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Members Update 15th May 2020 **re: Passports & 2020 Season**

IHRA Passports:

IHRA Passport applications have recently become delayed due to the current restrictions being imposed by the HSE due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. With the main offices of Horse Sport Ireland in lockdown and staff working remotely for the last number of weeks, all IHRA applications have been severely reduced. We are delighted to inform our members that we have received confirmation that from next week, there will be an additional employee working on our applications to remove the backlog. Once passports have been issued to the IHRA, the relevant members will be contacted for posting and or payment details.

On a matter of housekeeping, the Equine Premises Number (EPN) is mandatory for all passport applications and is a legal requirement for all owners to apply for such prior to sending your applications. The EPN are checked at HSI for their validity and the most common fraudulent EPN numbers supplied are from either an owner using another person's EPN or a farmer who has not registered with DAFM that they have equines on their premises. The IHRA would like to remind any persons, who have not applied for their EPN's to do so as this will certainly help the process. A further reminder to all members is in relation to your marking charts. These must be signed and stamped within 6 months of the date of your application and the form itself cannot be a photocopy, it must be an original.

2020 Season:

As you are aware the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, announced on Friday 1st May, the roadmap for the ease in current restrictions because of the Covid 19 pandemic. Under phase 1, which comes into effect this Monday, 18th May, it allows for all sports grounds to be reopened. We are delighted to announce that Portmarnock raceway will be reopened next week for exercising purposes for our members. A protocol on the track use is currently being finalised and once signed off, it will be published on our website and social media platforms.

The IHRA recognises that some members require the use of Portmarnock raceway, more than others and we trust that all members will uphold the protocols that will be in place. The track will be managed daily, and trainers will be required to book in advance, the time slot with which they would like. The track will be locked each evening and any person found to be in breach of these protocols will be guilty of a penalty.

With regards to racing, the government has announced today that racing behind closed will be permitted from June 8th. The committees will meet tomorrow and the IHRA board will convene early next week to discuss this matter and we will make an official announcement about the recommencement date and associated protocols in due course. We would like to ensure all owners and trainers that we fully intend on running for the planned prizemoney as planned in our 2020 budgets.