

# Irish Shows Association

## Rules and Guidelines for Member Shows



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## About The Irish Shows Association

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The Irish Shows Association (ISA) is the official recognised body representing Irish Agricultural Shows on the island of Ireland. The ISA is a collective representative organisation which currently has more than 130 member shows, which run throughout the Summer and into the Autumn each year. Country shows are an important showcase for the Irish agri-food and bloodstock industries and an ideal platform for the myriads of artisan food producers in this country to display their products and services. Complementing the benefits to the rural economy, agricultural shows are a community event, boosting social capital and wellbeing with local clubs, community groups and schools involved. Agricultural shows provide a breadth of entertainment for local rural communities and most of the agricultural shows are administrated and operated on a voluntary basis, adopting the Irish tradition of the Meitheal model.

The Irish Shows Association Ltd. evolved from a Federation of Show Societies initially formed in 1931. Membership of the Association is open to all recognised Agricultural Show Societies throughout the island of Ireland.

The Irish Shows Association is governed by a voluntary board, consisting of one member for each five member shows. This committee meets on a regular basis, and its function is to best ensure that the quality and standards of the Agricultural Shows and related organisations are at the highest optimal levels.

The Aims and Objectives of the organisation are:

- To promote and assist in the development of Agricultural Shows
- To act as a negotiating instrument between members and outside bodies
- To liaise with Government Departments and Agencies in matters affecting members and show exhibitors.
- To organise and oversee annual All Ireland Championships for horses, ponies, cattle, sheep, dogs, horticulture, and home industries.
- To publish an annual show Guidebook and Judges Lis
- To provide a group insurance scheme for member
- To provide a national secretariat and head office for receiving and processing material relevant to members and their interests
- To operate in accordance with the objects for which the company is established, as outlined in the company constitution

The ISA has a permanent head office, which is staffed by The National Secretary and other administrative staff as appointed by the board to carry out the affairs of the association. The office is supported by a board and regional volunteers.

### Benefits of Membership

- Being part of a network of more than 130 shows, with the opportunity to share and gain knowledge and resources.
- Advertising through the Irish Shows Association (ISA) annual yearbook, website, and social media channels
- Collective bargaining when negotiating with various statutory and regulatory bodies.
- Support at local level through your assigned board member
- Access to government grants and funding administered through the Irish Shows Association
- Access to the ISA Group Insurance Scheme
- Access to the National Shows Management Software at reduced cost

## Rules for Member Shows

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### Criteria of Membership

1. Membership is open to agricultural shows on the island of Ireland.  
Definition of an Agricultural Show as it relates to membership of the ISA:
  - Must include animals/livestock in a competitive setting.
  - Must not operate as, or be described as, a fair, festival, or vintage event, and must not use the terms “fair”, “festival”, or “vintage” in its title, branding, publicity materials, websites, social media, signage, or official correspondence.
  - Must include six (6) listed categories on the programme of events form.
    - Where current member shows do not meet this criterion, they will be afforded a period of three years from the date of the implementation of these rules to develop their show to meet this.
2. The number of dates available is limited. Member shows / Prospective member shows should endeavour to request a suitable date at time of application.
3. Arklow Agreement: Where two shows apply for the same date, the board of the Irish Shows Association is obliged to protect the show with the traditional date, where a genuine clash occurs. Every effort will be made to mediate between the shows. The final decision on the ratification of the dates lies with the board of the ISA. Criteria to assess the level of clash include close proximity geographically (within 100km), similar programme of classes, similar list of exhibitors. Supporting documentation will be required to substantiate any objection.
4. New shows should only be admitted to membership on a date given by the ISA.
5. New shows will be admitted to membership as probationary members. The probation period should last for three years. After this time, the board would need to ratify the show's full membership.

### Reasons for Excluding a Show from Membership

1. Shows can be refused membership on the following grounds:
  - a. Repeatedly not paying bills owed to the ISA.
  - b. Repeated health and safety breaches without remediation being undertaken.
  - c. Inability to ratify a suitable date.
  - d. Failure to meet the Criteria of Membership.

### Responsibilities of Member Shows

1. Member shows to have a named child safeguarding officer and relevant training undertaken. Names, contact details and certificates to be submitted to the ISA office for inclusion in the ISA database.
2. Member shows must provide at least two contacts and an “out of season” phone number and email address to the ISA office.
3. Member shows are expected to respond to correspondence from the ISA in a timely manner. No correspondence will be issued more than twice.
4. Shows must acknowledge the Irish Shows Association on programmes, advertising, and publications.
5. Shows must not announce show dates publicly without confirmation from the ISA that the proposed date has been ratified.
6. Member shows must collect the Championship Fund Levy (currently 5%) from Horse, Pony, Cattle, Sheep & Goat class and championship prize money each year and forward the amount collected, in full, to the Irish Shows Association within the stipulated period of not more than 30

days from the date of the show.

