

## **STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL HORSE BREEDING – EQUINE DEMO EVENING**

2009 was a difficult year for breeders. Last autumn's three year old and foal prices have given breeders much to think about. Many involved in the industry consider it to be a necessary and overdue wake-up call, but the situation where hundreds of foals fail to reach the cost of their stud fee, never mind other production costs, cannot continue.

Far more worrying with the three-year old trade was the fact that buyers did not find enough of the 'right sorts'. Whether they were seeking a show jumper or an eventer, far too many returned home with their order books unfilled. Most felt that the quality of stock was poor.

The widening gap between the top and bottom end of the market shows that the professional breeders and producers who present good, correct stock from well-related mares were still rewarded, albeit less than in previous years. These individuals are in the minority. It is at the lower end of the market that problems arise.

These problems must be addressed. The upcoming Teagasc demonstrations 'Steps to Successful Breeding', in association with the Army Equitation School at Doyle's Equestrian Centre in Rathvilly, Carlow on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February and Ravensdale Equestrian Centre, Dundalk, Co. Louth on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, aims to identify some of the issues which must be overcome. The demonstrations begin at 7pm.

The Teagasc equine team will address the area of adding value to your produce. Advice will be offered and demonstrations provided on young horse production techniques.

Breeder, ex international event rider and trainer John Watson and his son Sam (international rider) will demonstrate and discuss their passion for breeding and producing eventers and the principles by which they operate and are successful with.

The Army Equitation School will, demonstrate the requirements for international level show jumpers and discuss the challenges facing breeders in producing for the sport.

With the current poor trends in sales prices and the impact of the global economic environment on the horse trade it is critical that breeders and producers up their game and make educated choices and execute good skills. All are welcome and admission is €10.

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