

International Meeting for New Forest Stud Books
24 - 25 October 2009
Burley Manor Hotel, Burley, Ringwood, Hants BH24 4BS

Present: Representatives from the studbooks of UK, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden

Apologies: Switzerland, USA

Chairman: Ms Gill Wright (UK)

1. Opening and Welcome

Ms Gill Wright, Chairman of the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society (UK) opened the meeting and welcomed all delegates.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting in The Netherlands, 16 November 2007

Approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

3. A review of the acceptance procedures in all the countries for fully licensed and performance tested stallions, following various problems encountered in France

A particular situation had arisen with a UK fully approved and performance tested stallion that had gone to France.

France reported that each year stallions have to be licensed and issued with covering certificates before the start of the season, otherwise registration is not allowed. In this particular case, problems had arisen as the papers did not seem to be in order. This paperwork issue has now been resolved with both the Society and Haras. However, it had raised the general issue of importers not always knowing the procedures, and so the French Society has now produced an information paper that will be circulated to all studbooks.

In this particular case, the registration of the foals from the stallion's first year of covering in France had been thrown into doubt because the stallion had not been issued with covering certificates at the start of the season.

Currently in France, all active stallions have to be presented and accepted so that they can be made known to breeders and their identity can be checked. There is only one approval session each year, in August. In the future, and to avoid the situation that had arisen with the UK stallion, an imported stallion will be able to cover for one year on its original papers provided that French covering certificates have been issued before the breeding season. UK expressed satisfaction at the resolution of this issue, and was pleased that information will be circulated, as it was an insufficient understanding of procedures that appeared to have caused the problem.

UK then asked for each studbook to state its criteria for acceptance of an imported stallion fully approved and performance tested in another studbook.

Belgium: can cover in the first year on its original papers. Then has to be inspected in line with all stallions, which involves an annual inspection from the second to the twelfth year.

Finland: licence granted on application. No inspection necessary. If it is presented, then premiums may be given.

Denmark: accepted for breeding when papers have been sent to the two organisations.

Norway: national laws require a presentation before judges. All have been accepted up to now.

Netherlands: no inspection necessary for full acceptance.

Sweden: have to go before a jury for inspection. If it is not liked by the jury, it may be put in part two of the studbook. However, all progeny go into part one of the studbook.

UK: once the status has been checked with the original country, the licence is issued with no inspection.

UK reminded all studbooks that the UK does not insist on performance testing, owing to the existence of the semi-feral herd. UK does not want one rule for stud-bred stallions and another for Forest-run stallions, so all UK performance testing is voluntary. However, it is not a problem for the UK if other countries insist on performance testing.

Belgium requested clarification if a licensed stallion is later found to have a condition such as sweet itch, which was not apparent at the time of licensing.

UK responded that in UK, it would go to the Board and vets, and there would be a good chance that its licence was revoked. However, all progeny would retain their registered status, as there is no retrospective action.

4. Defining infectious disease reporting requirements

France asked if it was possible to define reporting requirements for infectious diseases, in order to prevent infection during the breeding season, and if national databases existed.

No clear picture emerged.

Belgium was unable to give any information.

UK: Semen is quarantined and tested before export.

France: CEM testing of imports was carried out until 4-5 years ago, but is very expensive and no longer considered necessary. Stallions are now EVA tested.

Finland: Compulsory national CEM testing each year before covering, although there does not appear to be a problem in Finland.

Sweden: CEM and EVA testing of semen before an import can cover.

Denmark: For AI, semen is tested before the season - some bacterial and morphological testing.

Norway: no special testing before natural mating.

Netherlands: CEM testing for AI.

5. Confirmation of the exact and official date for the ending of registrations of ponies with more than 6.25% Golden Wonder blood

UK reminded the meeting that an extension of three years until the end of 2012 had been agreed previously. The UK Board will not extend this date and would like to see the problem brought to a finish at that point. Foals born in 2012 with an excess of 6.25% are eligible for registration, but foals born in 2013 will have to be registered elsewhere – probably a sports register. All breeders will therefore have to be aware of the effect of this on 2012 coverings.

