



EQUINE STUDBOOKS ASSOCIATION

Representing Horse and Pony Studbooks of the UK

Chair: Celia Clarke (WBSUK), Vice-Chair: Natalie Meredith (AHS), Secretary: Jane Murray (New Forest), Treasurer: Sue McGeever (Rare breeds rep)

NOTES OF THE AD HOC EQUINE ID LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2022, 10 am, by Zoom

Present: Celia Clarke, Natalie Meredith, Simon Cooper, Jane Murray

The meeting was called to check the questions to raise with Helen Johnston of Defra Equine ID at the first post-consultation meeting on 16 December 2022.

Three main areas had been identified.

1. Statistical interpretation of the responses, skewing of statistics, and how this impacts the consultation report.
2. Enforcement.
3. Whether an electronic passport will become the primary document over a paper passport.

Statistical interpretation of the responses

It was noted the number of responses from individuals was almost equal to those from organisations within the industry, and it seems that in the interpretation of the results they are treated as having much the same weight and value. There is concern that legislation will be based too much on the owner responses. SC commented that it looked as though the report had been written before the survey, as there were several skewed questions in the consultation. He feared that more control will be handed to CED, which is barely fit for purpose. The BHC seemed to be pushing the centralised 'French model', but no-one from BHC is directly involved in a PIO, and there is no funding available for this model. Although there is no proof, the Irish model with fewer PIOs might be favoured. BHC wanted to control the narrative by issuing their own survey, with a number of leading questions. The BHC meeting the following day might be an opportunity to raise some forthright questions.

Enforcement

Enforcement has been non-existent apart from a few big welfare cases. NM though there was little point doing anything until we have enforcement. More publicity is needed. There is a lot of time wasting without enforcement. How will an effective system of enforcement be embedded in any new passport regime?

Digital vs. Paper

If the primary document is digitised how do we help those who need paper documentation? Do we need a digital card in combination with a paper passport? A long transition period of 5+ years will probably be needed.

For export movements, all High Health horses can be pre-cleared electronically. BCPs can then concentrate on the smaller number of equines that cannot be pre-cleared. Minimising

unloading at BCPs will reduce spread of diseases. Movements to France have dropped by about 60% since Brexit and Covid.

If the starting point is updating the 2018 domestic legislation, then the starting point will be the paper passport and then looking at enabling acts to introduce digitisation. We still need to pay attention to EU legislation, especially for export movements. How closely do we need to align our paper passports to the EU legislation. An indication of timescales would be helpful.

Summing up, we do not know what Helen Johnston has recommended to the Minister, and it would be most helpful to us to know those recommendations. The situation is not helped by the BHC not fully understanding the role of a PIO, or what is involved in registration procedures.

It was agreed that those attending the BHC meeting the following day would try to find an opportunity to ask questions, particularly about their own questionnaire and the extent to which Defra accepted its validity.