

Our reference: DAERA/20-123

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Agri-food Policy Branch 1
DAERA
Room 917, Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB

Tel: (028) 907 65344
Email: agri-foodpolicy1@daera-ni.gov.uk

1 June 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I refer to your request for information received by the Department on 6 May 2020 that sought the following information in relation to the Horse Racing Fund:

1. How much was collected from bookmakers and other sources over the last 5 years?
2. How that money was spent and specifically how much was paid to Downpatrick and Down Royal Race Tracks over the same 5 year period?
3. What was the purpose of those payments?
4. Whether the payments to Down Royal have altered since the operation of the track changed in January 2019 from Down Royal Corporation of Horse Breeders to Dublin-based property developer Mike Roden?
5. Whether the Department has checked whether this change of circumstances at Down Royal has implications for EU state aid and competition law?
6. Please direct me to whatever legislation and other rules are relevant to the administration of the Fund and the donations to each race track.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds the information you requested which is below.

1. The amount collect by the Horse Racing Fund in each of the past five years is listed below:

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

2019: £361,366.00
2018: £369,920.00
2017: £374,213.00
2016: £380,620.00
2015: £365,934.14

2. The amounts distributed from the Horse Racing Fund to Down Royal Racecourse and Downpatrick Racecourse over the past five years are listed below:

Down Royal

2019: £0
2018: £199,091.00
2017: £199,091.00
2016: £199,091.00
2015: £199,091.00

Downpatrick

2019: £9,885.13
2018: £156,023.87
2017: £165,909.00
2016: £165,909.00
2015: £165,909.00

3. The purpose of all payments made to Downpatrick and Down Royal racecourses over the past five years has been to meet the legitimate claims that they made to the Horse Racing Fund under the terms of The Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990.

4. No payments have been made by the Department to the new operators at Down Royal Racecourse (Down Royal Park Racecourse Limited) since they replaced the previous operators on 1st January 2019, as they are not a named beneficiary of the Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990.

5. The Department has considered the operation of the Horse Racing Fund in light of EU Rules on State Aid. An application was submitted to the European Commission on 31st December 2019 seeking to obtain a Commission decision in respect of the operation of the Horse Racing Fund.

6. The Horse Racing Fund is administered under the terms of The Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 and the Horse Racing (Charges on Bookmakers) Order (Northern Ireland) 2010.

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.



If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please write to The Review Section, The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Ballykelly House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, LIMAVADY, BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE, SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Agri-food Policy Branch 1

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

