

UKAS Committee Update – August 2010

- GRB chairman Steve Winfield and GBGB Director of Accreditation John Blake stood down as chairman and secretary, respectively, of the UKAS Committee at the meeting held on August 9.
- Tom Shields QC, who was present as an observer throughout the meeting, will now assume chairmanship and the GBGB's Amanda Duplock will service the committee in her new role as Quality Manager. Tom has also become an independent director of the GRB and will also chair the Rules of Racing Review committee.
- Amanda Duplock has been working alongside John Blake in recent months and her training programme will continue through the first set of surveillance visits from UKAS in late August and September.
- The Director of Accreditation updated the committee on the latest Internal Audit of GBGB's Quality Management system that was conducted on August 4. The findings were all of a fairly minor nature and were accepted as a positive output of the procedure. The quarterly audits have strengthened the effectiveness and value of GBGB's operating procedures, as well as ensuring compliance with the standard EN45011, against which the company has been accredited by UKAS since mid March.
- The committee welcomed Clive Feltham, Clarissa Baldwin and Henry Hoppe as representatives from the Racecourse Promoters Association (RCPA), the Dogs Trust and DEFRA, respectively. One function of the UKAS committee is to facilitate communication from a broad range of relevant stakeholders in relation to GBGB's scope of accreditation. The August committee meeting was another opportunity to engage with external groups.
- Clive Feltham reported to the committee some positive feedback from his members, focusing particularly on the introduction and merit of the new Racecourse Certification Inspection procedure. He stated that initial concerns over the possible impact of a new approach by the GBGB had quickly subsided once the racecourses had been through the process of surveillance and evaluation that now contributes to the licensing process each year.
- Clarissa Baldwin thanked the committee for inviting her to her second meeting and congratulated the GBGB on behalf of a number of welfare groups on its achievement in attaining such important recognition from UKAS. She added that self-regulation was now accepted by her and colleagues as being the best way forward in meeting the challenges in this area. She did, however, state general disappointment that GBGB's other licensing activities - the inspection of residential kennels, in particular, was not included in the initial accreditation. She stressed the importance of addressing a wider scope to the groups that constitute the welfare lobby and on their behalf pledged to direct her concerns to the GBGB Board, via the Executive.

- DEFRA representative Henry Hoppe updated the committee on changes in personnel that have accompanied the formation of the new coalition government. It was noted that Lord Henley was the new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with responsibility for animal welfare. Mr Hoppe confirmed that a review of the Animal Welfare Act (2006) was underway and that a report would be produced by the end of the year.
- The specific secondary legislation relating to the welfare of racing greyhounds is not included in the review.
- The committee welcomed the regular reports from the GBGB's Certification Body staff. An update was received on current complaints and general matters relating to Certification and Surveillance procedures. The Director of Regulation, Declan Donnelly confirmed there had been no applications received from prospective racecourses since the last meeting. He added that the current certification process of re-licensing racecourses was ongoing and would be finalised by the late autumn.
- Chief Executive Barry Faulkner provided the meeting with an update on GBGB's financial status and the issues that necessitated the recent re-budgeting exercise. He confirmed that the GBGB would be contracted with a new sampling laboratory from October 1st (LGC) and that this would reduce costs significantly in this key integrity area. He also confirmed that the GBGB's finances were sufficiently robust to ensure the on-going certification and surveillance of licensed racecourses in the normal manner. Finally, he commented that his attendance at a recent meeting of the Irish Greyhound Forum had been very useful and had underlined the progress made by GBGB thus far across welfare and integrity.
- The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for October, subject to any issues arising from the UKAS surveillance visits that might require the committee's immediate attention.