

### **Update Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Many of you will have already seen a publication that outlines that the guidance associated with the completion of the Export Health Certificates will require a veterinarian to be present at each marking station. Although the certificate has to be signed by the Official Veterinarian (OV) those vets present at other marking stations do not need to be OV's but MRCVS vets. Today I have met with the NFC, MNFC, BICC, BBC and CSCFC representatives to update them in relation to the complexities associated with the EHC. I am in the process of arranging meetings with other Organisation representatives that have previously indicated that they still wish to race the channel. Those organisations that carry out central marking will of course only require one vet (the OV). Since the latest meeting with DEFRA we have proposed a different approach to replace veterinary officers at marking stations. This proposal is based on the processes adopted when exporting commodities. This includes a process where Certification Support Officers (CSO's) are used in replace of veterinarians. The idea is that individuals or members of organisations complete an online training course (there is a cost) that then allows them to carry out the required certifications process at marking stations. This will then reduce the number of veterinary officers required to just the OV who signs the export health certificate at the final loading point. However, there is no guarantee that this process will be agreed or be in place by the time organisations start racing from France.

Ian Evans CEO

The DEFRA registration process for channel racing is now live here <https://www.rpra.org/euahregs-channel-racing/>

Ian Evans CEO

### **Update Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

One of the most popular question we are getting asked is will I need a visit from a veterinarian before racing. The answer to this is that following registration with DEFRA you will need to register with a veterinary practice before you can race.

However, a visit from the veterinarian does not have to have been completed prior to racing but will have to have been completed within a period that DEFRA/APHA will confirm in their communication on the 24th May.

Another question is what information will I need to register with DEFRA. For this we understand you will need just basic information such as name address and other contact details. You will not for example, be required to submit a ring list.

All other information including what will the veterinarian be looking for when visiting will be clarified in DEFRA's publication but as an indication this MAY include notifiable diseases such as Paramyxovirus.

Ian Evans CEO

### **Update Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

A list of Veterinary Practices for Loft Registration and Official Veterinarians (OVs) for Export Health Certificates is attached. This list is not intended to be RPRAs recommended or an approved list of veterinarians but simply a list to help members and organisations identify veterinary practices that can provide the services required for Cross Channel racing. It is not an exhaustive list; there will be other practices that can provide the same services.

Please note that many of the practices quote hourly rates. It would be advantageous to arrange visits in groups of lofts to get the best possible deal. It is estimated that a loft visit should take approximately 30 minutes although this will depend on the practice and individual circumstances. You will need to discuss cost and times with the practice to establish an accurate position.

### **Update Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

At today's meeting (10/05/2022) with DEFRA and representatives from the devolved Governments we were informed that;

1. That the registration process for England, Scotland and Wales will go live at 10am on 24th May 2022
2. Due to the possible high level of demand on registration in England there could be a period of up to 6 weeks before all lofts are registered.
3. The Export Health Certificate along with all guidance notes will be published on 24th May 2022 DEFRA has indicated that following the registration process going live we will be kept updated of the amount of applications for registration and how many lofts they have registered. This will then give us a clearer picture of how long it will be until all lofts are registered.

Website links and information on how to register will be published on the RPRAs website at 10am on 24th May 2022 There will be more detailed information published over the next two weeks.

Ian Evans CEO

### **Update Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Continental Racing Update - Following the update on Friday, RPRA CEO Ian Evans will be meeting with Defra tomorrow (Tuesday) to receive details of the registration system, export health certificate and necessary guidance.

Ian Evans CEO

### **Update Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Today I received the following email from DEFRA.

Apologies for the delay in responding to you and for not providing more detail sooner. We appreciate that this is frustrating for your members. Since our last meeting colleagues in Defra, Scottish and Welsh Governments have been working on making a registration system, Export Health Certificate and necessary guidance available as soon as possible. We expect to be able to share documents with you very shortly. To this end we would like to meet you with our Scottish and Welsh colleagues early next week to discuss the launch of the new process, if your association/union is able to do so?

We would suggest 1pm on Monday 9 May or 1pm on 10 May. Please let us know asap and we will schedule for a meeting that suits best.

I have replied stating I will make myself available for both days.

Ian Evans CEO

### **Update Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

Due the delay in the publication of the loft registration process I have written to the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Pigeon Racing, via email, requesting his assistance to speed up the process.

A copy of the email can be found here <https://www.rpra.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/APPG-230422.pdf>

It would be helpful if members contact their MP requesting their help. This contact could include a copy of my email to the APPG Chair. Ian Evans CEO

### **Update Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022**

In my previous update of 7th April I stated that the DEFRA loft registration process would be published within two week. This week I have been 'chasing' confirmation in relation to the process. However, as of 4.30pm today, Friday 22nd April 2022 I have received no information in this respect.

I appreciate this is a frustrating position for everyone concerned and is impacting on the start of organisations channel race programmes. I will continue to push for this process to be published as soon as possible and

as soon as I have any information I will share it through the normal channels.

In the meantime I have held meetings with various veterinary practices to establish a list of such practices that are willing and able to carry out loft visits to adhere to the EU loft registration requirements and also compile a list of Official Veterinarians that are able to sign export health certificates for organisations. This list will be published sometime next week and will be updated as and when necessary.

