

Newmarket Trainers In A State Of Shock

After Godolphin trainer [Mahmood Al Zarooni](#) was charged after tests found traces of anabolic steroids in 11 of his horses and subsequently banned, Newmarket trainers are in a state of shock.

While a few said they cannot get over how insane the whole thing is, others said the horses administered with steroids could have even won without them, while some believe a big stable like Godolphin should lead by example.

Michael Bell, one of Newmarket's Derby-winning trainers, said the home-bred trainers are acutely aware of what drugs are legal and illegal and anyone who does it risks their license. Bell said one is putting his livelihood at stake if he uses illegal substances and so he would say it's not an across-the-board problem and it appears to be one guy going off on his own, taking the law into his own hands. He also added by being tested, you get found out and there's no escape.

John Berry, speaking at his yard in Newmarket's Exeter Road, is not much confident about the existing system and said there are so many things about the affair that just defy belief but one of them is that he's stupid enough to get caught pointing out that two horses of Zarooni tested positive for a painkiller last year and that therefore he would have known that he was odds-on to receive a spot-check at some point. The BHA investigation will continue with the testing of all horses at [Moulton Paddocks](#), but Berry can see no point to that and said it won't add to anyone's knowledge of who's had what, all it'll do is tell us who's got what in their system now. Berry also reports that the testers of the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) descend unannounced on "a handful" of stables each year, which he believes is enough of a deterrent for most people but he also feels such measures have a limited impact as larger stables use pre-training yards and so if [drugs] were in any horse's system, the ones who would have them in their system wouldn't be present at the time anyway.

He went on to add that even though anabolic steroids can pass through a horse's system in a short time, the benefit derived from them may last for much longer and a horse may spend months in a pre-training yard, getting daily doses of steroids, and the British Horseracing Authority would be unable to prove it as such yards are unlicensed and their testers have no right to enter them since horses are only required to be in a licensed yard for a fortnight before racing. Berry also said that anabolic steroids cannot be relied upon to improve a horse's ability as they would a human athlete and added that if you could get a horse so that he was that much bulkier than the others, he'd probably break down and if you could get his blood so much richer than the others, he'd start bleeding. He also said there are optimum levels for everything and if it's been routine to use this in Zarooni's stable, his results suggest they're more of a hindrance than a help.