

TIHA CAP Reform Submission

DATE 23/08/2021	Funding Classification: EU Council Directive 2009/156/EC
PROGRAM	2023-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan (CSP).
SUBMITTED TO	Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM) Equine Infrastructures
SUBMITTED BY	Traditional Irish Horse Association (TIHA)
SUBMITTING BODY	TIHA Council

I. MISSION / PROJECT PURPOSE

To support Irish landholders specifically small holding Irish Farmers to assist the take up of alternative farming practises enabling their sector to embrace the EU's criteria for the 2030 carbon footprint / climate change compliance whilst maintaining the social fabric and financial benefits to rural Ireland in tandem to have the ability to participate globally.

The Irish farmers are today's custodians of shaping the rural landscape and it's sanctuary for future generations.

II. SCHEME AMBITION

The breeding and rearing of Equidae, in particular traditionally bred equine to be included in the agri environment schemes for conservation grazing as part of a mixed grazing regime with weight towards permanent pastures alongside the preservation of the environment and indigenous ecology.

This supporting equine scheme would not just be a supporter sustainable growth for agriculture and the rural areas but also maintain the social links of rural communities by keeping a number of cottage industries & services viable i.e. veterinarian, blacksmiths, leather & fabric crafts, transportation, horse breaking & tuition etc, plus giving a real sporting focus for the youth to remain and represent their local regions & traditions through the different equine disciplines which gives local communities a sense of achievement and pride to build, striving forwards.

III. HYPOTHESIS

The agricultural uses of the horse in Ireland dates back to the Iron ages. The significant commonality of the Irish horse in transporting and bind the rural Irish communities in a upward trajectory from initial Irish roads (bog road in Doogarymore Co Roscommon) to being regular & repetitive podium finishers across all equine disciplines – showing, dressage, racing, jumping, eventing plus a social skills builder - pony club, disability club riding & equestrian sports riding. Irish

traditional equine are assets having the ability to drive economic & sustainable development that meet real community needs and environmental biodiversity enhancers.

In parallel to the existing farming model the breeding & rearing of horses can easily create alternative on-farm employment and revenues in non-agriculture activities and services i.e. agri-tourism, hands on farm & animal lifestyle experience, biodiversity tutoring etc.

2017 Irish Sport Horses key Performances

- Number of Irish Sport Horses: 135,715
- Euro contributor to the Irish economy – €816m
- Direct & Indirect Employment – 46,799 persons, plus the employment created overseas by the selling & exporting of Irish bred horses.
- Competition sector accounts for €168m expenditure with the leisure spend €103m.
- Key benefactor: Rural communities, within the island of Ireland

Irish bred horse global performance results:

- *Irish show jumpers notched more clear rounds in team competitions in 2019 than those from any other country.*
- *Ireland was one of eight countries only who had horses qualify for all three disciplines of the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.*
- *The Thoroughbred sector is the second largest producer of bloodstock worldwide by value sold.*
- *Connemara ponies are sought out by global buyers for their recognized positive attitude & cleverness, a willingness to perform and gentleness of personality.*

In essence, Irish horses on the worldwide stage punch above their weight which is a direct result of small holdings farmers knowing how to produce a quality foal day one. These are the knowledge pillars regenerative farming can adopt and apply whilst achieving the National Policy goals for carbon footprint reduction yet foster growth & development energies for rural Ireland communities.

IV. SPECIES OF FOCUS: TRADITIONAL IRISH HORSE DESCRIPTION

Traditional Irish Horse (TIH) is the Original Irish Sport Horse historical known as the Irish Hunter until 1974 when the Irish Sport Horse (ISH) stud book was established of which the TIH is now a subset of the Irish Sport Horse population.

A horse only qualifies as TIH by its breeding of which its DNA is scientifically analysed and officially documented.

A TIH is bred by breeding TIH to TIH or by crossing with Thoroughbred, Irish Draught or Connemara Pony with the Irish Draught and Connemara Pony being indigenous Irish breeds.

These breeds have been instrumental in providing to the Irish Sport Horse its international reputation of intelligence, endurance, elite performance in a friendly persona making them the ideal choice for all rider levels.

V. PROJECT PLAYERS / STAKEHOLDERS

Active farmers undertaking breeding of livestock as well as grazing of animals.

The TIH would develop equine focused initiatives to support farmers transitioning to sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The challenge for Irish agriculture is to help meet the National Policy Objective of an approach to carbon neutrality that does not compromise their capacity to farm sustainably with profit, hence the role of equine in the farming mix.

Currently, Irish farmers carry a wealth of practical knowledge and primary intellect for breeding and farming success. This knowledge is flexible. With professional support and equine expertise this knowledge can be adapted to the breeding and developing young stock for sustainable success, whilst continuing their contribution to the food system, addressing biodiversity loss and mitigate climate change. This expanding capability enables the equine sector to nurture Centers of Excellence plus enrich Irish equine biotech & technologies permitting value adding services here in Ireland, versus being off-shored as happens today.

This value adding modelling will enhance not just the farmers but provide a plethora of employment opportunities within rural communities for raw materials and required services such as vets, pharma, feedmills, horse breakers and trainers, tuition, eco-tourism, selling agents, transporters, handlers, community and International events & competitions and lastly but the most impactful is enabling the youth to develop skills & expertise whilst keeping family traditions & localised culture alive for future generation. In addition due to the nature of equine & human interactions, Equidae contribute positively towards the mental health of owners and handlers, without prejudice.

VI. EQUINE AS CONTRIBUTORS TO AGRICULTURE IN TRANSITION

Equines hold a unique footing in Irish society from being livestock to landscape managers to transporters and leisure allies. With today's wakeup call of shifting weather patterns and damning scientific data, the pressure is on stakeholders to make changes which must be financially sound for the utilisation of assets to be more efficient & green alternatives outcome.

The geography of the Irish landscape is ideally suited to the rearing of horses, it's undulating countryside, its rich limestone pastures and its climate - all provide the perfect nursery for the early education and nutrition of young horses giving them the best start in life. Ireland needs to play to it's strengths utilising all it's natural resources and landscape in a sustainable ecologically friendly manner.

The horse should be valued as a green asset contributor as they have many environmental advantages – grazing & domestic biodiversity, their usage on land, their usage by humans for

tourism & work and their ecological contribution to the environment enhancing agriculture output:
1- Provision of Wildlife Habitat, 2- Watershed and Stream Protection, 3- Groundwater Recharge, 4- Soil Conservation, 5- Reduction of Brushloads, 6- Maintenance of Biodiversity.

VII. PROJECT FUNDING USAGE

Engaging with these stakeholders as early as possible promotes knowledge share & transparency. Equine experts and specialist groups that work with them will provide a critical source of input and legitimacy around measures intended to benefit their breeding, equine training planning plus its execution to meet the needs of the Irish domestic market, the global buyers & International riders expectations.

The funding granted to TIHA by the EU 2023 – 2027 CAP CSP program will support the advancement & growth of equine of farmers in transition to adopt or expand Equidae, be a global equine center of excellence complete with horse technologies & equine biotechnology plus eco-tourism.

TIHA visualizes programming design to fit the EU strategy of “New Delivery Model” principle, the performance being judged on measurements of output and results and on how their CSP's contribute to the CAP objectives at EU level.

The end.