

RAS Affiliation Benefits - General

The RAS has a range of intellectual property and that includes the RAS

- Website
- Show Schedules
- Yellow Card
- Resolution Process
- Equestrian Judges List
- Equestrian Rulebook
- Equestrian Judges Information Manual and Tutor Judges Procedure Manual
- Certificate - Horse/Pony ID (Height)
- Administration Manual
- Interbreed Beef Cattle Judge's List

Within each of those components there is a whole raft of information and material relating to specific areas. For instance the RAS Administration Manual relates to all matters of showing, (with a very thorough Health & Safety aspect), while the equestrian rulebook is specific to equestrian.

The RAS Intellectual Property belongs to the members who pay affiliation fees. For those parties who chose not to be affiliated to the RAS - they are not entitled to any of those benefits. For instance, an unaffiliated equestrian show is **not entitled to use** the RAS

- Yellow Card system
- Resolution Process
- Forbidden Substance system
- Show Schedule
- Certificate - Horse/Pony ID (Height)
- Equestrian Judge's List
- Equestrian rules, in which to run their show.

While obviously any party can run an equestrian event they would need to make up their own schedule with their own rules and there should be no reference or use of the RAS Certificate (Height). If they wished to run classes with heights, they would need to have their own system in place as the RAS Measuring stands and certificates are not available to them. As a standalone event with different rules, schedules and systems there is no consistency or benefit for the exhibitor or competitor so why would they choose to attend that event? In addition to this any equestrian event outside of the RAS umbrella is not a HOY qualifier.

Some people try to challenge the ownership concept; however, when you look at it from the point of view – members pay a fee to enjoy the benefits and strengths that a national organization offers and that money goes towards training or setting up initiatives for the members - it then becomes a lot clearer.

The RAS affiliation fees (along with sponsorship and grants) are what runs this organization. This money is channeled in to areas such as

- Interbreed Beef Cattle Judging Seminars
- Equestrian Judges Seminars
- Measurers and their Stewards Training Seminars
- Forbidden Substance Training Seminars
- Broadening the use of the RAS website by having an equestrian database that can track all showing animals, record their wins and provide a level playing field for the equestrian competitors.
- Youth Development – Junior Judging, Rural Ambassador, Equestrian Youth Team
- Manning an office 5 days of the week for all components of the movement (RAS staff also work on the weekends when and if required)

Outside of the equestrian scene there are a number of other breeds that belong to the RAS organization that have their own specific problems – teat sealing issues within the dairy, strengthening one specific breed over and above another breed, more than one group representing that breed and the list goes on. When this matter relates to the showing scene, the parties automatically come to the RAS for assistance with their concerns.

The RAS provides the umbrella structure for the showing scene and creates an environment where all members can have their say via the processes in place – postal voting system and/or voting at RAS Conference. The RAS District structure is in place to air any issues at regional level and to provide an accessible venue for parties to have regional discussion. Discussion also takes place at national level and that is at the RAS Conference. A range of topics are covered at conference and the administrator's day provides a valuable resource for those parties running events and shows. The affiliation fees paid allow this structure to operate for the benefit of the members.

This is not to forget a very important component that is at the heart of the organization. This is one of the few organizations that has a Royal Charter and this allows the RAS to run Royal Shows and Events for the benefit of the members. All of the hard work undertaken by the A&P Societies throughout the year, running their individual A&P shows, is replicated at the Royal Show – the prestige of winning a Supreme Champion medal and ribbon at the Royal Show is not to be underestimated. These medals and ribbons, are provided by the RAS.

In 2012, the RAS Executive reviewed the medals they had available and introduced an extra level. Currently there are three levels available –

- The prestigious RAS Gold medal awarded for national achievements
- Medal of excellence (1) for district achievements, and
- Medal of excellence (2) for local achievements.

Each year the Districts automatically receive an allocation of medals to distribute to their members. A&P Societies can also request medals for special events or long serving members they wish to recognize.

The RAS as a national organization can open doors that a local body or party do not have access to and this can include support for getting grants/funding as well as having a voice within biosecurity issues. Currently the RAS is a member of Equine Health and as such we have an RAS Executive member that attends their meetings and speaks for the RAS members. As you can appreciate there is always strength in numbers and the RAS speaks for the showing scene.

There are other initiatives underway (RAS Youth Council and RAS Young Judges and Rural Ambassador Competitions, as well as the Equestrian Youth Squad) to ensure that the RAS and the showing scene have a future. The RAS also co-ordinates or assists where necessary with other competitions such as the Golden Fleece Exhibition, the Dairy Heifer, and Ewe Hogget Competitions as they believe they also enhance the showing movement.

As to the amount of benefits members receive – in part this will relate to what aspect they relate to – beef, dairy, equestrian etc; however largely it relates to how involved that member is within the organization. Do they attend the District meetings, do they attend conference, do they support and involve themselves in the RAS initiatives, do they make sure their voice is heard? If members tend to sit on the fringes and not participate within the structures available, then they may feel they get limited benefit.

I hope this perhaps gives the reader a better understanding of the RAS as a whole. The RAS organisation represents the bigger picture for the benefit of all the members within showing.

Remember – RAS Head Office, the President and Executive, and your District Chair and Councillors are only a phone call away if you would like any further information or clarification.

Debbie Cameron
RAS CEO