Finally, I wish to clarify that the loft registration process is one imposed by EU regulations (not DEFRA) for those lofts wishing to race from EU countries. The reason that they have to be registered with DEFRA is purely down to the EU regulations requiring lofts to be registered with the competent authority within the country of origin. In the UK the competent authority is DEFRA

Ian Evans CEO

#### **Update Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

At today's meeting (7th April 2022) the following was discussed;

**LOFT/PREMISES REGISTRATION** The process for registering lofts was outlined. Details on how to register will be published in the next two weeks via DEFRA/RPRA and other unions.

From what we are told this will be a relatively straight forward process that can be done online or via a form that can be posted to DEFRA.

A somewhat surprising point was that the EU require lofts, that wish to take part in channel racing to be registered with a veterinary practice and have at least one visit from a veterinarian per year.

It was stated that you will not need to have had a visit from a veterinarian before registering or racing but you will be expected to have a visit within the year and each year thereafter.

**VACCINATION** All birds in the loft will have to be vaccinated not just the ones you are racing.

**THE EXPORT HEALTH CERTIFICATE.** DEFRA are seeking clarity from the EU in respect of one part of the certificate before publishing and providing guidance for the official veterinarians that are required to sign the export health certificate on behalf of the convoy.

As mentioned above the details regarding processes of registration will be published within the next two weeks.

Ian Evans CEO

#### **Update Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022**

The meeting scheduled for today with representatives from DEFRA has been postponed until Thursday 7th April. I received notice late yesterday afternoon and despite my respectful request that this meeting is not

delayed I have been informed that due to the availability of DEFRA officials that this meeting can not go ahead.. Although disappointing we have to consider the competing priorities DEFRA have with the ongoing Avian Influenza issues in the UK.

However, I know first hand that DEFRA have given this issue due consideration and have been working hard with the RPRA and EU, on behalf of the confederation to achieve a solution. Despite this disappointment it is important to note that due to the amendments made by the EU to the requirements of entry for Racing pigeons, we now have a solution to the issues that prevented racing from the continent in 2021. As a summary the requirements of entry into the EU from UK are as follows:

1. The pigeons have to be vaccinated against Paramyxo. The vaccine used has to be one approved for use in the UK by the VMD.
2. The lofts/premises of origin have to be registered with the competent authority of the third country. In the UK this is DEFRA
3. Each convoy will require an export health certificate signed by an official veterinarian (OV). At next weeks meeting we hope to be able to confirm the registration process with DEFRA.

We are working with an OV to produce guidance that will assist organisations in achieving channel racing for their members. However, this guidance can not be completed until we have had the meeting with DEFRA.

Clearly, we now have a solution to meeting the requirements of entry that will facilitate channel racing in 2022. We ask that everyone remains patient and we will publish an update as soon as possible following the meeting with DEFRA.

Ian Evans CEO

### **Update 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Firstly before I go any further I wish to express the importance of complying with the Avian Influenza code of practice. There is a legal requirement to inform the APHA of the venue and dates etc of all markings see <https://www.rpra.org/avian-influenza-code-practice-pigeon-racing/> Inland Racing.

Despite information circulating I can confirm that races scheduled to start the weekend of 2nd April will go ahead.

Continental Racing I have received a call this morning (25th March) to confirm that the EU has amended the export certificate to include the amendments highlighted in my last update.

I have not seen the document but it is in the hands of DEFRA who will arrange a meeting next week ( date to be confirmed) to discuss next steps including loft registration etc.

This is clearly very good news.

Ian Evans CEO

### **Update 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Despite my publication of 2nd February 2022 where I asked for patience and outlined what was required to achieve Channel racing there are still many posts on social media that demonstrate a lack of understanding of what is required; it also demonstrates frustration in relation to publishing the relevant confirmation.

While I understand peoples frustration their misleading statements do nothing to help the situation; quite the opposite. In my update of 2nd February 2022 I outlined what was required to achieve the position of being able to race from the continent in 2022. If you have not already done so then please read this update available here

<https://www.rpra.org/euahregs-channel-racing/>

In summary the statement outlined the following; The latest amended Export Health certificate published in January by the EU would not work. Therefore, the certificate required amending. I outlined that we had direct conversations with the EU and via DEFRA to achieve these amendments and although I could not provide any guarantees, the EU through DG Sante (Department of Health) had indicated in an email that these amendments would be agreed. The update then went on to outline that as soon as the certificate was amended DEFRA would publish a document for members to register their lofts, as per EU requirements.

However, DEFRA could not and would not publish such a document until the certificate had been amended. In short until the certificate is amended the registration document does not exist.

As soon as it does it will be published on the RPRAs website along with a notice on social media, BHW and an email sent to club secretaries. My update also outlined that the indicated timescales to achieve these amendments was weeks, but highlighted that progress was very much in the hands of the EU.

Six weeks later the document has not yet been amended but we are receiving indications that this will happen within the next two weeks and possibly this week.

I can guarantee you that this is the most important item on my/our agenda and that as soon as is reasonably possible (after the EU amend the health certificate) we will be publishing guidance and the relevant documents for registration; BUT we cannot do any of this until the EU amend the

certificate. I remain confident that this issue will be sorted to facilitate  
Channel racing in 2022  
Ian Evans CEO