

## Greyhound racing told to clean up its act

Oireachtas committee hears industry has reputation for dishonesty

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Greyhound racing, which has seen sharp falls in the number of people attending meetings, must counter its image for dishonesty, according to an Oireachtas report.

Owners and trainers were found “openly admitting to doping dogs” in BBC and Channel 4 documentaries, Kilkenny-based Senator Pat O’Neill said at the launch of a report into the industry.

“The industry has got to change its image,” said Mr O’Neill, adding that admissions of drug use in the industry was internationally damaging both to itself and to Ireland.

Insisting that it was “a great, old industry that can be great again”, Senator Brian Ó Domhnaill said there were “issues of corporate governance” and that owners and breeders were not being given a voice.

Describing it as “an industry in pain”, Tipperary-based Senator Denis Landy said there had been a serious decline in the numbers of people attending events and Bord na gCon (the Irish Greyhound Board) was “€20 million in debt”.

### Recommendations

Chairman of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Agriculture which compiled the report, Andrew Doyle, said the committee had made a number of recommendations including:

That Bord na gCon publish detailed, specific measures to maximise the commercial viability of each race track

Any additional funding supplied by the exchequer should be ringfenced as prize money or other incentives, but not used for debt-servicing

That a zero tolerance policy was vital on the issue of prohibited substances.

The committee put forward eight additional recommendations in relation to enhancing greyhound welfare.

Mr Doyle also said that a previous report commissioned by the Department of Agriculture from Indecon Consultants should be revisited on a regular basis.

“A recurring examination of Bord na gCon implementation of the Indecon review’s recommendations is merited to ascertain that its recommendations were being implemented,” he said.

### Breeding

Among the other recommendations of the committee were a reassessment of the industry “stud book”.

This was particularly important as it appeared that there were still “ongoing issues concerning the breeding of greyhounds with dogs which were [certified as] dead for two years or more.

The full report of the committee is available on the Oireachtas.ie website.