7. Member shows must undertake to ensure the correct collection and return of qualifier cards and entry fees.
8. Member shows must submit membership form and schedule of events to the Irish Shows Association together with the appropriate fees as stipulated by the board and advised in writing to the shows by the date stipulated annually.
9. Member shows are expected to send representatives to attend two regional meetings annually. Two named delegates from each member show will be eligible to vote at such meetings.
10. Complete any and all paperwork, forms and other stipulations as outlined by the Irish Shows Association in relation to the distribution of any grants or funding. This may include the provision of receipts of proof of expenditure.
11. Member shows must publish and endeavour to enforce the ISA Disciplinary policy.
12. In the interest of safety, the board of the ISA directs that the minimum age for a handler or rider in a horse class must be no less than 16 years of age. This should be increased to 18 in the case of showing a stallion.

### **Eligibility of Shows hosting Qualifiers:**

***Shows wishing to participate in the Championships and be eligible to hold qualifiers must:***

1. Have collected the Championship Fund (currently 5%) from Horse, Pony, Cattle, Sheep & Goat class prize money for the previous year and forwarded the amount so collected, in full, to the Irish Shows Association within the stipulated period of not more than 30 days from the date of the show. Alternative methods of meeting this obligation are not acceptable. Any show or competitor in breach of the rules set out will be disqualified from participating or competing in these Championships.
2. Undertake to ensure the correct collection and return of qualifier cards and entry fees.
3. These General Rules and those relating to individual championships (where applicable) should be published in the show schedule and catalogue of the participating shows and must be strictly observed.
4. For horse, pony, cattle and sheep qualifiers, qualifying rounds must be at least 10 days before the date of the final. For indoor, poultry and dog finals, qualifier rounds must be at least 7 days before the date of the final.

### **Suggestion on Judges' Expenses.**

Where shows are paying judges' travelling expenses, the recommended rate is 40 cent per kilometre, up to a maximum of €125.

### **Responsibility of Shows holding Qualifying Rounds:**

1. Selected Shows should hold a separate class for each qualifier from which the highest placed animals will qualify.
2. Shows must ensure that the qualifiers are held strictly in accordance with the relevant rules.
3. No other sponsor may be involved in qualifying classes.
4. Shows may charge a set entry fee for each qualifying class. The I.S.A. will award a rosette to the successful exhibit(s) on appearance at the final.
5. No show hosting a Championship Final may hold a qualifying class for that championship on the day of the final other than by agreement with the Irish Shows Association.
6. Shows who hold qualifiers for Horses, Ponies, Cattle, Sheep & Goats may ask exhibitors to enter the exhibit in at least one other class at their show on the day. Shows should not undertake to host a qualifier unless they have an equivalent class.

7. Where shows debar class winners from further competitions, this rule must not be applied to qualifiers.
8. Animals qualified for finals are not eligible to enter in any other show class at the show where the final is held, other than a qualifying class for another championship.
9. Shows should appoint competent, well-briefed people to act as stewards, who must ensure that only animals (or other exhibits) which are eligible to compete and whose documentation is in order, are allowed to proceed to the judging ring.
10. On completion of judging, Stewards must inform the successful competitors to visit the Secretary's Office at the show within one hour and complete the necessary paperwork and pay for entry to the final.
11. The show must appoint a well-briefed officer who will be available at the Secretary's Office to assist exhibitors to complete the entry cards for participation in the final and collect the entry fee.
12. **Qualifying cards must be fully completed and the qualifying fee paid on the day of the show.** Once both conditions are met, then qualifying cards may be signed by board members.

### Responsibility of Exhibitors:

1. Exhibitors accept that the Judge's decision is final in all cases.
2. Any abuse of Judges will not be tolerated. Where a dispute or case for complaint arises, the matter should only be dealt with under 8 below.
3. Exhibitors should be familiar with the Irish Shows Association Disciplinary Policy as published on our website and annual guidebook.
4. Winners of Qualifiers are themselves responsible for entering their qualifiers (or exhibits) for the final in accordance with the rules above, within one hour of qualifying.
5. Winners of qualifiers will compete in the final.
6. The Irish Shows Association in conjunction with the sponsors reserve the right to alter or amend the rules of the competition as may be necessary where appropriate.
7. Shows and competitors must contact the ISA for details of any championships and not the sponsor involved.
8. Objections must be lodged in writing with the I.S.A. representative at the show and the Show Secretary within half an hour following the completion of judging, together with a fee of €50, or other stated fee, which is refundable in the event of the objection being upheld.
9. Any exhibitor who makes a false declaration or misrepresents a fact regarding themselves or their exhibit is liable to disqualification and/or forfeiture of any prizes awarded.
10. If a qualified exhibitor does not turn up to an ISA final without giving prior notice to the ISA office or to a board member, he or she will incur a financial penalty.

