

## The channel a possibility if season starts soon enough

Contributed by John Walsh  
Friday, 22 January 2021

Pigeon fanciers throughout Cumbria, as well as the rest of the country, are still uncertain about a start-date for the 2021 season.

Early April, the traditional opening of the old bird programme, seems over-optimistic and the majority of fanciers are resigned to a late start and a shortened programme again.

The 2020 racing didn't start until Sunday, June 7 with a sticky first test from Charnock Richard.

A planned mid-week follow-up from Appleton was cancelled but the second week-end did produce a good race from Appleton.

No channel racing was possible last year and even without another delayed start the impact of Brexit on Channel racing has been a concern for fanciers all around the UK.

The teething problems with introducing Brexit regulations, and the red tape that goes with it have been obvious. The required health documentation and processes relating to the import and export of the avian species, published since Brexit has increased these concerns.

The relevant EU regulation that covers the transportation of the Avian species from third countries (countries from outside of the EU) into a European Union member state includes the following -

This Regulation shall apply to animals of the avian species. However, it shall not apply to:

"racing pigeons which are introduced to the territory of the Union from a neighbouring third country where they are normally resident and then immediately released with the expectation that they will fly back to that third country;"

Fairly clear, but the RPRA chief executive Ian Evans quite rightly considered it prudent to seek confirmation from the relevant authority that no additional health documentation is required.

He has now told fanciers: "I am pleased to communicate that I have received confirmation from the Centre for International Trade, (via the APHA) that pigeons transported to an EU state are exempt from the requirements that have caused so much concern.

"I am sure members will be pleased to read this confirmation but please note that this relates to the transportation of pigeons for racing purposes and not the permanent import of pigeons from the EU.

"In this respect I am still seeking further clarification and will update members as soon as I am in receipt of such information.

"In addition to the above I am also aware of information circulating relating to vehicle emissions. I have seen social media posts that suggest there is a blanket ban on vehicles, that don't meet certain emission requirements, travelling in France. This is not true.

"However, there are currently a limited amount of low emission zones with certain restrictions; we will publish information shortly outlining where these emission zones exist."

So, depending on the start date for the season we might get some channel racing, although the usual four for the West Cumbria Amalgamation may be super optimistic and out of the question.

As soon as a date for the start of racing is concerned local delegates will be working on a suitable race programme for the Derwent Valley Federation, the West Cumberland Federation and the West Cumbria Amalgamation.