

826 EQUINE STUDBOOKS ASSOCIATION

Script for British Horse Council meeting Friday 13 December 2024

First of all let me start by thanking the British Horse Council for allowing the breeding section of the equine industry to provide status reports on what is happening in our sector. As chair of the 826 Equine Studbooks Association it is I who will be doing this and I am ably supported by my Vice-Chair Natalie Meredith and a number of representatives of 826 ESA member studbooks who are here in their own right representing their organisations.

The main role of the 826 ESA is to represent the interests of its member studbooks to official bodies including DEFRA, the British Horse Foundation, the National Equine Forum, the Central Prefix Register, NEWC and of course the BHC itself. However, it always encourages all of its members to interact with these bodies both individually and severally as well, particularly in the case of official DEFRA consultations. As its members are the studbooks themselves, it has no direct interface with the public, which is why it is quite possible that you have never heard of us, but even so, our opinions and judgements are widely sought after in our sector.

For clarification, the 826 in the name refers to the UK country code at the start of the UELN of every equine passport issued in the UK and the studbook status of our members indicates that they can issue pedigree zootechnic pages in the passports that they issue. Its origins are in the old BHS Horse and Pony Breeds committee and it was created in 2017 after the BHS revised its committee structure to reflect more its welfare and competition interest. So, if you own an equine with an UELN number begins with 826 and includes a verified pedigree (and I think quite a few of you will do) then it will almost certainly have been issued by one of our member studbooks.

This is because there are currently about 50 studbook PIOs recognised by DEFRA and of these 40 are members of the 826 ESA. Those that are not tend to be based in the devolved nations and deal directly with the branches of DEFRA in those nations.

Usually our concerns and reports will seem a little out of phase with the others as our members have a time frame that lasts from the conception of a foal in one year to its final registration in the autumn of the next, making us chiefly concerned with events / developments in the previous 18 months or the future 18 months at any one time. However, as well as the usual biosecurity and welfare issues, at this time we do have a couple of 'live' concerns (details of which will hopefully have been posted by DEFRA onto the BHC website). They are the issue of resolving the possible reorganisation of the procedures of the registration of part bred in a number of studbooks, the problems at borders that have made export and import of both live animals and their breeding products very hard to organise in recent months, the large number of ownership changes lodged in Amber status with the CED because the owners do not realise that until they have also notify the relevant studbooks of the change, the change itself will not have been legally verified, and finally the fact that the halt of the new SIs relating to the proposed changes in Equine ID has meant that the enforcement of the law is still as weak as it has ever been, with Trading Standard having no incentive to investigate and prosecute those infringing passport regulations, thus leaving the enforcement of them as poor as it has always been. To find out more:

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