



MINUTES FOR INITIAL MEETING –
GLOBAL TOOL FOR HARMONISATION OF COVERING CERTIFICATES

28th June 2018 in Schiphol/The Netherlands
Time schedule: 12h00-15h00

Attendants:

Sophie Levallois (FRA)	Haras de Semilly
Bérengère Lacroix (FRA)	Selle Francais
Brice Elvezi (FRA)	Groupe Francais Elevage
Heinz Ahlers (GER)	Verband der deutschen Hengsthalter
Ulrich Hahne (GER)	Hannoveraner Verband
Norbert Boley (GER)	Verband des Holsteiner Pferdes
Lorna Wilson (UK)	Elite Stallions
Tullis Matson (UK)	AI Stallion Services
Jeanette Benedict-Nijhof (NED)	Team Nijhof
Tom Lemmens (BEL)	Zangersheide
Janko or Wiebe Yde van de Lageweg (NED)	VDL Stud
Klaus Miesner (GER)	WBFSH / FN
Nadine Brandtner (BEL)	WBFSH

Excused:

Alison Corbally (IRE)	WBFSH / Horse Sport Ireland	EXCUSED
Rudi Eerdeken (BEL)	WBFSH / BWP	EXCUSED
Laetitia Viollet (FRA)	Haras du Bois Margot	EXCUSED

Agenda:

1. Welcome by WBFSH
2. Delegates introduce themselves
3. Introduction by Sophie Levallois
4. Open Discussion for Proposals
5. Appointment of Working Group Committee

Appendix

- i. Draft Proposal by Sophie Levallois
- ii. Introduction to a global issue in the breeding industry
- iii. Illustration of the development of covering techniques and their impact on the industry
- iv. Model Form Zootechnical Certificate (2017-171) Semen of Pure Breeding Animals

MINUTES

1. & 2. Welcome by WBFSh & introduction of attendants

The project manager of the WBFSh, Nadine Brandtner, welcomed the attendants to this initial working group meeting to find a global solution for harmonising covering certificates.

3. Introduction by Sophie Levallois

Sophie Levallois described how advances in breeding technology have both benefitted and negatively impacted on the breeding industry. A single dose of frozen semen can now be used to conceive multiple pregnancies. As semen is shipped worldwide and frozen semen can be stored indefinitely, it is difficult to trace foals registered and whether coverings/multiple coverings from a single dose or straw have been paid for.

Action must be taken to prevent the negative impacts that this development has for the stallion owners, who invest a lot in the production of stallions.

Refer also to attached documents submitted by Sophie Levallois (appendix documents ii. & iii.)

4. Open Discussion for Proposals

The proposal presented by Sophie Levallois (appendix document i.) to issue covering cards from a centralised authority, and which must be submitted before the studbook can register a horse/foal, is a system that is already successfully in place in France, where it is under the control of the IFCE. It was discussed that applying this system throughout Europe, or even worldwide, would not be feasible, as it would depend on the full cooperation and participation of all parties involved. Furthermore, current EU legislation gives the possibility for a Member State to authorise a breeding society to register a foal in the stud book as long as the pedigree/DNA is verified.

It is therefore felt that steps must be taken at the time of the sale of semen in the form of a sales contract. Most stallion owners and keepers already sell semen with a sales agreement that includes terms and conditions. But tracing whether these sales conditions are adhered to is extremely difficult, as there is no central database where stallion owners can cross-check foal registrations with coverings sold. The studbooks do cooperate with the stallion owners when requested to supply a list of all newly registered foals/horses by their stallions. However, this method of cross-checking is labour-intensive and time-consuming "detective work".

There is a need for a central database where stallions, their owners/agents as well as the doses of semen sold can be recorded. Database entries by the studbooks of all newly registered foals will help to improve traceability. Under EU legislation the member states are required to have a central database, but the types of databases of the member states vary and mostly can't communicate with each other.

The question as to who would therefore pay for the set-up, maintenance and administration of such a database for stallion owners, agents, breeders and studbooks was posed. This need not be an open database. Participating

studbooks can enter all newly registered foals into this database so stallion owners can easily track how many foals by their stallions have been registered, cross-referencing this with the doses of semen sold. Stallion owners/agents already have the contact information of their clients/buyers, and so do the studbooks have the contact details of their breeders. This is an important aspect with respect to capturing personal data under data protection laws. The cost and staff to establish and maintain such a database needs to be considered. It was decided that the feasibility of a central database should be further considered.

The central database can potentially be used to generate electronic covering certificates as is currently done in the UK (Elite Stallions), where these covering certificates can only be generated once payment has been made and they are directly sent to the relevant breed authority that issues the papers for the foal. It was brought up again that EU legislation allows studbooks to issue papers as long as there is pedigree verification. However, Bérengère Lacroix referred to wording in Zootechnical regulation 2016/1012 Annex 1 Part 3.1 ("...purebred breeding animals of the equine species shall only be entered in a breeding book if they are identified by a covering certificate and, where required by the breeding programme, as 'foal at foot'") which implies that the covering certificate stays the main rule. But at this stage we do not know which member states will authorise this derogation or not. If this regulation can be applied, a harmonised covering certificate could be a realistic solution.

Zootechnical Certificates consist of two parts (Part A & Part B). It was discussed whether Part A of the zootechnical certificate, which has to be issued by studbooks for every horse, could be derived from a harmonised covering certificate. Also, the possibility of using semen certificates for this purpose was considered. A model form for Trade of semen, for identity verification of the stallion that provided the semen, is already available (provided as attachment for appendix item iv).

