

Effect of the recession on the welfare of British Thoroughbred horses 2011 Report

Since late in 2007 there has been on-going speculation on the impact of the recession on the welfare of thoroughbred horses. The British Horseracing Authority, in partnership with Weatherbys and World Horse Welfare, and experts within racing, established monitoring and sources of advice early in 2009. Data and information to the end of 2011 is reported below. *There may be updates to the data as late returns become available.*

There has been a reduction in foals born and active broodmares, considerably larger in Ireland than in Great Britain. From 2008 to 2011 there has been an overall reduction of 38% in foals registered (falls of 45% in Ireland and 24% in Great Britain).

Foals born and registered: (data as at September 2011)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2010>11
GB	5,727	5,489	5,839	5,920	5,397	4,552	4,502	-1.1%
Ireland	11,748	12,004	12,633	12,419	9,581	7,128	6,890	-3.3%
Total	17,475	17,493	18,472	18,339	14,978	11,680	11,392	-2.5%

Active Broodmares: (data as at September 2011)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2010>11
GB	11,285	11,142	11,091	10,740	10,471	9,423	9,177	-2.6%
Ireland	19,080	19,646	20,700	20,038	18,616	15,366	13,484	-12.2%
Total	30,365	30,788	31,791	30,778	29,087	24,789	22,661	-8.6%

Note. Around 7-6,500 horses enter training each year, half from Ireland, half from Great Britain.

The number of horses in training is down by a few per cent and the number entering training was essentially unchanged.

<u>Year</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010>11</u>
Average number In training	14,325	14,877	15,154	14,669	14,318	13,847	-3.2%
Number entering training	7,089	7,087	7,099	7,038	6,745	6,781	-0.5%

Note. There is a cycle of changes throughout the year, with a fall in numbers at year end. This continued as normal in 2011.

The number of thoroughbreds reported dead to the Horse Passport Issuing Authority rose by 580 (+29%) from 1994 to 2574 horses. Of these, 1127 horses either in training, breeding or out of training were reported as killed in abattoirs (and so reported to the Government Meat Hygiene Service), from 499 horses in 2010, an increase of 126%.

Horses reported dead not via an abattoir (accidents, put down at home etc) were essentially unchanged from 2010. *However it has become apparent that many returns are delayed, with around 400 horses reported dead after December 2010. Therefore a representative like for like comparison will not be possible until later in 2012.*

Note. It is a legal requirement that owners notify the death of a horse. However it is recognised that compliance and enforcement could be improved.

There were moderate rises in horses offered for sales and prices paid, and the proportion of horses offered for sale that were sold. The overall average price rose by 15%.

Sales 2011 – totals to year end

	<u>Offered</u>	<u>Sold</u>	<u>Aggregate</u>	<u>Average</u>
2010	10,208	7,425	£206,173,929	£21,909
2011	9,456	7,187	£231,838,760	£25,348
2010 > 2011 Diff	- 752	- 238	+£25,664,831	+ £3,439
% Change	-7.3%	-3.2%	+12.4%	+15.7%

Note. These changes are in line with international trends in 2011

The Authority established a specific source for advice for those concerned about the welfare of their thoroughbreds in early 2009, and works with animal welfare charities to monitor issues.

- World Horse Welfare, with whom the Authority had partnered to provide advice, reported minimal enquires through the year.
- Through the framework of the National Equine Welfare Protocol partnership welfare groups have not reported any significant increase in problems with thoroughbreds in 2011.
- Continuing feedback within racing continued to express concern over the potential for problems, but confirmed lack of evidence for any significant problems at this time.

It is concluded that, on the basis of the information above, British horseracing, with respect to horses, has continued to be remarkably resilient but has also responded by appropriately reducing horse production. It remains important not to be complacent, and recognise that impacts may take some time to become apparent. Therefore, the Authority, with its partners to who it is most grateful, will continue to monitor as above.

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