

MEDIA RELEASE

REVISED DRAFT DATES FOR SIRES' STAKES AND HARNESS MILLION RACES

MAY 8, 2020

September and October will be jam-packed with Sires' Stakes and Harness Million races, under a draft schedule just released by the Sires' Stakes Board.

With all racing in this country coming to a halt because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sires' Stakes Board has been forced into a major re-think of when and where the races would be held.

"With 18 races involved in all it's been challenging," says Sires' Stakes executive Martin Pierson, "we have worked towards getting a flow of races so that all horses have every opportunity to contest the races they are eligible for. Every attempt has been made to ensure 2YO Series' are completed before the 3YO's start their campaigns."

The first of the outstanding heats (2YO colts and geldings) is scheduled for Addington in mid-August, before six weeks of Sires' Stakes and Harness Million races at Addington and Alexandra Park in September and October.

"Any Series that has already started will carry over that qualification form into the remainder of the Series," said Pierson.

Of the three Group One races, the Garrard's Sires' Stakes Final for two-year old colts and geldings is set down for Alexandra Park in mid-September, the Magness Benrow Sires' Stakes Championship for the two-year-old fillies at Alexandra Park at the end of October. The Nevele R Fillies Series Final for the three-year-old fillies is scheduled to be run on New Zealand Cup day.

The NZB Standardbred Harness Million races are set down for Alexandra Park in late September for the two-year-old colts and geldings, with the fillies and trotters at Addington in early October.

Haras des Trotteurs Sires' Stakes races for the two and three-year-old trotters have been scheduled for October to accommodate those wanting to compete in the Breeders Crown heats that start on November 12.

Just what the stakes will be is yet to be determined, Pierson added, "Funding for all races is still being worked through, but the Board assures participants all monies paid into each

Series has been ring-fenced for these races.” It is unlikely that the rescheduled races will be able to be run at the same stakes level. The impact of COVID-19 on wagering means the distributions that would have supported these races (on top of the ring-fenced contributions from the Sires’ Stakes Board) in the 2019-20 season are no longer available from RITA. Decisions on stakes levels for the rescheduled races will be made as a part of the HRNZ funding model review for the 2020-21 season.

The Board wishes to thank HRNZ for its help with this process. “We also acknowledge the support of our sponsors in rescheduling these races,” concluded Pierson.

The revised draft schedule is below (actual dates to be confirmed in the 2020-21 dates calendar)

RACE		TENTATIVE PLAN	CLUB
Garrard's Sires Stakes Heat 2	2YO C & G	mid August	NZ Metro
Garrard's Sires Stakes Heat 3	2YO C & G	early September	Auckland
Garrard's NZ 2YO Sires Stakes Final (G1)	2YO C & G	mid September	Auckland
NZB Standardbred Harness Million 2YO Colts & Geldings (L)	2YO C & G	late September	Auckland
Magness Benrow Sires Stakes Heat 2	2YO F	early September	NZ Metro
Magness Benrow Sires Stakes Heat 3	2YO F	mid September	NZ Metro
NZB Standardbred Harness Million 2YO Fillies	2YO F	early October	NZ Metro
Magness Benrow Sires Stakes Heat 4	2YO F	early October	Auckland
Magness Benrow Sires Stakes Fillies Championship (G1)	2YO F	late October	Auckland
Haras des Trotteurs 2YO Trotters Sires Stakes Prelude 2	2YO T	late September	NZ Metro
NZB Standardbred Harness Million 2YO Trot (L)	2YO T	early October	NZ Metro
Haras des Trotteurs 2YO Trotters Sires Stakes Championship (G2)	2YO T	mid October	NZ Metro
Nevele R Fillies Series Heat 6	3YO F	early October	NZ Metro
Nevele R Fillies Series Heat 5	3YO F	early October	Auckland
Nevele R Fillies Series Heat 7	3YO F	late October	NZ Metro
Nevele R Fillies Series Final (G1)	3YO F	NZ Cup Day	NZ Metro
PGG Wrightson 3YO Trotters Final (L)	3YO T	early October	Auckland
Haras des Trotteurs 3YO Trotters Sires Stakes Championship (G2)	3YO T	late October	Auckland

Note – age as at July 31, 2020. The horses competing in the 2YO races will be 3 at the time the races are run, those in the 3YO races will be 4 when the races are run.

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