

Animal welfare concerns stall greyhound board's China plan

By [Gordon Deegan](#)

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AMBITIOUS plans by Bord na gCon to bring greyhound racing to China have been halted amid concerns over costs and animal welfare.

The Department of Agriculture refused the Irish greyhound board permission for the potentially lucrative deal with the Asian country where dog remains on the menu in some areas and gambling is illegal.

The department said it "considers that the risks contained in this proposal for (Bord na gCon) -- in terms of its reputation -- from a range of different perspectives are unacceptably high".

Documents released through Freedom of Information Acts shows the department stopped the plan because it "does not provide sufficient assurance that adequate provision would be made to safeguard the health and welfare of greyhounds in China at the end of their racing life".

Adverse

Bord na gCon had initially planned to export Irish greyhounds to China. But that proposal was withdrawn last year after the department said it generated "very widespread adverse reaction from the public nationally and internationally".

As part of a revised proposal, Bord na gCon said it would transport non-Irish greyhounds to China, but didn't say where the greyhounds would be sourced from.

The initial proposal stated a subsidiary of Bord na gCon would make a profit of €7m per year after the greyhound board had received its fees.

However, in a letter to Bord na gCon CEO Adrian Neilan on December 9 last throwing out the plan, the department stated that the plan's "financial projections were based on a very optimistic scenario".

The department said it would not be appropriate to give approval to Bord na gCon to embark on overseas investment.

- *Gordon Deegan*