### Responsibilities of Shows hosting Championship Finals & All-Ireland Finals:

1. Where shows are paying out prizes for horse, pony, cattle and sheep finals, a deduction of 5% of the prize money will be collected by the show and forwarded to the ISA within 30 days of the Final.
2. Championship finals must start not later than 2pm on the day of the show and the advertised time must be adhered to as far as possible. If necessary, other show classes should be either postponed or relocated to allow for this.
3. Shows should cooperate with ISA personnel and judges appointed to officiate at finals.

4. Selection of judges for All-Ireland championships should be handled by the relevant sub-committee of the board of the ISA.

## Rules for Member Shows availing of Funding Grants through the ISA

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1. Shows must take note of allowable and non-allowable expenses under any grant scheme administered through the ISA. These criteria are set by the relevant government departments and communicated to shows through the office of the ISA.
2. Shows must take responsibility to read and complete any necessary documentation and correspondence in a timely manner, adhering to deadlines outlined. Late applications cannot be processed.
3. Application form should be completed by all shows wishing to avail of any grant, including a signed agreement to abide by the rules outlined.
4. Grants will only be paid down on submission of eligible receipts.
5. All grant applications for State funding are subject to audit by the relevant departments.
6. Insurance rebate and any other grants will only be paid once a show has paid any debts owed to the ISA, e.g. membership fee and levy.
7. New member shows must meet requirements set out before being eligible for grant funding.
8. An administration fee of 3.5% payable by member shows to the Irish Shows Association upon drawdown of any state funding or grants administered through or by the Irish Shows Association.

## Rules for Member Shows availing of ISA Group Insurance

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1. All member shows are required to have sufficient insurance cover in place to cover their event.
2. Shows wishing to avail of the Irish Shows Association group insurance scheme must:
  - a. Complete all required paperwork and forms by the date stipulated annually.
  - b. Provide truthful and accurate information on all forms.
  - c. Notify the office of any events throughout the year requiring insurance cover, for example, fundraising events involving the general public.
  - d. Pay their insurance premium immediately on receipt of invoice. Failure to do so could endanger your insurance cover.
  - e. Request any letters of indemnity required in a timely manner.
  - f. Appoint responsible safety officers who will be required to attend safety training seminars as arranged by the Irish Shows Association at intervals stipulated by the board.
  - g. Make every effort to run their show in a safe manner. Where unsafe practices are reported, this will be investigated, and the show may not be able to avail itself of the insurance scheme going forward or be asked to pay a higher premium until remedial actions have been taken.

## **External Disciplinary Policy**

The Irish Shows Association expects and will insist upon appropriate behaviour from all Exhibitors and others participating in any of the activities at our Member Shows and will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour shall include but not be limited to the following:

- Profanity, coarse or vulgar language or gestures towards judges, exhibitors or other Show officials
- Harassment or bullying, including using words or actions that threaten, intimidate or undermine judges or other officials before, during or following Member Show activities.
- Failure to follow rules and/or obey instructions.
- Abusing any animal

### **Disciplinary Procedure:**

Complaints of misconduct against an Exhibitor, Spectator or other participant at an affiliated Show or any event organised by The Irish Shows Association, or alleged breaches of the rules and standing orders of The Irish Shows Association, shall all be investigated and adjudicated upon by a Disciplinary Committee appointed by the Board of the Irish Shows Association. All complaints must be submitted in writing and must be signed by all parties submitting the complaint. The Disciplinary Committee shall seek to ensure the existence of consistent, effective, fair, and transparent complaint procedures and shall act in accordance with natural and constitutional justice. Hearings of all committees shall be confidential and held in private, unless the committee decides otherwise

### **Disciplinary Committee:**

A Disciplinary Committee shall be established by the Board of the Irish Shows Association to determine alleged misconduct, or alleged breaches of the rules and standing orders of The Irish Shows Association. The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of five (5) persons all being Directors, of the Irish Shows Association. One of these five shall be elected as Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee. Each member shall be appointed on the basis that he or she is able to hear issues referred to the Disciplinary Committee under these General Rules fairly and impartially. The Disciplinary Committee has the power to hear and determine all issues referred to it in accordance with the General Rules of the Irish Shows Association.

### **Disciplinary Process:**

The Disciplinary Committee shall appoint one of its members as Disciplinary Officer. All alleged complaints of misconduct or breach of General Rules shall be referred to the Disciplinary Officer who will determine if the matter should be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. In making this determination the Disciplinary Officer may consider any evidence he or she deems worthy. The Disciplinary Officer shall have the right to make enquiries of any individual, seek further information in relation to the matter and seek guidance as he or she considers appropriate to determine whether the matter should be investigated further, dealt with otherwise or brought forward as an alleged breach of these General Rules.

