



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: Susan McGeever (Exmoor)

MINUTES OF THE 826 EQUINE STUDBOOKS ASSOCIATION MEETING NO 8 2.00 PM FRIDAY 22 OCTOBER 2021 VIA ZOOM

Present

Committee: Celia Clarke (Chair, WBSUK), Eva-Maria Broomer (AES), Jane Murray (Minutes Secretary, New Forest), Simon Cooper (Weatherbys), Sacha Shaw (NPS), Natalie Meredith (AHS) Susan McGeever (Treasurer, Exmoor)

Observers: John Shenfield, Jane Nixon MRCVS (speaker), Lady Anne Vestey, Gina Dent (CPR), Amy Kirby (BHS),

Studbooks: Angela Whiteway (Shire), Tikki Adorian (IMHPS), Meirion Davies (WPCS), Carol Morse, Rosemary Clarke, Pam Moon (all Donkey Breed), Barbara Smathers (Caspian), Mary McBryde (BAPSH), Kate Eaton (British Hanoverian), Jane Mullan (Palomino), Jill Graham, Jo Ashby, Janet James (all Dales), Lucy Sheldarake (SPSS), Tom Brown (Dartmoor), Peter Boustead (Fell), Jillian Robinson (MHCGB). Judith Harris (Eriskay), Marian Edyman (SHBGB), Heather Chaplin (Irish Draught)

Defra Zootech: Amelia Greenham

Defra Equine ID: Simon Waterfield, Frances Adeke, Debbie Bailey, Olivia Herford

Speaker: Victoria Murrell (TBA)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Andrea Betteridge (TGCA), Auriole Thorne, Kim Sands (both APHUK), Catherine Burdock (SHBGB, Committee), Emma Hoare (CHAPS), Lynn Jarvis, Rachel Palmer (both USAUK), Phillipa Cole (SPSS), Rachel Davis (Defra), Sandra Mansell (Exmoor), Viv Brown (Dartmoor), Ruth Staines (Caspian), Susan Attew (Trakehner Breeders Fraternity), Katherine Wilkinson, Michael Goddard (both Fell), Karin Swanson (AHS)

THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING were approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES for the last meeting not covered by Agenda items below

Marian Edyman asked if any society had experienced problems with posting passports by Royal Mail to Europe and especially Ireland. It did not appear to be a general problem, and the best advice was to use a courier if problems with Royal Mail persisted.

CHAIR'S REPORT OCTOBER 2021

Celia Clarke had circulated her report below by email prior to the meeting.

With the constantly changing timescales for the introduction of the EU Animal Health Law – and the direct and indirect effects that this has had on import, export and breeding schedules for pedigree equines (indeed on all equines of every type) -- it is quite hard to define exactly how the situation that the members of the 826 Equine Studbooks Association now find themselves in is compared to 6 months ago. The flow of information from DEFRA and other sources has certainly been extensive – and sometimes rather confusing and complex – and as Chair I have tried to keep

you all informed of it by forwarding it to you as soon as it arrived in my Inbox, but whether we are all actually any the wiser about where we currently are in this post-Brexit COVID-19 infected age is difficult to tell. This is particularly true where the transport and documentation of animals bound to or from Northern Ireland is concerned and watching the regular webinars on this subject have devoured quite a number of my hours over the past few months.

Of course, there are a few definite steps forward that have taken place. The most important of these is that not only has the EU now recognised all UK-based DEFRA approved studbooks as approved studbooks from a Third Country, but the same has happened in reverse, so that (almost) all EU-approved studbooks are now also recognised in the UK by DEFRA as Third Country studbooks as well. And if we think we had problems getting EU approval at our end, spare a thought for the head of the German National Federation, who – as the competent authority for all the German studbooks – had to perform a similar task for GB recognition of over 600 mother, filial and regional breeding organisations for which he is ultimately responsible. The Expanded Breeding Programme initiative, on the other hand, is still in development but hopefully DEFRA will be able to give us an update at this meeting.

In addition, a series of on-line meetings took place with DEFRA on matters relating to studbook issues, often concerning on-going problems with the CED and the ER but also dealing with wider issues including possible future changes to the passport regulations (such as the introduction of a digital passport) now that we are no longer a member state of the EU and we are assured by DEFRA that such consultations will continue in the future.

