

## Visit from Haras Nationaux and French Ministry of Agriculture Stoneleigh Park - 2 July 2009

Xavier Guibert, Caroline Teyssier and Beatrice Labardie attended from Les Haras Nationaux. Marie Noelle Proutheau attended from the French Ministry of Agriculture. Cyril Portalez the Agricultural Attaché from the French Embassy in London attended. A number of UK studbooks and Lead Bodies plus representatives of the BEF and NED attended.

A slide show was presented by M. Guibert which explained the structure of the French breeding industry, how data was collected and managed and how breeding integrates with riding and sport.

### **Horses with existing passports**

It was explained that when adult horses with EU passports are imported into France, the identification must be validated by a French vet, the microchip checked (or a microchip inserted if none is present), the markings checked and the identification rewritten in French. This is to ensure that this animal can be identified anywhere in France by people who do not speak many of the other languages of other European countries. Effectively this is an "overstamp" and is a requirement of French domestic legislation. If the British PIO which issued the original passport has a reciprocity agreement with France, the ID, breed/studbook and pedigree of this horse will be recorded in full in SIRE. In many cases no such reciprocity exists which means that many of these horses have in the past been grouped together within the French categorisation of horses which are Chevaux de Sang, Poney, Chevaux de Train and Anes, effectively meaning that they "lose their identity" which is what has caused British studbooks consternation in the past. Similarly problems have been caused by French domestic legislation which requires that all equines which were born in France and are subsequently used for competition or breeding shall have a passport issued in France. Suggested solution to overcome the above matters is to sign a simple reciprocity agreement (copy to be posted on the BEF website).

### **Horses with no passports (born in France)**

Where the parent(s) studbook of origin is recognised by Defra.

EITHER

1 Set up a daughter studbook in France which will administer and approve the records of breeding stock, breeding rules and have its own French-based membership. Once approved will be able to enforce its breeding rules by decree of the French Ministry of Agriculture and will have its passports issued through SIRE and recorded and updated by Haras Nationaux in the normal way. Several UK studbooks (especially of native breeds such as the Welsh, New Forest and Shetland) have already taken this route and the procedure is effective and working well.

OR

to adopt the following entirely new procedure designed to help UK studbooks that already have breeders, owners and producers in France

2 Sign the reciprocity agreement (copy to be posted on the BEF website) which will ensure that animals approved for breeding by the signatory UK studbook will receive an EU-

compliant passport issued by SIRE for their progeny born in France. This passport will actually be a registration document for the UK studbook (including the UK studbook logo if required) but conforming to both the breeding rules of the UK studbook concerned as well as French passport and microchipping regulations. In this case control of breeding rules, maintenance of lists of approved stallions, mares owners, members and breeders will remain directly under the control of the UK studbook (i.e. there is no need to create / recognise a French daughter studbook) and the French authorities will keep the UK studbook constantly updated on animals being registered through this system. This route also ensures that future competition records are correctly allocated to the animal and studbook concerned and that international studbook competition data (e.g. WBFSH and FEI) will record the animal as being from the original studbook or origin, although the UELN issued will also record it as being foaled in France. In other words, the UK studbook will use SIRE as an administration provider to produce passports for horses born in France whereby the registration rules of the British society are retained and the passports produced by SIRE contain the logo of the British studbook and the data for the horse registered is sent to the UK PIO. Older imported (i.e. UK-foaled) competition horses with passports from the signatory UK studbook will also be able to enter the SIRE competition record system correctly recorded as to breeding and breed (studbook of origin) rather than losing this information, which is the case at present.

It was also pointed out that France is only able to sign reciprocity agreements with one British studbook representing a particular breed. When there is more than one studbook in the UK representing a particular breed, and they wish to have reciprocity with France, the domestic situation will need to be discussed and resolved in order for this to happen.

In France, the authorities are highly diligent about the collection of data and every horse is recorded on SIRE in line with domestic legislation, providing a clear picture of the size of the French resident horse population. It also enables Government to use SIRE to know where horses are kept in order to manage matters of biosecurity efficiently and effectively.

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