

The Welsh Pony and Cob Society

Cymdeithas y Merlod a'r Cobiau Cymreig



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Review: November 2017

DNA TESTING POLICY

This policy and procedure aims to explain the DNA testing rules for entry into the Welsh Stud Book.

Within the Articles of Association of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society one of the four primary objectives of the Society is:

- To encourage the breeding and improvement of horses and ponies more especially those of the Welsh Breeds.

Amongst the ancillary objectives are included:

- To supervise the importation or re-importation of animals of the Welsh Breed and to accept or reject their inclusion in the Welsh Stud Books as the Council may in its entire discretion decide.
- To investigate cases of doubtful or false pedigrees and also cases of conduct derogatory or prejudicial to the interests of the Society and to take action thereon as the Council may decide

DNA Testing of Mares for Pure Bred Foals

The DNA testing of mares is required after their first pure bred foal is eligible for registration in the stud book of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society.

By introducing this policy the Welsh Pony and Cob Society Council aims to build up a profile of the breeding stock of the Breed over time. Ideally it would be preferable for the Society to hold a DNA record of all registered animals however the Council does recognise this would be a prohibitive cost to breeders at this time.

The Society wishes to continue raising the standard of animals that are being bred from. By having a smaller, but higher, quality breeding pool, the price breeders expect for their foals should increase and will contribute to welfare by lessening the availability of cheap animals.

The Council feels it needs to have a database of DNA from breeding stock in order to maintain and future-proof the integrity of the Stud Book. By retaining a database of the breeding pool of Welsh ponies and cobs this means it will be easier to verify parentage whenever a query is raised. Stallions are checked against Sires when the stallions are licensed.

The availability of DNA profiles makes the UK bred ponies more attractive to an overseas market and easier to export to overseas clients where DNA testing and parent testing is

mandatory. Sometimes when an older animal is exported it is difficult to get the required DNA sample, especially if one or two parents are deceased, but a DNA database of breeding stock will prevent this problem arising.

By the Society introducing this DNA testing of mares it pre-empts any DEFRA decision on DNA testing. If compulsory testing is introduced in the future, the Society will be some way into testing already. The feedback the Society has had from the Welsh Government is that they have liked what the Society is doing to introduce DNA testing so are less likely to impose compulsory testing of all equines. By implementing its own policy this places the Society as an innovator at a time when the future is uncertain. The Society aspires to be recognised as a forward thinking and transparent organisation, ensuring its future success and therefore the future success for breeders and ultimately for the Breed.

Since launching the policy in January 2016 the Society has noted that people are choosing to DNA profile across their stock. The Society is pleased to accept the DNA profile for any stock and not just from mares.

DNA Testing of Mares Procedure

The DNA profile of the WPCS Stud Book is held by Animal Health Trust (AHT) with DNA testing completed by AHT by use of the AHT DNA kit. All DNA profiles are lodged with AHT on behalf of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society.

In order to provide a DNA profile to the Welsh Pony and Cob Society horse owners should:

- Purchase an AHT DNA kit (available from the WPCS website, Bronaeron and the Exhibition Unit)
- Arrange for a vet to pull the hair sample, confirm the identity of the horse by comparing the microchip with the passport and sign the Society form accompanying the DNA kit.
- Send the kit to AHT
- Send the completed form to the Welsh Pony and Cob Society
- AHT will forward the DNA profile to the Society and retain a copy. A copy of the profile is available to the owner upon request.

DNA profiles can be accepted from alternative providers however for the Society to accept the profile the owner must follow the following procedure:

- Ask for a form from the Society (downloadable from the Society website)
- Arrange for a vet to pull the hair sample, confirm the identity of the horse by comparing the microchip with the passport and sign the Society form
- Return the form to the Society.
- Forward the DNA profile to the Society.