

## DNA Impasse

The registration of two dozen foals by HSI has been delayed because of HSI's refusal to share DNA profiles for breeders who wish to register foals with WSI. This has put breeders into a difficult situation, and it is unacceptable. It is important that breeders understand the nature of the problem and the steps taken by WSI and other organizations to resolve the impasse.

WBFSH studbooks routinely share DNA profiles of mares and stallions with each other for the purpose of registering offspring. There is no requirement in law to do this; it is a collegial activity that benefits everyone.

WSI shares profiles on a mutual basis with many WBFSH studbooks, and our policy is to share with every studbook that is willing to share with WSI. Sometimes WSI is the studbook submitting a formal request for a profile; other times another studbook submits a formal request to WSI. Only one organisation refuses two-way collaboration: HSI. They demand profiles from WSI but refuse to share profiles on an equal basis.

HSI says and writes that they share DNA profiles with all WBFSH studbooks, but that is not true. HSI refuses to share equally with WSI. And this is the cause of the impasse.

Over the last 18 months, and well before this problem came to a head, WSI made the following proposals to try to resolve this problem:

- WSI sent a detailed offer to negotiate a memorandum of understanding with HSI to address this and other issues;
- WSI sent approximately eight offers to HSI for WSI to resume sharing DNA profiles with HSI if HSI agreed to share profiles on an equal basis with WSI;
- As a way to deal to clear the backlog and make space for negotiations over the winter WSI offered to conduct parentage tests on the affected foals on behalf of HSI at normal commercial prices (this proposal allows for parentage tests to be done without WSI having to turn over the profiles to HSI);

- Requests for a one-on-one meeting with the chairman of HSI to discuss and resolve policy issues;
- Several requests to DAFM to change the terms and conditions of its Equine Technical Support Scheme so that any studbook that accepts subsidies for parentage testing must share its profiles with other Irish studbooks.

All of these proposals to resolve the impasse were actively rejected or long-fingered or ignored. Meanwhile HSI has not made one single proposal to WSI or to me to solve the DNA impasse.

Our offer remains on the table. This offer was made many times on behalf of WSI, two Irish studs, a German studbook, and a German stallion company. If HSI agrees in writing to the following text (or if DAFM decides that profiles subsidised by the exchequer must be shared with other Irish studbooks) the impasse will be resolved today:

**“The ISH Studbook approves the sharing of DNA profiles with WSI, and all authorisations to share a DNA profile will be submitted by the ISH Studbook to Weatherbys within two business days of receipt of the request to the ISH Studbook from WSI.**

**WSI will agree to continue sharing DNA profiles with the ISH Studbook under these same conditions.”**

In March WSI will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. HSI and the ISH Studbook must accept the fact that WSI is here, is growing, and is not going away. It’s time for Ireland’s national equestrian federation to accept these facts and to be divested of all studbooks it manages to remove the conflicts of interest this creates.

Thomas Reed