THE
THOROUGHBRED
BREEDERS'
ASSOCIATION

British Horse Council

Summer Meeting 2026

Championing the future of the British Thoroughbred

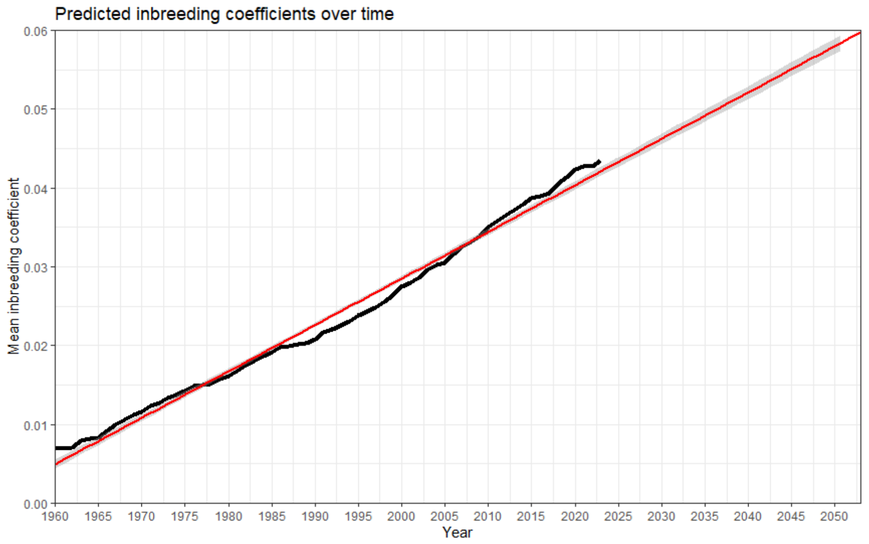
GENETIC DIVERSITY OF THE THOROUGHBRED

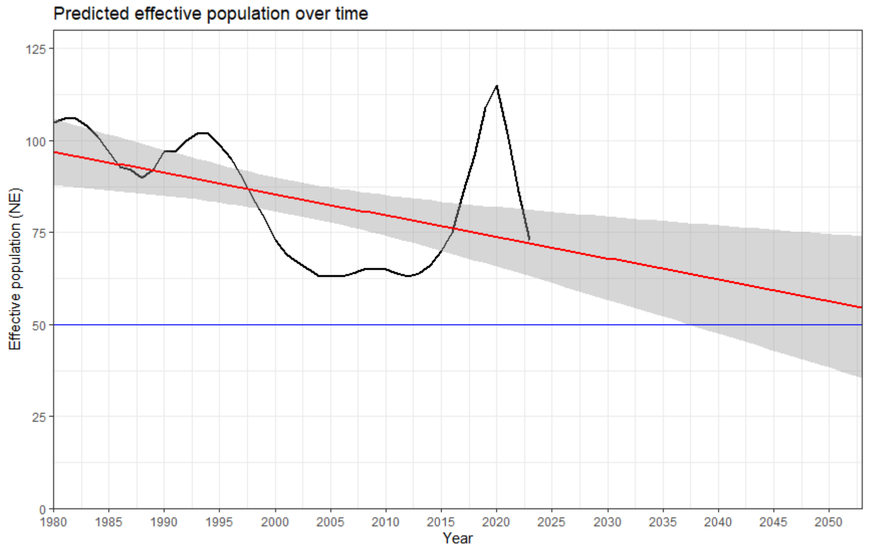
Is reduced genetic variance in the thoroughbred population a problem?

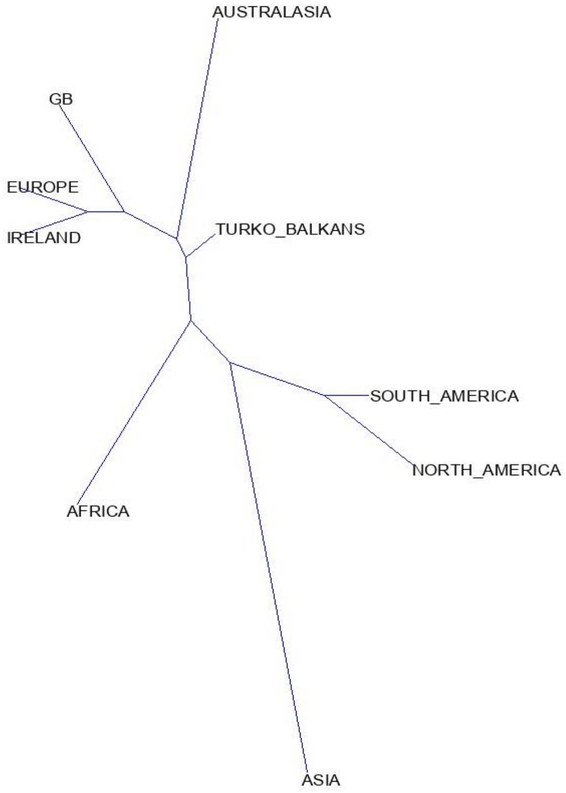
- Inbreeding identified as a contributing factor to mid and late term pregnancy loss (Jessica Lawson, 2024)
- Inbreeding linked to reduced likelihood of racing (Emmeline Hill, 2022)
- Inbreeding associated with reduced racecourse performance metrics in Australia (Evelyn Todd, 2018), such as prizemoney, race starts, career length and winning strike rate

MEASURING GENETIC DIVERSITY

Genealogical study of the General Stud Book (GSB) performed to measure the average inbreeding coefficient; rate of loss of genetic diversity; effective population size; and pedigree divergence by continent of birth







SPARKS PILOT

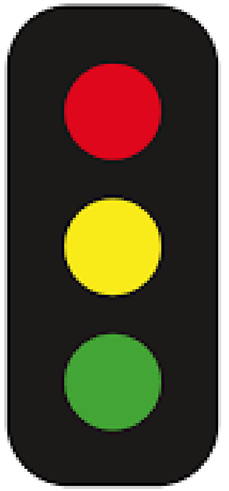
Software trial

Understanding mean kinship – how related one horse is to another (recent and historic common ancestors)

Focusing minds on the projected inbreeding coefficient of the progeny – protecting anonymity of stallion data

Encourage breeding like to like – ideally mating horses who have a similar inbreeding coefficient (traffic light system)

AIM: Informing and shaping a broader industry awareness and education strategy



TRACEABILITY

- Analysis of the 2018 and 2019 foal crops at six years of age – understanding pathways, outcomes and performance metrics – robust data to inform industry communications and shape future strategy.

- Ambition of 100% lifetime traceability – greater education and enforcement – requires collaboration across the equestrian sector and between international racing jurisdictions.

- What next? – broodmare traceability – ten-year data capture from the General Stud Book.