



**Horse Sport Ireland and IDHS Meeting
Held at HSI Offices, Naas
On Tuesday, 28th October 2025 at 10.00am**

Present:

Denis Duggan, CEO – HSI
Sonja Egan, Head of Breeding, Innovation & Development – HSI
Jennifer Doyle, Geneticist – HSI
Lucinda McClure, Senior Executive Assistant – HSI (*Minutes*) joined by MS Teams
Fiacre Hensey – IDHS
Seán McGuirk – IDHS
Elizabeth Deane Coogan – IDHS

At 10:02hrs SE opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. SM proceeded to set to IDHS's intentions for the meeting, noting that their priority items for discussion were:

1. Genetic Diversity
2. Studbook Rules
3. Inspections 2025

The additional items which had not been provided in advance would be taken under AOB on the agenda.

Genetic Terminology Presentation

JD presented the key aspects and definitions of genetic terminology and clarified that all horses share >99% of their DNA and any variation comes from <1% of the DNA.

There was lengthy discussion on this topic.

It was noted that kinship has 1 single definition, the kinship coefficient is the probability that two alleles at a random locus are identical by descent (0.5 (50%) self or identical twins, 0.25 (25%) parent progeny or full sibling, 0.125 (12.5%) half sibling, grandparent/child, aunt/uncle niece/nephew, 0.0625 (6.25%) great grandparent, first cousins etc.).

JD explained how kinship is calculated and showed that mean kinship will decrease in a closed population.

It was noted that previous report cannot be compared accurately to the 2024 report by Jennifer Doyle as it was compiled using a substantially smaller and different reference population, coupled with the understanding that that calculation used appear to have confused relatedness with kinship and the 2% kinship referenced in the report looks like it is referring to 2% relatedness. HSI agreed that they can reach out to Fran to discuss the reports.

It was noted 66% of inspected stallions are related, with a kinship of less than 2% and a relatedness of around 4%.

Pedigree Completeness (PCI) was discussed at length.

SM highlighted that of the seven stallions remaining in breeding production, six of those are C4. SE noted that this relates more to the amnesty discussion which will be taken under AOB on the agenda.

SM advised the IDHS are trying to make a case against the use of the fourth generation PCI, for mares that are of rare lines that are in the third generation without going to PCI in the fourth generation. From there IDHS would request that stallions in the same situation would receive the same consideration in an attempt to preserve the rare lines of the herd.

SE highlighted that the report is an informative document and that separately, the studbook has introduced the rule for mare diversity based on analysis of the herd. JD reiterated that inclusion of rare mares comes back to the kinship. JD advised that there will be a move to genomics and genomic inheritance in the future. It was noted that not all studbooks are mandated to use DNA testing and many of the old back pedigrees are not reliable. Further discussion continued on the importance of DNA, genomics, rarity and future preservation of the herd. JD noted that there is a likelihood that from 2026 HSI will widen the application of colour tested using SNP markers pending validation. The use of DNA and SNP testing in other countries was discussed.

SE advised that a rule change has been put to the Department for genomic inclusion for supplementary section for animals which will allow identification of animals that are genomically Irish Draught which have been excluded previously, allowing them to be stamped into the supplementary section thereby allowing their progeny to be main section registered. HSI are awaiting a response from DAFM.

Grade-ups were discussed, SE noted that an animal should come for grade up inspection before the intention to breed into the studbook and it was noted that the development of genomics will allow an animal to be genetically identifiable among the herd.

National Breeding Services (NBS) Schemes

NBS Schemes and Breeding Grant were discussed.

IDHS noted appreciation of the support provided and available. SE explained that HSI cannot provide money to specifically support a specific breed but suggested that any specific suggestions or ideas be provided for consideration. It was noted that the starting and schooling scheme, as it is, is for progeny out of Class 1 and this rule is being updated to be either out of Class 1 or they themselves can be Class 2. **IDHS to write to SE with proposals/suggestions for funding for consideration.**

Breed Composition Update

This item was covered under discussion during the natural course of the meeting, and no further discussion was required.

Genetic Diversity

This item was covered under discussion during the natural course of the meeting, and no further discussion was required.

AOB

Amnesty:

The amnesty was discussed. **HSI to formally write to both IDHS and IDHBA regarding maintaining the amnesty.**

Studbook Rules:

IDHS to go through the studbook rules and revert to HSI with suggested tweaks for consideration.

Inspections 2025:

Inspections were discussed at length.

It was noted that a female inspector in Greenogue advised a handler that the mare they were presenting was inbred. **SE to investigate.**

It was noted a member of the inspection panel had been historically assured to IDHS by HSI that this individual would not be included on an inspection panel again. **SM to provide correspondence relating to this matter to SE for investigation.**

It was noted that Sligo and Thurles inspections were positive and the inspections in general have improved significantly.

Transparency Policy:

DD advised that the Board of HSI recently approved a new Transparency Policy and explained that minutes of stakeholder meetings will now be published.

At 12:51hrs all participants were thanked for their time, and the meeting was closed.

Ends.