

# Irish Draught: a ridiculous situation

## NEWSCOMMENT

All hopes of uniting the Irish Draught Horse Society appear to be gone. The society is split down the middle and it is looking like the Irish Draught horse is going to be represented by two separate bodies. On Wednesday, 9 July, the Irish Draught Horse Society co-operative was registered with Anne Loughnane in the chair while at an EGM in Abbeyleix on Sunday, 13 July, a new governing body for IDHS Ltd with chairman Kevin Croke was elected by members (over 400 votes including proxy votes).

Some legal procedures have still to be gone through but one way or the other there are going to be two bodies involved. The scenes at the Abbeyleix EGM did nothing for the dignity of ID breeders and the group attending showed open hostility towards Anne Loughnane

and her supporters. When Anne addressed the crowd attending the EGM prior to the start of the meeting proper, all hell broke loose with those attending moving out of their seats in protest to the side of the room. The court-appointed director continued speaking to her remaining supporters amid constant heckling from the main audience.

Anne told the members that the name IDHS Ltd had been changed to Black Drum Ltd, which is still an active company. Later, the EGM voted off the High Court-appointed governing body (Anne and fellow directors John Varley and Jim Cooke) and replaced them with 12 directors including chairman Kevin Croke. During the five-hour EGM, the object of the whole debacle, the Irish Draught horse, was only mentioned twice in passing

– what a bloody god-awful mess! Are there now going to be two watchdogs for the Draught studbook? Two national shows (one in Mullingar and another in Galway)? Two Draught stallion inspections? Two sets of mare and stallion inspectors? Which body gets Horse Sport Ireland (Horse Board) support, if any, and will HSI now appoint its own inspectors? How many ID sales apart from those being run by Goresbridge and Cavan will there be? The list is endless and the future for strong representation for the Irish Draught horse is severely weakened. Already, some members who pay their membership fees by direct debit are wondering where these are going to go and are considering cancelling them.

Let's be clear, neither side is without blame. Personalities with slighted egos have let things get out of hand

and it is now too late to call for resignations to try and mend the society. We in *The Irish Horse* don't give a damn whether a Limited company or a co-operative represents the Draught, but it must have the guts to look after the interests of the horse and ID breeders without getting into legal arguments. We say change and update the rules of the society and get on with it. The swing back to traditional breeding (ID-thoroughbred) is continuing and despite the looming recession there is a strong demand for quality, traditionally-bred hunters and jumpers.

In the last 20 years good strides have been made in improving the quality of mares. Quality in stallions has not been as good and more work needs to be done. Breeders, don't let the opportunities out there slip through your fingers.