As a member of the British Horse Council, we have also regularly stressed to them that studbooks are the solution – not the problem – as far as ensuring much more traceability and full records of equines with the CED and the ER and we had hoped that we were getting our message through. However, even if we were, the opinion of the EFRA committee (as published in Horse and Hound a few weeks ago) that centrally produced digital passports are the solution to the data gaps is deeply disappointing and something we must argue against in every stage of the forthcoming DEFRA consultation on the subject.

There were no questions and no objections, so the Chair's Report was accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Sue McGeever had circulated the current balance sheet by email prior to the meeting. This showed a current balance of £3,672.13, and just a small number of membership payments outstanding. It was agreed that the Zurich Insurance policy was reasonably priced and will be renewed. The Association is not spending much money at present while holding meetings online – it was noted that live meetings can cost about £600-700 a time. The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

UPDATES FROM THE DEFRA TEAM

Amelia Greenham: Zootechnical Items – Third Country Listing and Permissions for Extended Breeding Programmes for EU-based Studbooks

- **Third Country Listing:** 400 equine breed societies from 23 European countries are eligible to trade under equivalent terms. There is unlikely to be many amendments to this list.
- **Extended Breeding Programmes:** These allow the approved EU breed societies to register and issue passports to equines born in the UK. There are only 7 equine breeds approved from France, Germany and Spain. A further five from Ireland can register in Northern Ireland as they were existing all-Ireland studbooks. There is one outstanding application from Finland.

Eva-Maria Broomer commented that there had been unfortunate conflation and confusion of the two among some British warmblood breeders. Some had never used British studbooks and it was important that they were aware of where they could now register their stock.

Meirion Davies reported that he understood that the Welsh Assembly had not accepted any requests, although some had been received.

There were some queries and comments about over-stamping with Debbie Bailey confirming that only horses resident in the UK were required on the CED.

It was thought that while digital passports might be the way forward in the long term in the EU, for now there was still a reliance on paper passports because of the lack of consistency in availability of the internet across the EU. EU legislation is still based on the physical passport.

Simon Waterfield (SW): Forthcoming DEFRA consultation on electronic passports

A public consultation was planned before the end of the year, which would not just be on digital passports, but a full review of equine identity and traceability in England. It was thought that Scotland and Wales will follow the EU rules more closely, and Northern Ireland may link to Eire. Defra's current focus is on an analysis of the economic impact to accompany the consultation as it was thought that any proposed changes require an industry and public buy-in.

Concerns were raised for equine welfare and traceability when horses are being microchipped but this information is not reaching the CED. SW responded by saying that the consultation will cover the quality of data on the CED and how accuracy can be improved, whether through enforcement, control or guidance.

Simon Waterfield: Update on current import and export arrangements post-Transition

Further digitisation would lead to a better process. Ministers want to streamline the trade regime and efforts are being made to reduce the amount of paperwork that goes with a horse moving to EU.

EU has extended the grace period on the use of EHC until January 2022, after which only the new EHC which reflects the new Animal Health law can be used. In practice, though, many exporters are already switching to the new certificates as they are less onerous.

Simon Cooper noted that the situation was definitely improving, things are beginning to settle, but the various new arrangements have had an impact on the TB industry.

Horse Smuggling. Currently, equines can be exported from GB for any purpose, including slaughter, but with large parts of the British public averse to slaughter, this trade has needed to be called something different. SW explained that it is being called 'smuggling', but it is a misrepresentation of the proper purpose of this type of equine movement. Defra does not want exporters to use the EHC as a cover for movements to slaughter. Electronic passports have been proposed as a solution to 'horse smuggling' but for the moment EU regulations require equines exported from the UK to have a hard copy/paper passport when crossing borders.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF STUD FARMS - PRESENTATION BY VICTORIA MURRELL (EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, TBA)

The presentation began by considering legislative changes and government objectives: the government's 25-year Environmental Plan, the Climate Change Act, the Agriculture Act (2020), the Environment Bill working its way through Parliament, and future Environmental Land Management Schemes. A number of environmental markers will be assessed at both farm and landscape level.

