



Declan Ryan heads the field in the RASE Eqvalan Duo® Equine Student Award – the first male to win in the award’s 12 year history

Declan Ryan from the University of Limerick has made history by becoming the first male winner of the Royal Agricultural Society of England’s ‘Eqvalan Duo Equine Thesis of the Year Award’. His study detailing the haematological parameters of Irish thoroughbred horses saw off strong competition from the three other finalists in the presentations at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire on Friday 12th November.

Commenting on his choice of study, Declan said: “We had a few racehorses at home before I started college and from time to time we carried out blood tests to query poor performance. This started my interest in haematology. Then through work with the Irish Equine Centre it became clear that it had been over 20 years since there had been a study on normal values for a healthy horse – and my dissertation was set.”

“I had this competition in the back of my mind from the start. To be selected to represent my College was brilliant, and then to make the finals was a great feeling, but to win is a dream come true. I fly out to California next week to spend a year working with racehorse trainer Bruce Hedley and then hope to return to Ireland and take out a licence to train National Hunt horses. I’m going to use some of my winnings to buy a new saddle, so winning this award will kick-start my training career in more ways than one.”

Declan’s winning thesis was selected from research theses submitted by universities and colleges in the UK and Ireland. The four finalists presented their studies to a panel of judges including Jan Rogers (British Equestrian Federation), Dr Emma Batson (Merial Animal Health), Dr Georgina Crossman (BEFRED), Nicky Moffatt (Horse & Rider magazine) and Rachel Kay (2006 winner), which they this year described as “fascinating and extremely useful information for the industry.”

Runner-up was Rebecca Mundy of Writtle College for her dissertation: 'An Epidemiological Study into the Prevalence of Recurrent Exertional Rhabdomyolysis (RER) and Possible Dietary Risk Factors in a Thoroughbred Racehorse Population in Ireland'.

The other finalists were Kelly Dinwiddy from Hartpury College and Jessica Putnam from the University of Nottingham.

Dr Emma Batson of sponsor, Merial Animal Health, congratulated all the finalists and said: "The standard of the entries in the award rises every year – all the finalists were outstanding, and certainly good enough to have won in previous years, but the judges were unanimous that Declan's contribution had the edge."

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Notes to Editors:-

1. Press release issued by Chloe Davies, Assistant Director - Communications, Royal Agricultural Society of England

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2. The Royal Agricultural Society of England, play a leading role in the development of British agriculture and a vibrant rural economy through the uptake of good science, the promotion of best practice. www.rase.org.uk
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