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KERRY BOG PONY NEWS

Vol I No I

First AGM of KBP Co-operative Society

The first AGM took place at the Standhouse Hotel, Curragh, Co Kildare on Sunday 27th February 2005. There was a very large attendance of members, many of whom had traveled long distances to be there. Members came from Kerry, Mayo, Down, Tipperary, Offaly, Meath and Kildare.

The longest journey was made by Fiona McLachlan from Cape Clear Island who took, in total three days to travel to and from the AGM given the long distance from the Island to the Curragh and the ferry times.

There were, in fact three meetings held on the day. Firstly: a Special General Meeting a) to explain the new European legislation regarding

Breed Studbooks, b) A vote to reinstate the original breed standard for elite classification within the studbook

and c) the formal disbandment of the Kerry Bog Pony Society, in favour of the newly formed Cooperative Society. The second meeting approved new paid up members. The 3rd meeting was the AGM.

The new Committee for 2005 was elected at the AGM. The officers were later decided as follows:
President: Mr John Mulvihill,

Chairman: Dr Leo Curran,

Secretary: Mrs Norma Cook,

Treasurer: Mrs Sinead Byrne,

Keeper of the StudBook: Mr Pat Byrne

Ordinary Committee Members:

Mr Tim Cooper

Mary McGrath (Secretary of the Equisave Project).

EQUISAVE: Kerry Bog Pony Partner in inter reg III program in the Atlantic Area.

The first Seminar of the Equisave Programme took place in France from the 1st—4th March 2005. It began in Paris at the Salon d'Agriculture where the attending partners were shown around examples of France's 47 horse and pony breeds and 7 donkey breeds. The programme was launched at a major conference on horses attended by many International delegates. It was a great thrill to see the Kerry Bog Pony on the big screen representing Ireland in the Equisave Programme. There was an official lunch afterwards on the top floor of the conference centre and although it was snowing hard you could see the Eiffel Tower through the window.

During the next few days there were many workshops covering different problems common to the Partner breeds. Small scattered populations were a major problem leading to inbreeding in small animal populations. Some of the mountain breeds listed wolves as a major problem when mares foal out as they often take new born foals. Maintaining habitat, creating links with tourism and finding alternative uses for the ponies were some of the topics discussed. We have a lot of homework to do before the next seminar which is in Portugal in September. Attended by Mary McGrath on behalf of the Kerry Bog Pony Co-operative Society Ltd. (Tel: 045 432007 for further information) Before the

KERRY BOG PONY BLACK PASSPORTS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE SOCIETY AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

ponies are recognized by the Department of Agriculture all the Black Passports must be returned to Pat Byrne. New KBP marking sheets will be issued to be completed by your own vet and all the ponies must be micro-chipped. The Weatherbys DNA/Bloodtyping reports and Laboratory Register Numbers will still stand good for inclusion in the new passports. Unfortunately the veterinary fee for the new marking charts and the microchip will have to be borne by

the applicant., as will the fee to the Irish Horse Board of Eur 35.00 for the new passport. All animals will first go into the General Classification of the Stud Book. They will later be inspected and those conforming to the breed standard will achieve Premier Status.

PLEASE SEND PASSPORTS NOW TO:
Pat Byrne, Carricleas House, Carlow Road, Kilcullen, Co Kildare. Tel: 045 485354

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The new address for the Kerry Bog Pony Co-operative Society is:

KBPS, Ellenborough House, Dublin Road, Naas, Co Kildare.

Tel: 045 886907

Mobile:(temporary)087 2495365

Email:(temporary)

pandncook@eircom.net

Website: www.kerry bog ponies.org

Hours of Opening:

Wednesday Afternoons:

2.00 pm—5.00 pm.

Single Membership Fee for 2005 : Eur 40.00

SEARCH FOR NEW PONIES

This year we hope to find and inspect some unregistered Kerry Bog Ponies. The existing pony population is very small and **there must be other Bog Ponies out there that have not yet been discovered.** We will be advertising for any ponies that might be KBPs. If you know of any possible candidates please encourage their owners to contact the Society.

Our MA Student Aisling Heffernan, will work with the Inspectors and Veterinary Surgeon on the day to measure, take markings, DNA and bloodtype all new comers. Those who are approved will enter the KBP Stud Book and will qualify for a Breed Passport.