Belgium: accepts.

France: accepts, as it is not a major problem. The small number of foals will go to a sports register.

Finland: about 20 ponies may be affected. Asked for clarification on where to register them. UK pointed out that these ponies are not pure New Forest, so X-register rules do not apply to them – they do not meet X-register criteria. They should therefore be registered as riding ponies or sports ponies from 2013 onwards.

Denmark: not a big problem (only 2 foals this year) and rules will be changed next year.

Norway: no problems with accepting.

Netherlands: not so many as others might think. Has been pleased with the additional three years, and there has been good publicity so all are aware of the situation. Foals will be registered in a sports register after 2012.

Sweden: There is a stallion with 25% GW blood, who covered 2 mares in 2008 and 3 in 2009. They have changed their rules with effect from 1 July 2009 and have had a big publicity campaign since 2008. However, they are unable to register as a sports pony in Sweden, they will go in the X-register and different codes will be used in the passport.

Norway asked Sweden for clarification, if one of these ponies is exported, will the Swedish information in the passport be clear enough?

UK reminded all studbooks that all imports should be checked carefully. The ideal situation is for all these ponies born in 2013 or later to be registered in a sports register. As Sweden is unable to do this, Sweden was asked to continue to state the GW % in the passport.

France expressed the view that while the situation was clear to the authorities, it was not always so to buyers. It was felt that the registration of foals elsewhere was not an issue, but concern was expressed that the right to breed was being taken away from brood mares who were already registered and whose stud book entry could not be changed.

UK responded that mares with more than 6.25% GW blood (and were therefore never pure NF in the first place) had only been given a temporary licence to breed, and that limited time frame expired at the end of 2012. Although some foals may be lost, they were never technically NF anyway. France reported that they were never given the NF name, and made them sports ponies.

UK further pointed out that there was a difference between GW ponies and X-register ponies. The X-register had been forced on all studbooks by EU rules, and covered ponies that did not meet the breed standard, such as if they had too much white. These are unapproved New Forest ponies. However, the GW ponies were never truly NF and had been given a breeding dispensation for a short time only.

France thought that there was still a risk of confusion among breeders with ponies formerly registered for breeding who lost that temporary breeding right at the end of 2012, and that the situation must be made clear to breeders.

UK again clarified that ponies born in 2012 were acceptable. However, 2012 coverings (ie 2013 foals) would not be acceptable.

UK always checks imports with the original studbook to check the GW blood before accepting an import into the studbook and suggested that all studbooks do the same. Denmark pointed out that this would be easier if it were possible to go direct to the registration database of all countries.

6. National Databases

UK: online National Equine Database is now up and running, but only includes ponies with a UELN. The Society is independently considering putting the entire studbook online, but this would need Board approval and would depend on costs. Daughter studbooks would be given the right to use.

Belgium: only agencies recognised by the government have access to the national database.

France : all registrations from the last 40 years are on a national database ; access is easiest if it is done through the studbook.

Finland : Hippos is further developing the national database.

Denmark : limited access to the national database, but it is possible that it could be given to other societies.

Norway : an open access database.

Netherlands : nothing yet.

Sweden : free access to the national database that covers most breeds.

7. Use and communication of UELNs

Input from Belgium, who drew attention to a particular problem with Germany, which does not use the UELN system – they do not even use the 3-digit country code, using instead DE only.

There did not appear to be a problem between other countries.

France pointed out that Germany's federal system seemed to make it difficult to apply the UELN system. There is no national studbook in Germany, and about 10-15 regional New Forest studbooks; however, as an EU country Germany should be following the same rules.

In Denmark, they have used the birth name with the German name when they have had a German stallion arriving with several numbers.

The Netherlands has found that when a Dutch stallion goes to Germany it gets given another number.

UK asked for suggestions on how this could be raised with Germany, as it is confusing if a pony coming out of Germany ends up with several identities.