Where the Disciplinary Officer determines that a breach of General Rules should be alleged, the Disciplinary Officer shall notify the Secretary of the Irish Shows Association of this decision, and the Secretary shall refer the matter to the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee. Where the Disciplinary Officer determines that a breach of General Rules should not be alleged, the Disciplinary Officer shall notify the Secretary of the Irish Shows Association of this decision, and the Secretary shall take such action as he or she believes appropriate.

### **Hearing Procedures:**

Upon receipt of a referral from the Secretary of the Irish Shows Association, the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee, or a Vice-Chairperson, if necessary, shall form a hearing committee to consider the issue. A hearing committee may award costs. Subject to these General Rules a hearing committee shall have the power to regulate its procedures. The Hearing Committee will

appoint, from within its members a person who will be responsible for recording the proceedings of the hearing and for sending a copy of same, duly signed by all members of the hearing committee, to the National Secretary, within 2 days of the hearing.

Any person against whom a complaint has been made shall be entitled to an in-person hearing. Hearings of the hearing committee shall be confidential and held in private, unless the hearing committee decides otherwise. The hearing committee shall have the power to decide on the admissibility, relevance and weight of any evidence and shall not be bound by any legal rules in relation to such matters. Facts may be established by any reliable means, including admissions. The hearing committee shall consist of either three or five persons as the Chairperson or a Vice-Chairperson deems appropriate. A hearing committee will not have powers

Each party to the proceedings shall have the right to present evidence, make submissions, call witnesses, and cross-examine the witnesses of the other party and, subject to the hearing committee's discretion to accept testimony by telephone, written statement, or submission, whether by fax, email, or other means. The hearing committee, at the request of one of the parties to the proceedings or on its own initiative, may require one or more parties to the proceedings to supply it and/or the other party or parties to the proceedings, within such time as the hearing committee determines, with further particulars of the case of that party, including details of all witnesses that party intends to call at any hearing together with details of the evidence to be given by those witnesses and that party shall comply with that direction. The hearing committee, at the request of one of the parties to the proceedings or on its own initiative, may direct one or more parties to the proceedings to make any property, document, or other thing in that party's possession or under its control available for inspection by the hearing committee and/or any other party and that party shall comply with that direction. Any failure by any party to the proceedings to comply with any requirement or direction of the hearing committee, including those requirements or directions to be complied with within a truncated time schedule, shall not prevent the hearing committee from proceeding and such failure may be taken into consideration by the hearing committee when making its decision. A failure by any party or their representative to attend a hearing after notification shall not prevent the hearing committee from proceeding with the hearing in their absence.

All hearings shall be recorded, and the Irish Shows Association shall retain the record. The hearing committee may postpone or adjourn a hearing. The hearing committee shall have the power, at its absolute discretion, to appoint an expert to assist or advise it. The person chosen as the expert shall not be involved in the matter before the hearing committee and shall be free from any conflict of interest. The decision of a hearing committee shall be final and binding on all parties, unless appealed in accordance with these General Rules. The decision of a hearing committee shall be notified to the Secretary of the Irish Shows Association who shall ensure that all the necessary parties are notified of the decision within five working days from receipt of the decision from the hearing committee. The Secretary of the Irish Shows Association shall ensure that the decision is enforced.

### **Penalties:**

The hearing committee shall have the power to impose one or more of the following penalties for misconduct or for a breach of these General Rules:-

A formal warning;

A formal reprimand;

A suspension of a person from entering or competing in any competition organised by the Irish Shows Association for a period up to and including one calendar year.

### **Appeals:**

A decision of the Disciplinary Committee may be appealed. An appeal may be lodged by any party to the original decision. A notice of appeal must be made in writing to the Secretary of the Irish Shows Association, within fourteen (14) days of the date of issue of the original decision. Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, the Secretary shall refer the appeal to the Chairperson of The Irish Shows Association who shall form an appeal committee to consider the appeal. The Appeal committee shall consist of three Directors of the Irish Shows Association. The Appeal committee shall not include any members of the Disciplinary Committee who were involved in the hearing at first instance which is the subject of the appeal. Subject to these General Rules the appeal committee shall have the power to regulate its procedures. The Appeal Committee shall have the power to approve, amend or overrule the decisions of the Disciplinary Committee. The appeal committee shall have the power to impose any penalty it deems appropriate upon a person found on appeal to have breached these General Rules or the rules of a show section/ subcommittee. The decision of an Appeal committee shall be final and binding on all parties.