It was decided to set up a meeting with the EU Commissioner to discuss whether there is a way to use or incorporate such a covering certificate as part of the Zootechnical Certificate (Part A).

It was also discussed whether semen should only be used for insemination by authorised vets or AI centres, who enter an agreement with each stallion owner/agent. Semen is owned by the stallion owner until it is used for insemination. The AI centre keeps inventory of straws and returns used straws to the stallion owner. Micro-chipped straws are a possible consideration for tracking straws and ensuring that the correct straws are returned. Tests with micro-chipped straws are already being done in the UK.

Going forward, four main aspects are to be addressed by this working group as elements for a possible solution:

i. Harmonised Sales Contracts

Harmonised sales agreements that mare owners need to enter with stallion owners/agents when purchasing semen (clear definition of permitted use of semen – one dose/covering one foal, permission to harvest multiple embryos from flushing after using a single dose, permission to use for ICSI, etc.) The stallion owners/agents/representatives that are members of this working group will collaborate on this, gather various sales contracts currently used, compare and collate them into a single harmonised agreement. Stallion

owners in individual countries will have to ensure that the agreement can be legally binding in their country. For this purpose, stallion owners from countries not represented in this working group may have to be consulted. This draft sales contract will be reviewed by the working group. Legal counsel will be sought to ensure that the contract can be legally enforced. The harmonised contract can be translated into various languages for international use and can be published by stallion owners/agents/representatives, as well as studbooks and the WBFSH. The WBFSH will recommend this contract as an internationally accepted standard for the sale of semen internationally.

ii. Central Database

Considerations:

How could it work?

It should be a UELN database, such that all horses are identified based on their UELN and to avoid duplicate entries.

Stallion owners enter their contact details and their stallions (name and UELN) into the database. Stallion owners and semen agents enter every covering or dose sold into the system. Mare owners have to enter their mares into the system when they buy a covering. A record can be kept of doses provided for a particular mare until pregnancy is achieved. This requirement can be included in the sales agreement at the time that the semen is purchased. Studbooks enter newly registered foals into the database. Coverings sold can therefore be reconciled with registered foals. The studbooks receive an automated covering certificate when they enter a new foal into the database if there is a corresponding entry for semen/covering sold, for a mare whose new foal is being registered.

Problems starting out – there is “old” semen circulating that cannot necessarily be accounted for in terms of where and when it was bought. Foals born from such coverings may appear in the system as “coverings not paid for”. A transition period is required to take “old” semen into account. But going forward, from day one of the database, all semen sales and foals should be captured.

Cost –

Stallion owners and semen agents pay to enter their stallions into the database. Mare owners pay to enter their mares into the system (could be an integrated cost in the covering fee in order for the mare owner not to have to make a separate payment for registering the mare in the database).

Set-up and maintenance –

Funding for set-up and maintenance must be considered, as well as the manpower to maintain and administer the database.

iii. A Universal WBFSH (Harmonised) Covering Certificate

This harmonised covering certificate could possibly be electronically-generated from the central database.

A meeting with the EU Commissioner Dr Alfred Füssel and the working group will be scheduled for July or August (Klaus Miesner to liaise with Dr Füssel regarding availability) to discuss how current EU legislation can be applied to implement this.

iv. Mandatory DNA-Testing

The practice of mandatory DNA testing by all WBFSH studbooks should be enforced to protect breeders and buyers, and to ensure that the papers

issued by studbooks state the correct pedigree. Mistakes pertaining to pedigrees are not necessarily intentional but can also arise as a result of human error.

Furthermore, it was decided that the studbooks should be informed of this project and its development. A presentation on this topic will be considered for the WBFSH General Assembly in Hungary in December 2018.

5. Appointment of Working Group Committee

Everybody that was present at the initial meeting agreed to remain part of the working group. It was decided that the current group of 13 people is big enough and represents a healthy mix of stallion owners/agents, breeders and studbooks. However, it was decided that Esben Møller (Blue Hors Stud/Denmark) should be invited to join the working group.

Additional interested parties that are on the original mailing list from the initiation of this collaboration will be kept informed of developments such that they can comment and contribute. Nadine Brandtner will continue to oversee the project, assisted by Bérengère Lacroix as secretary.

Summary of Follow-Up Actions:

<i>TASK</i>	<i>RESPONSIBLE</i>	<i>ACTION</i>
Draft legal agreement for semen sales	Stallion owners	Compare existing sales contracts in use. Request additional contracts from other countries if needed. Draw up draft contract for international use. Present draft at next meeting
Meeting with EU Commissioner	Klaus Miesner/WBFSH	Invite Dr Füssel to a meeting in Brussels (possibly involve COPA as well) – schedule for July/August
Central Database	WBFSH	Look into what options are there for setting up a central database
Covering certificate requirements for studbook registrations	Bérengère Lacroix/ Klaus Miesner/WBFSH	Look into the EU legislation regarding covering certificate requirements for studbook registrations – Can something be done with the zootechnical certificate?
Additional member to the working group	WBFSH	Invite Esben Møller (Blue Horse Stud)
Informing the other WBFSH studbooks	WBFSH & the working group	Consider presentation for agenda of WBFSH GA-2018 in Hungary