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TO: Member Societies
FROM: RAS Executive
DATE: 22 March 2019
SUBJECT: Competitive Organisations

At the recent Executive-District meeting there was a discussion around competing organisations or parties attempting to utilise the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) Showing Movement to run their classes or schedule. While this has been mainly equestrian orientated, there has been the odd occurrence surface within other livestock sections as well.

The meeting unanimously agreed that this is not acceptable. Breed Societies and A&P Associations pay an affiliation fee to belong to the Royal Agricultural Society. This gives them certain rights and privileges. Understandably they are less than impressed if other parties, who do not contribute to the overall organisation, get those same rights and privileges, and rightly ask the question, "Why should we affiliate if that is the case?"

The policy is as follows - where a Breed Society is affiliated to the RAS, part of the affiliation benefit for that Breed Society is to be able to provide a minimum schedule for A&P Shows to run as well as providing a Royal Show Schedule for their particular breed. The A&P membership get the opportunity at conference to approve any Royal A&P Schedule so if there is a concern with the schedule that is the time to raise it.

A problem has arisen where some local A&P Societies have a direct relationship with a local party that is not affiliated to the parent body which is affiliated to the RAS.

An example of this would be within the Miniature Horse Section. Currently the National Miniature Horse Society and the NZ Miniature Horse Association are affiliated to the RAS however, there is a third group AIMS that is not affiliated to the RAS. AIMS is established predominantly in the Northern region and their schedule of classes has been included within some Shows. When we have become aware of this, we have notified the Shows this is against RAS policy and have asked them to withdraw those classes.

Equally an issue can be created where shows wish to encourage local Miniature groups to compete at the show or local Miniature groups offer to run something for the Show and then do not abide by the rules in place.

For example, an RAS judge or a judge on the NZMHA list (on the RAS website) is required to be used, the approved schedule needs to be run, and RAS height certificates are required. RAS is aware of the view that it is too costly to get RAS certificates for a team of Miniature horses and are currently in discussions with the NZMHA regarding this. Any discussions and agreement would need to go through the remit process and should there be any discount suggested this would apply for all other equestrian parties as well.

A reminder to all of the Gypsy Cob situation – the NZ Gypsy Cob Association is the affiliate. The Gypsy Vanner Society applied for affiliation however were turned down due to the current RAS One Breed Affiliation Policy. Please do not offer Gypsy Vanner classes as part of the Show Schedule.

There has also been discussion around Warmbloods – specific Warmblood classes/sections are held at several shows and Champion and Reserve Champions are awarded. Some shows are also allowing the following - if they have an overall Supreme Led Exhibit, they have been allowing the Warmblood Exhibit to come through. Equally in the South Island a points accumulator is run.

There is a Warmblood Association, they have been offered the rights to affiliate to the RAS, but have chosen not to, yet several shows still accord them the same privileges as they do to those breed or kindred societies that are affiliated to the RAS. This is neither right nor fair for the reasons previously explained.

This leads to the next discussion around having the ability to hold local classes if there is a certain strength within an area. For instance – Kaimanawa Horses. This has always been allowed as long as certain rules are followed – a local class is exactly that – no supreme, champion or reserve champion ribbons are meant to be awarded, only 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc.

For many years the RAS has been the showing equestrian movement within NZ. More recently the NZ Show Horse Council has also established themselves within NZ. Show Horse Council were offered the opportunity to affiliate but have declined on the basis that “they feel the RAS has nothing to offer.” That is their decision and we accept that however that being the case they are a competing organisation to the RAS. If affiliated shows or events are being approached to run their classes, and wish to do so, this would be a breach of the RAS rules.

Recently the Speckle Park Cattle Breed has become affiliated to the RAS and this has tidied up the situation where some shows were allowing Speckle Park cattle to exhibit along the same lines as affiliated beef cattle breed societies.

Unregistered sheep have also been allowed entry to shows – again this has caused concern from NZ Sheepbreeders Association, who represents several of the sheep breeds. The same theory of fairness to our affiliated societies applies here as well.

We will be asking all Districts to have this memo as an agenda item at their District AGM and it will also be on the agenda for RAS Conference – it is important that the members discuss and have a good understanding of the situation. We understand that shows are wishing to retain as many entries as possible however there needs to be some checks and balances to protect the rights of the affiliated members. If members believe changes should be made there is a process for that.

This is a timely discussion at the close of a season before the beginning of the next season however if ever in doubt RAS Head Office is only a phone call away to check the content of any schedule. If we don't know the answer, we will assist by putting you in contact with people that do know the answer.

Asking first will avoid potential conflicts and the ultimate consequences of those conflicts.