

## WBFSH Statement on DNA testing & verification of parentage:



Imagine, you have just bought your dream horse! It took you ages to find it. There were many boxes that needed to be checked before you decided “This is the one!”.

Conformation – check, pedigree – check, vetting – check...

You’ve done your research on the horse’s pedigree & are excited to think what you can breed from this horse in the future. And then it transpires that the pedigree of the dream horse you bought is not what it’s papers claim it to be.

Incorrect pedigrees can be picked up in any studbook. These need not necessarily have arisen due to bad intent, although such motives cannot be excluded.

Mistakes are likely to be more common in older horses, from the time before DNA testing was introduced. These days many studbooks are using routine DNA testing to verify parentage. Some studbooks do random sampling and some studbooks now routinely test all mares that are used in their breeding program. The WBFSH is not here to assign blame & police its studbooks. However, three of the WBFSH’s major goals are to:

- Stimulate the development of sport-horse breeding world wide.
- Co-ordinate and stimulate co-operation among member studbooks.
- Represent the common interests of sport-horse breeding worldwide.

The WBFSH appeals to its members to do everything in their power to ensure the pedigrees stated in the papers they issue for their horses are correct. Studbooks are strongly encouraged to do sufficient DNA testing to give high confidence that the pedigrees they produce are correct.

### How should mistakes be dealt with?

There are various opinions on how to deal with the issue when an incorrect pedigree is picked up. Going forward studbooks should be testing & verifying the DNA of all their foals. What should be done about older horses though?

One approach could be to go by the assumption that their pedigrees should be accepted as stated in the papers. This may be acceptable for an individual studbook. However, if a mare is introduced into the breeding program of another studbook and the mistake is uncovered there, it gives bad publicity to the studbook of origin and a negative impact on the professional image of the breeding industry on the whole.

The administration & logistics that are involved in correcting mistakes in pedigrees are not to be underestimated. It is up to every studbook to decide for itself to what extent it would like to deal with these mistakes.

At a minimum, when mistakes are reported in existing pedigrees, the record in the studbook of origin must be corrected and an endorsement made with the date of the pedigree correction. Ideally other relevant databases (other studbooks, FEI database, national federations, public web-based databases, etc) should also be similarly corrected with an endorsement. Further corrections in pedigrees down the line should also be made. However, when pedigrees are amended they no longer correlate with the horses’ papers.

Should new passports be issued? Who pays for them? And what about direct offspring who have the incorrect pedigrees in their papers? The ripple effect can be endless.

These are difficult questions for studbooks. Therefore, the first priority for studbooks is to ensure as far as possible that the new pedigrees they produce are correct, by adopting good procedures and doing the necessary testing. Amended passports should be issued for such horses where it is practically and economically feasible.

The WBFSH strives for a professional & harmonised standard amongst its members. With the intention of increasing its efficiency and service to the studbooks the WBFSH will support those studbooks that want to undertake the task of correcting pedigrees and the passports that go with these pedigrees.

As a service to its studbooks the WBFSH offers the following proposal:

#### **REPORTING OF INCORRECT PEDIGREES**

- A studbook detects an incorrect pedigree by DNA testing or other means.
- Incorrect pedigree is reported to WBFSH Project Manager (where possible with correct sire or dam if it has been possible to determine this).
- WBFSH Project Manager compiles a list of all horses with incorrect pedigrees, categorised by studbook.
- All WBFSH member studbooks are informed that they can contact the WBFSH to get the list of their horses with incorrect pedigrees.

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