



## **The racing industry is ready to resume the sport behind closed doors from 11 May**

Horseracing, which has been suspended since 17 March, could resume from 11 May under strictly controlled health conditions. France would hence follow other European countries that are also preparing to gradually relaunch their horseracing activities.

Tens of thousands of French households depend on the racing industry. From studs to yards, it is an important workforce that cares and looks after the well-being of horses. During the suspension of horseracing most of them have been able to continue with their work, as horses and especially competition horses, cannot remain inactive. The yards and studs have hence continued their activities without being able to count on revenues generated by competition, which is their “raison d’être”.

When racing resumes, France Galop and LeTrot’s main priority is to protect the health and safety of the people involved in the organisation of race meetings. These race meetings will be run behind closed doors for as long as necessary and in the strictest conditions, as it was already done in the final days leading to the suspension of horseracing in France. This successful experience of holding race meetings behind closed doors at racecourses in the Oise region in March, provides a solid basis to ensure the health security at future race meetings. Race meetings behind closed doors will be subject to very strict specifications. For example, only the trainer, the jockey or driver and one lad can accompany and look after a horse declared to run in a race.

Personnel in charge of the organisation and regulation of horseracing will also be limited to the strict minimum. Access to the racecourse will be strictly controlled and all attendees will receive the necessary equipment to work in good conditions without taking any risks. Shared areas will be adapted to avoid contact between racing professionals.

In order to mitigate the health risk, horses trained abroad and jockeys holding a foreign licence (apart from jockeys quarantined in France) will not be allowed to ride in races in France until the end of May at least.

These restrictive procedures do not allow the organisation of all the races initially programmed, as some racecourses do not have the capacity to meet the regulatory requirements.

Projects to accommodate and move PMH meetings are being planned so that racing professionals who are dependent on these meetings will not be penalised.

Regarding the fixture list, with a view that the sport will resume on 11 May, the parent companies are placing a strong emphasis on finding a suitable balance between the different divisions, which ensure the success of the French racing and breeding industry. France Galop and LeTROT will publish their fixture lists in the following days.

Prize money policy from the moment racing resumes depends on the outcome of discussions that are currently being held with the responsible ministers. In fact, prize money and premiums are financed through betting and if racing resumes on 11 May, PMU betting shops will only be partially operational, depriving betting operators and the entire racing industry from essential income. The meeting that took place on 21 April between the Presidents of the parent companies and the Minister of Public action and Accounts and the Minister of Agriculture proved constructive and discussions between the leaders of the parent companies and the Government authorities continue so that the racing industry can overcome the financial losses caused by this health crisis.

If France Galop and LeTrot are doing everything they can for horseracing to resume in France on 11 May, the resumption is nonetheless dependent on the development of the pandemic and the measures taken by the Government in view of a gradual exit out of lockdown. The parent companies will respond promptly and will be able to adapt their plans of resumption in accordance with the constraints imposed by the Government.

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