thinking and trained me to assess each horse I look at carefully."

Nicole Groyer, Naul, Co. Dublin

Nicole placed at National Championships 2016: *"The programme has opened up so many doors for me and I have made some great friends."*

Sharon Mannion, Doon, Co. Offaly

Sharon participated in training events in the formative years of the programme *"Gained confidence in my own assessment of the foals and other youngstock very useful in working on our own stud now."*

Amy McCarthy, Kiltegan, Co. Wicklow

Amy competed at WC Ireland 2009: *"Being part of the programme has benefitted me greatly, not only toward my interest in breeding, but also towards my career as a Veterinary surgeon."*

Vera O'Callaghan, Macroom, Co. Cork

Vera competed at WC Spruce Meadows Canada 2017: *"Participating in the programme has given me great confidence to judge the horse in front of me."*

Conor Wixted, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare

Conor won the senior section of National Championships in 2019: *"Training days provide a chance to visit some of the best breeders and producers alongside experienced and generous trainers, imparting invaluable information you wouldn't get anywhere else. It is interesting to take on different perspectives, before formulating your own."*



More information:

www.teagasc.ie/youngbreeders

www.horsesportireland.ie/breeding/young-breeders/

www.wbfs.com/iyb

Find Equine Young Breeders IRE on Facebook

Find ire_young_breeders on Instagram

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