

Greyhound racing: after the ban in NSW, could Ireland and the UK be next?

🕒 AUGUST 31, 2016 📁 ANIMAL WELFARE, PAT KENNY SHOW, THE TELEGRAPH 👤 PETETHEVET



GREYHOUND RACING: IS THIS THE BEGINNING OF THE END?

The greyhound racing industry globally is in serious trouble. There is a remarkable story going on right now, where in Australia, the parliament in New South Wales has voted to ban greyhound racing from next year. What's next? Could other states in Australia, and other countries now be affected in a similar way?

The big issue in New South Wales was "live baiting" where live animals (piglets, rabbits and possums) were tied to the lure on a greyhound training track before greyhounds were released to chase and kill them. Trainers in Australia who had publicly condemned this practice were caught red-handed on secret video carrying out this practice, and this caused the public to lose faith in their credibility completely. Surveys show that now over 80% of the Australian public would like to see a complete nationwide ban on greyhound racing.

There has been no confirmed evidence that live baiting takes place in Ireland and the UK, but there are other issues that need to be dealt with.

SERIOUS ISSUES OF CONCERN WITH GREYHOUND RACING IN IRELAND

- Traceability and accountability for all non-racing registered greyhounds, estimated at 10,000 annually. The Irish Greyhound Board's reliance on "wastage" (killing of unwanted greyhounds) has no place in the 21st century
- The number of puppies born annually should be logged precisely. If every calf, lamb and piglet is tracked from birth to death, why not greyhounds?
- Abuse/cruelty cases (violations of the Greyhound Welfare Act, Animal Health and Welfare Act, IGB Code of Practice, etc) need to be addressed more seriously. In my

Article Categories:

- » [PETS & OTHER ANIMALS](#)
- » [PET HEALTH](#)
- » [ANIMAL WELFARE](#)
- » [ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR](#)
- » [DUCK](#)
- » [GOAT](#)
- » [NEWS](#)
- » [PETE'S BLOG](#)
- » [PETE IN THE MEDIA](#)
- » [SPONSORED POSTS](#)

Catch Pete's Podcast

Listen to the latest [podcast episodes online](#), or subscribe to the podcast:

[iTunes](#) [Feedly](#) [My Yahoo](#)
[Feedburner](#)

Latest Pet Subjects Rescue:



[Thoroughbred Cross Alabama is looking for a new home](#)

opinion there have been insufficient responses to such cases, insufficient penalties and prosecutions, and not as much transparency as there needs to be to inspire public confidence.

- Inadequate funding and programmes for responsible rehoming of unwanted greyhounds: at most, 12% of the “disappeared” 10,000 every year currently find homes or rescue space. What happens to the other 88%?
- Injuries and deaths at the racetracks (including subsequent deaths caused by racing) need to be monitored transparently and comprehensively. With IGB as a semi-state body, this should be logged and the statistics should be publicly available.
- Drug testing – insufficient levels of drug testing is carried out for the number of races taking place. Presently, only about 5000 random samples are taken even though there are about 60,000 individual greyhound entries annually.

Thoroughbred Cross Alabama is looking for a new home as a ridden horse.

[More »](#)

[ALL RESCUES »](#)

THE IRISH GREYHOUND INDUSTRY IS STRUGGLING TO RESPOND

- The IGB was brought before the Dáil twice in late 2015 to answer questions regarding the industry in general and also specifically about their finances (via the Public Accounts Committee)
- IGB debts and deficits exceed €30 million
- Tote receipts have fallen more than 50% in 7 years, and they are continuing to fall
- Gambling has moved mostly online with the public now having only limited interest in greyhound racing
- The number of race nights has significantly decreased and stadia attendance continues to wane
- Animal welfare awareness has increased dramatically, while at the same time, the interest to engage in a time-consuming and costly sport such as greyhound racing does not provide the instant gratification that people now demand. Given a choice, most young people would rather hop on a cheap flight to Ibiza or hunt for Pokemon.

THE GREYHOUND INDUSTRY’S RESPONSES ARE INADEQUATE AND UNACCEPTABLE

Examples of the sub-standard responses of the industry to the current challenges include:

- Condoning sending greyhounds abroad to inhumane race tracks such as Macau does not inspire confidence
- Continuously sending unwanted greyhounds abroad to Italy and the Czech Republic to greyhound rehoming programmes is not an adequate solution, as these outlets have reached a saturation point;
- Appealing to DAFM for more funding to promote more greyhound breeding while ignoring the present crisis of the over-population of unwanted greyhounds does not inspire public confidence in a commitment to deal with the animal welfare issues. An additional €700,000 from the DAFM has since been provided to promote breeding, with none of it to be used for rehoming. This will only create even more greyhounds with nowhere to go.

SERIOUS REFORM IS NEEDED NOW

If the greyhound industry in the UK and Ireland continue to pay lip service to the animal welfare issues listed above, there is a significant risk that the public will continue to lose

confidence and interest in the sport. On the face of it, greyhound racing could be as popular and successful as agility training in dogs. But that level of public engagement and support will only happen if proper attention is paid to these issues, with serious (and I mean serious) reform of the current set up.