

British Horse Council Report from Scotland

So far 2019 has been a busy year in terms of equestrian welfare in Scotland where all the agencies work together in a positive collaboration that engenders national events, political support, and new legislation. Scottish equine welfare legislation is 100% devolved.

Equine ID Regulation

The new Equine Animal (Identification) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 came into force on March 28th this year, they were launched by Mairi Gougeon MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment at an event held at the Scottish National Equestrian Centre.

The Scottish Minimum Operating Standards for PIOs were published in May

The horse owner applies for an equine passport, at this point the horse or pony is assigned its Equine ID, the Equine ID, unique worldwide, it will have for life.

In most cases, the responsible person is also likely to be the owner. But it is the horse we are interested in not the owner, the ScotEquine Pilot requests persons responsible to provide locations for all horses resident in Scotland. This stands us in good stead traceability wise and puts us in a better place to tackle an outbreak of disease.

Below are the six things that owners in Scotland need to know.

1. The Regulation brings in retrospective microchipping for all equines in Scotland and we have until March 28th 2021 to ensure all equines are chipped. (This will allow owners to fit chipping in around routine vets visits and save costs.)
2. The deadline for applying for a passport for a foal in Scotland is either the end of the year of the foal's birth or the end of the month that is 6 months following the date of its birth. (The completed application must

reach the passport issuing organisation (PIO) 30 days prior to the deadline.)

3. The regulation introduces ScotEquine as the Scottish Equine Database. The ScotEquine website, www.scotequine.com presents the opportunity for equine owners to sign up and request a ScotEquine card that shows a photo and a unique QR code for the equine.
4. In Scotland, ScotEquine cards can legally accompany an equine on journeys in place of the full passport – unless the passport is needed to verify vaccination or drug data. (which is hoped will be available via ScotEquine in the future).
5. The regulations are enforced by local authorities and they bring in the provision of fixed penalty notices – you could be fined £80 on the spot if you travel your horse without its passport or ScotEquine card or have an equine with no passport (or chip after March 28 2021).
6. When you buy a new horse or pony or your horse or pony dies you must return the passport to the PIO for adjustment.

Scottish Equine Database (database)

Created to support the UK, as the member state, meet the EU regulation in 2016, the Scottish Equine Database (SED) gathers the data from all Scottish PIOs and sends updates to the UKCED.

The UKCED in November 2018 provided a file of passport data to the Scottish Equine Database where the horse owner postcode was Scottish.

ScotEquine card

ScotEquine cards are an additional identification method being introduced in accordance with the 2016 EU Regulation.

Those with horses located in Scotland will be given the option to purchase a ScotEquine card which has many benefits to horse keepers. This service opens shortly, and as part of the ScotEquine Pilot, the card is free, giving horse owners the chance to test the system voluntarily and at no cost prior to it becoming compulsory in the future.

Horses with ScotEquine cards are able to travel anywhere in Scotland without the need to be accompanied with their passport, therefore providing keepers with a handy and practical solution to the paper based 30+ page document when away from the place of holding.

ScotEquine cards are printed with a QR code, unique to the equine, which can be read using a scanner on hand held devices (often incorporated in the camera function), or a bar code reader. The QR code scanner or reader is accessing data held on ScotEquine for the horse or pony, ensuring that the most up to date information is always available.

Consultations have recently taken place on;

Sanctuaries - In 2018 Scottish Government ran a consultation on sanctuaries and re homing activities – they received a good response on the topics of regulation vs. licensing, inspection and powers, fitness to operate, role of local authorities and standards.

Amendments to the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 which closed on 26th April 2019. It is consulting on:

- increasing the maximum available penalties for certain animal cruelty offences (including offences involving attacks on service animals);
- enabling secondary legislation to be made that will allow Fixed Penalty Notices to be used in relation to lesser animal welfare offences; and
- making it easier for approved bodies to quickly make the best arrangements for animals after they have been taken into possession to protect their welfare.