Belgium, Finland, Norway and Sweden have not approached their national authorities for help or advice.

France did not think there was a problem with New Forest ponies, but will check with Haras to see if there is a problem with other breeds.

UK asked all studbooks to raise the issue at as high a level as possible with government bodies to see if pressure could be put on Germany.

France suggested writing to the EU Commission.

8. Ponies eligible for New Forest passports but that have riding pony (or other) types of passports that cannot be rescinded in Europe

Input from Belgium that had a case of a pony with a Dutch birth certificate, but when it went to Belgium it was given riding pony papers and its name was changed. Its new owner now wants NF papers. Possibly 200-300 ponies are affected. Talks with the government had not yet resolved the issue.

UK reported that in 2004 when passport law was enacted, many owners had been confused and had mistakenly obtained an ID-only Equine Passport, which does not have any verified breeding (often at the suggestion of their vet, many of whom had a tie-up with the ID-only Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO)). The situation had arisen through ignorance on the part of owners, who did not realise the consequences of what they were doing. For a short time, the UK government would not allow the issue of another passport, so the Society had to issue a Registration Certificate to be used with the ID-only passport, and linked to it by the UELN.

The UK government has now changed its stance and allows rescinding on the basis that an ID-only passport for a pony with verifiable breeding is incomplete. In these small number of cases, mainly of older ponies, NFPBCS can now issue its own passport, but

must use the UELN number given in the first passport and must include all vaccination and Section IX pages.

France thought it was terrible that a PIO could steal a pony from a stud book, and while the opportunity to rescind should be available if the breeding is proved, it was important that all medical records should be in one place.

It was generally felt that all societies should be able to correct errors, providing that the breeding can be proven, but there is an obligation to include vaccination records etc. However, many delegates thought that currently many ponies were being lost to the stud book when they moved from one country to another. It was recognised that in the future microchipping will help.

UK suggested that if stud books had a problem, they should approach their government, and apply pressure.

The UK did seem to have a unique situation where the issue of identity passports was regarded as a business, subject to free trade and consumer choice. Subsequently there are many businesses licensed by the UK government as ID-only Passport Issuing Organisations.

9. White markings on the non-hairy part of the body

Input from Denmark where there are two 2-year-old colts to be approved (one black and one chestnut) which have white spots on the scrotum.

UK circulated the most up-to-date Conditions of Registration of the New Forest Pony and drew attention to a recently amended section:

White markings other than on the head and lower limbs: loss of, or absence of, pigment in hair or skin that is not known to have been associated solely with skin trauma is not acceptable. So, for the purposes of entry into the approved section of the Stud Book a pony shall not have any white markings behind the head, above a horizontal line level with the bony protuberance of the accessory carpal bone at the back of the knee in the forelimb, and the point of the hock in the hind limb, unless proven to be due to trauma/injury.

If the Danish cases can be proven to be due to trauma/injury, then they can be accepted. UK reported that in these particular cases, a ruling could not be given by UK without their vets seeing pictures of the problem, but reminded the meeting that no action is taken retrospectively in the case of older ponies.

France clarified that as they have registered all their ponies for 2009, these new Conditions of Registration cannot apply before 2010.

10. Passports from Holland - some seem to indicate, that the pony is pure-bred New Forest but it is not always the case

Input from Denmark, where it has been a problem, more with older ponies than those with new passports, for both the New Forest Society and the registration organisation.

The Netherlands offered to issue guidelines to help identify their passport types, and it was agreed that it would be useful if all studbooks could do this and circulate (with pictures).

Sweden was again asked by UK to state the GW %.

It was recognised that this would be less of a problem if all studbooks were online, and all should therefore aim for this.

11. The Central Prefix Register. The possibility of a European register for New Forest prefixes

UK reported that a special deal is available for negotiation with the Central Prefix Register for overseas societies. An approximate number of prefixes is required as this will dictate cost.