The TBA has already taken some steps to help their breeders. In an evaluation of the current position, many breeders are already likely to be making a positive impact through being a low impact grassland management sector. Funding was secured from the Racing Foundation to carry out Environmental Impact Assessments on two studs in Gloucestershire and Suffolk. They are also researching initiatives in other countries and looking to collaborate and share resources throughout the broader equine community.

Individual stud farms can make a start on reducing their environmental impact by adopting some of the measures offered in a helpful list – composting/recycling of manure; grass/herb seed mixes suitable for grazing; wildflower meadows/walkways/margins; tree planting; reinforced grass car parks; reduced programmes of mowing/topping/ hedge cutting etc.

Some of the issues that will be difficult to deal with include horse transport; soya – trying to find a better protein source; bedding – a lot of shavings are imported and include large amounts of plastic packaging.

UPDATES FROM JANE NIXON ON EI, EHV AND OTHER BIOSECURITY MATTERS

British Equestrian's Equine Infections Disease Action Group (EIDAG) has published a 69-page document 'Advice Notes for BEF Member Bodies and Organisers of Horse Gatherings'. The guidance is based on 10 pillars of equine infectious disease management that organisers should follow: Responsibility; Raising standards and education; Risk communication and responsiveness; Vaccination; Vigilance and risk reduction; Biosecurity practice: participants; Biosecurity practice: stabling; Early disease recognition; Transparent information sharing; Supporting national infectious disease management.

The advice notes also contain general background information on a number of endemic and exotic diseases present in Great Britain to help educate horse owners on signs and management.

Endemic diseases: Equine Influenza; Equine Herpes Virus 1 and 4; Strangles; Ringworm; Infection syndromes – neurological and enteric signs

Exotic diseases: Equine Piroplasmiasis; Equine Viral Arteritis; Equine Infectious Anaemia; West Nile Fever; African Horse Sickness; Glanders and Farcy

New Formal Arrangements for Equine Infectious Disease Service

The Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB) has announced new plans to replace the equine infectious disease surveillance previously performed by the Animal Health Trust. HBLB has concluded an agreement with Rosdals Ltd to provide the diagnostic microbiology testing capacity, arrangements that will work in conjunction with the epidemiological surveillance and monitoring unit that will now be based at the University of Cambridge Veterinary School.

BHS Amendments to the Equine Influenza Vaccinations Code

From 1 January 2022, the primary course and booster interval schedule for Equine Influenza vaccinations will be amended and there is a period of harmonisation for the new intervals to take effect.

PRESENTATION BY JANE NIXON ON THE SOCIAL LICENCE TO OPERATE

Why should we ride horses? The Social Licence to Operate is defined as the level of acceptance of approval by local communities and stakeholders of organisations and their operations. Without sufficient popular support, elected governments will not grant permits or licences. For equestrianism, an increasing proportion of the media truly believe that horses should not be ridden. JN introduced the concept of a Pain Ethogram v. Happy Ethogram as a possible way forward. Equine welfare must take account of the evolution of the horse as a herd/flight/prey species and that these instincts cannot be changed. 'Fashion' must be binned if it interferes with equine welfare, eg not removing whiskers for showing. We must be ahead of the game – we must promote the happy horse, or lose your horse.

It was noted that there is currently a petition, supported by singer Will Young, to set strict limits on horse breeding. How do we counteract such initiatives? How do we demonstrate that we are making considered decisions on breeding?

JUNE 2021 BRITISH HORSE COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

All presentations are now available on the BHC website.

REPORT ON THE WBFSH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Eva-Maria Broomer was able to report that further British representatives have been added to the Executive Committee. Klaus Miesner indicated that the physical passport regime will continue in the EU. Further co-operation is needed between national sporting organisations and breeding organisations who need to be more involved in the selection process of horses for the World Breeding championships. WBFSH has a new website, with further developments to come for managing member services. EMB is very keen to push welfare – scientific research activities need to be handled under the welfare umbrella to improve knowledge and information.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none. Natalie Meredith and Anne Vestey thanked the Chair and Speakers for an interesting and informative meeting.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday 17 March 2022, 2 pm via Zoom. This will be the 2022 AGM and, according to the Consitution, many of the officers and committee will be up for re-election. Guidance on proposing and seconding people for office or committee membership, and on voting procedures via Zoom, will be given nearer the date of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.40 pm.