YOU MAY BE CONTACTED

As the Inspections are being delayed Aisling may contact you directly to arrange to come and take measurements of your Ponies. Her studies will be very important for the breed so please try to help her if she does contact you

KERRY BOG PONY OWNERS HOLD THE FUTURE OF THE BREED IN THEIR HANDS

The Kerry Bog Pony is the "Newest" and rarest ancient breed in Europe. The story of an old breed of ponies that was lost for hundreds of years and then rediscovered appeals to a great many people.

We, the Owners of known KBP ponies have both the privilege and the responsibility for their care. The breed is in a very vulnerable situation because of the small population of ponies. .

Now is the time to show how much you care for the Kerry Bog Pony. All mares should be put in foal this year to carefully selected unrelated stallions. If you do not have a list of approved stallions you can obtain one from the Office. (Ellenborough House, Dublin Road, Naas, Co Kildare). If you require assistance in choosing a specific mating you can request a list of suggested stallions from the Keeper of the Stud Book—Pat Byrne at **045-485354**.

Registration of Young Stock

Owners of ponies that do not have black passports should apply to Pat Byrne for a DNA kit and marking sheet. These will be sent out to the owner. The owner should then arrange for their own vet to obtain a microchip from the IHB. The vet will take the markings, take blood/DNA samples and microchip the pony. In this way the pony will be on record and ready to go into the General Classification of the Studbook once it is set up. Inspections for Premier classification of fillies and geldings will take place at 2 years old and Stallions will be examined at three. The Irish Horse Board will issue Procedures for Inspection once the Breed is approved.

Important Note for Stallion Owners

Once we have official Department approval, Covering Certs will be issued to each stallion owner. In the meantime Stallion Owners should keep careful records of covering dates and the mares' registration numbers ready to return them at the end of the year.

Aisling Heffernan explains her work on the Characterisation of the Kerry Bog Pony.

Hello, my name is Aisling Heffernan. As some of you may be aware a project entitled 'Characterisation of the Kerry Bog Pony' is underway. I am the student chosen to carry out the work on this project. I am employed by Weatherbys Ireland and have been working in the laboratory in Johnstown, Naas, Co. Kildare since March 2001.

Early in January 2004, I approached the scientific director of the Laboratory (Dr. John Flynn) expressing interest in beginning work on a project this year. In February 2004 Dr. Flynn became aware that the Department of Agriculture and Food facilitated projects under the Conservation of Genetic Resources Scheme with the provision of financial aid. He submitted a proposal to undertake a genetic and phenotypic study of the Kerry Bog Pony. At the end of April, Dr. Flynn was informed that the submission was successful and the project had been approved for grant aid. The next step was for me to become registered on the MSc. by research programme in University College Dublin. This took place in November 2004. I then liaised with my supervisor in UCD and she was very positive about the project. I was then ready to begin and decided to start in the laboratory and get that side of things underway.

Although all the Kerry Bog Pony samples we had in the laboratory had already been DNA typed, it was necessary for me to repeat all the samples, as in the last year we have developed new techniques that allow us obtain more information from each sample. This information will be used by me in the identification and characterisation of the Kerry Bog Pony. This information will also be necessary when comparing the Kerry Bog Pony with other pony breeds. I will also be working closely with UCD in trying to isolate some mitochondrial DNA from the samples. Along side this genetic characterisation I will undertake a demographic and phenotypic characterisation of the pony. I will gather information on the location of each pony, and characteristics such as height, colour, markings, etc. I also intend to produce a health survey of the population.

I am very excited about being given this opportunity to carry out what I believe will be a very interesting and useful project. I hope over the course of the next year to visit as many pony owners as possible in order to take some measurements and markings. I will be in touch with you in due course to make arrangements for this. Until then work will continue in the lab and on the analysis of the results.

KBP inspections 2005

There will be no inspections until such time as the Kerry Bog Pony is fully approved by the Department of Agriculture. Every effort is being made to fulfil their requirements. As it is not every day that a "new" breed is registered they are very careful to ensure that everything is in order.

Mr Nicholas Finnerty of the IHB has spoken to the Northern Irish Horse Board regarding the registration of Bog Ponies resident in Northern Ireland. It has been agreed that all such registrations will be handled through the KBP society and the Irish Horse Board.

There will be no stallion inspections until the KBP is fully recognised by the Dept of Agriculture & the IHB.