

## **Racing and Thoroughbred Breeding Report – Claire Sheppard**

### **Covid-19 – Return of Crowds**

- British racing is delighted that courses located in Tier 2 areas in England have been able to host racegoers once again, however significant economic challenges remain especially for courses still in higher tier areas.
- This also extends to courses located in devolved administrations. Scottish and Welsh governments are currently unable to provide clear timescales for the return of crowds in the respective nations.
- The return of crowd capacities to pre-Covid levels remains the single best way to assist racing with its Covid-19 recovery, however we realise that this remains unlikely until Q2 2021.

### **Covid-19 – Financial Support**

- British racing is delighted to have received financial assistance from both the UK government (£40m in preferably termed loans) and Scottish governments (£2m in grants)
- To allow British racing to ensure that financial support reaches those who need it, it would be preferable for the UK government to allow British racing to use the Horserace Betting Levy Board as a means of distributing our £40m in loan funding that we received as part of the Winter Sports Survival Package

### **Levy and funding reform – ‘Our fair share’**

- British racing is encouraged that DCMS will conduct a ‘health check’ of the Horserace Betting Levy in 2021, and we feel that there is a strong case for the department to press on with a full review next year
- Further action is required to make the 2017 reforms truly sustainable and allow meaningful long-term investment in our sport, our horses and our people
- British racing’s world-leading international position is under threat as other jurisdictions gain a higher return from betting activity
- British racing is willing to work cooperatively with the betting industry in order to reduce the potential impacts to both industries of any legislative changes to UK Gambling policy, and on coming to an agreement around our return from betting

### **Thoroughbred breeding**

- Covid protocols reviewed and re-issued to British thoroughbred breeders in advance of the 2021 covering season
- The breeding and bloodstock industries welcomed the continuation of the critical breeding stock sales in the UK during the recent lockdown. Turnover at thoroughbred auction sales has been down around 20% in general across the year, however clearance rates remain high illustrating continuing demand albeit a lower price point in the UK, and strong demand from global markets