Belgium: 70-80 prefixes currently in use, 4-5 new ones each year

France: has suffixes and prefixes under national control and would need to discuss at home.

Finland: Hippos no longer manages prefixes (since 2-3 years ago). Is interested depending on cost. 5/10 prefixes currently in use.

Denmark: no prefix organisation in Denmark at present; ponies have been registered with 157 prefixes, but 80-90 are older, now inactive studs. 8-10 new each year.

Norway: is already on CPR list as national concern. Interested expressed. 1-2 new prefixes each year.

Netherlands: already has a list 180 prefixes. Will discuss at home – may be interested, 6-8 new each year.

Sweden: already has a list, publicised for approval by members, 100-150 prefixes, but about half are now inactive. 5-10 new each year. Will need to check with members.

Queries to be resolved – Denmark and Sweden have different letters in their alphabets – this would be respected. Some countries have more than one word. These could be joined together.

UK: overseas societies joining the CPR seems a good idea, spelling needs adhering to and cost would be a deciding factor.

12. A general discussion on the breed in each of the daughter studbook countries.

USA: written report circulated to all delegates.

Belgium – fewer ponies are being bred, 86 pure-bred registered in 2009 (150 in 2001-2002). Costs are rising – foals do not sell well so are kept until they are 2-3 years-old. Costly to breed a foal, 58 Euros to government, vet + microchip + registration fees = total cost approx 140 Euros.

Judges are trained nationally with little input from Breed Society. Movement is placed higher than type.

France - 149 pure bred registered in 2008, 61 stallions active, 273 mares covered, of which 149 are pure-bred, so 54% of coverings are to produce pure-bred. Many part-breds are produced. The accent is on sport ponies, mostly for show jumping. The New Forest type and temperament is an important factor for selling ponies in France. Judges lean towards blood type (TB) in mixed classes.

UK responded that type is very important, and it should be possible to recognise the breed by type.

Finland - 30 pure bred registered in 2008. Judges have to judge every breed. Two judges came to UK this year and they felt it helped them define NF type. NF is second most popular breed.

Denmark - 173 pure-bred registered with 30 approved stallions. Three new 3-year-old colts approved in 2009. 50th Anniversary next year and will be holding an open international show – can be posted on UK website if information is forwarded. Judges – two Danish judges came to UK in April to the seminar.

Norway -15-20 pure-bred foals registered in 2009 with 7 approved stallions. Judges - three approved by NPS (UK) and one by NFPBCS (UK) in 2009.

Netherlands - there are 42 licensed stallions with the addition of 8 more stallions who are doing their performance test this year. The percentage of covered mares in 2009 is not yet known. 554 foals have been registered so far in 2009 with some more to come. In 2008, 568 mares were covered (about 35 less than in 2007). 490 foals were registered in 2008. In 2008 there were 1513 members in their society. There are 14 members on the jury. A Sport Day is held in September for jumping, dressage, driving etc. New Forests are very popular.

Sweden - 100-200 registered with 60 approved stallions, not all covering, some are competing. Youngstock are not selling well. Annual competition makes New Forest popular. Judges - some do all pony breeds and some do just New Forest. Overseas judges are invited. Grading is for all breeds and sometimes judges are not good with New Forest.

UK – in 2009, 1400 pure- bred registered and 1500 approx part-bred (some older ponies). Numbers are expected to go down next year as the number of stallions running out on the Forest was reduced to 20 this year and for June only. The breed is doing well nationally and is a favourite ride for adults as they can compete, and often beat the horses in all spheres.

France pointed out that ponies can be ridden by adults and compete against horses, depending on class restrictions.

UK commented that swapping judges between countries is a good idea. Judges in UK are regularly assessed to improve standards and train new judges, and the breed society has an input.

13. Any Other Business

Embryo Transfer

UK announced that embryo transfer is now acceptable to the Board, and the Rules will be changed accordingly in the near future.

Venue for the next meeting in 2011

Finland kindly offered to host the next meeting in Helsinki, during the first weekend in August in conjunction with their National Show.