Licensing

The Scottish Government is still contemplating options for registration and licensing of all boarding establishments. This could include livery yards, studs and dealers in due course. In 2018 Scottish Government carried out a consultation on dog, cat and rabbit (pet) breeding activities where they explained their modern approach to licensing as;

- A threshold number of animals determining whether licensing is to be applied;

- Licences should be flexible and may be awarded, on a risk-based assessment, for a period of up to three years;
- An exemption from inspection requirements for businesses assured by a UKAS accredited body;
- Licences to be issued at any point in the year for a fixed term but can be suspended or revoked at any time.

So we can reasonably expect the same approach to be given to equines.

Strangles Symposium - “Working Together To Stamp Out Strangles” a collaboration between BHS Scotland, World Horse Welfare, Redwings, AHT, SRUC and RDSVS was held at the Royal Dick Veterinary school on 29th March aiming to build on previous industry conversations on the issue of biosecurity and encourage new ideas and effective strategies to help us reduce the risk of disease outbreaks. The vent used behaviour change techniques. Speakers included Dr Andrew Waller AHT, Roly Owers World Horse Welfare also representing the UK Equine Disease Coalition as well as BEVA’s Health and Medicine Committee, insight was provided from respected leaders from other national biosecurity initiatives including Jane Nixon of the British Equestrian Federation. A report will be issued soon.

Scottish Equine Welfare Conference – May 17th World Horse Welfare Belwade Farm, Aberdeenshire

The event jointly run by BHS Scotland, WHW, Scottish SPCA, The Donkey Sanctuary and Scottish Government was opened by Mairi Gougeon MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment and we had a great presentation from Scottish CVO Sheila Voas giving us an update on most of the matters already mentioned in this report. Both Mairi and Sheila referred to the economic value of the equine industry and the importance of traceability to health and welfare.

We had a very frank presentation from equine transporter Philippa Gillie pointing out the effects online business and lack of enforcement is having on commercial transport of equines – the industry needs to have an education campaign on knowing the protections in place for transportation and there needs to be an overall clean-up of the industry. The ‘no check’ atmosphere we

operate in caused by local authority funding cuts which means lack of resources including chip readers – means compliance is an issue.

Debbie Dow from ScotEquine introduced the new database and card.

Two detailed sessions from Gemma Pearson well known and influential equine behaviourist – gave both theoretical and practical education on the subject and its effect on health, welfare and safety.

Bronwen Williams - talked about Equine hoarding and mental health referring to the effect of adverse childhood experiences and bio, psycho and social influences that can lead a person to lose their executive function pointing out it is not just the number of equines collected, but the number that are uncared for or kept in the wrong environment with their needs unmet. Bronwen's research has shown that collectors often go for specific breeds or species, most commonly Arabs, Shetlands or donkeys and range from being overwhelmed care givers, exploitative or indiscriminate breeders. Problems are often exacerbated by social media and often naive owner helpers were being taken advantage of; sadly equine hoarding is a growing problem.

This event counts as equestrian CPD for Local Authority animal welfare and trading standard staff and 13 CPD certificates were presented after wards.

EVA

As part of the veterinary investigation into the source and spread of EVA outbreak in Devon and Dorset, 66 tracings had been identified and one of these tracings was a stallion on a farm in Perthshire. As the horse was unvaccinated it was placed under breeding restrictions by APHA until it tested negative. Restrictions have now been lifted on this horse following negative EVA sampling results.

NEWC Scottish Partnership was convened in 2018 and has meet a couple of times recently and is a further way we strengthen our relationships as we work politically as united industry towards the same goals.

Antimicrobial Resistance

<https://www.scotlandshealthyanimals.scot/>

The Scottish Animal Health and Antimicrobial Resistance (SAHAMR) Group was formed with the aim of providing leadership and engaging with key stakeholders to develop and deliver a coordinated, quality-driven approach to:

- Optimising disease avoidance (biosecurity) in animals
- Optimising veterinary prescribing practice
- Improving professional education, training and public engagement in relation to the need for more sustainable use of antibiotics
- Providing better access to and use of surveillance data in animal sectors
- Providing better identification and prioritisation of AMR research needs

This supports a genuinely 'One Health' initiative, combining human health, farm and companion animals, wildlife, the environment, food and water.