

The Eriskay Pony Society is recognised as a Mother Society for the Eriskay Pony.

Gaining recognition as a Mother Society for the Eriskay Pony in our own right is an important change for the Society as a great deal of time and effort had been expended over the years dealing with CEnE and that time and effort can now be much better used on breed development and promotion of the ponies. We also believe we now have a much stronger basis on which to develop relationships with CEnE as societies with the same legal standing.

Background

Under the regulations that required breed societies to obtain official recognition, recognition can be applied for as a Mother Society or as a Daughter Society. The essential difference is that the Mother Society is required to set certain key rules (e.g. breed definition) with which a Daughter Society must comply.

Even though Comann Each nan Eilean (CEnE) was not recognised and did not obtain recognition until 2002, when the Eriskay Pony Society applied for recognition as a breed society in 1995 we recognised that CEnE preceded us and thus applied for recognition as a Daughter Society. This was granted that year and, as far as we were aware, our rules were at that time consistent with CEnE.

Sometime later the Scottish Government, in their role as regulator, identified that the rules of the two societies had drifted apart. They also noted that the statutory requirement that the two societies work together was not being met. In fact, at that time, relations were poor. The Scottish Government sponsored several efforts to bring the societies together to ensure both were operating in accordance with regulations however representatives of CEnE explicitly stated that they did not deem themselves to have a Daughter Society.

The Scottish Government were sympathetic to our plight and we had built good relations with them. They agreed that we could no longer operate as a Daughter Society but were meeting our obligations as a breed society and that we had a significant role in the preservation of the breed. After discussion with them, and consultation with other relevant regulatory authorities and interested parties, it was agreed that EPS should seek recognition as a Mother Society in its own right. This process, which was started in early 2016, has now concluded with the Eriskay Pony Society being recognised as a Mother Society for the Eriskay Pony.

What Does this Mean for the Society and the Eriskay Pony?

A critical fact is that EPS will not do anything that will impact the integrity of the breed. Key factors such as the breed description and eligibility of ponies to enter the studbook will remain exactly as they were.

The EPS Council firmly believes this recognition will benefit the Society and the breed in three key ways:

- We are now able to do things we did not previously have the authority to do.
- We have flexibility to set our own rules as we think fit to ensure the efficient operation of the Society, and achieve our aims for the breed, without reference to CEnE.
- We hope and believe that this will improve relations and co-operation with CEnE.

The RBST was previously unable to offer support to EPS without also engaging with CEnE. Now they are free to engage with us and have recently been offering direct support in areas such as developing breeding plans, offering advice and guidance, and supporting efforts in artificial insemination. Being able to draw on their knowledge and expertise has made a huge difference and a good example of this is that they now run breed analyses (SPARKS) which tell us the best breeding matches for every single breeding pony registered with us.

We have fundamentally the same objectives as CEnE, but differ to some extent in how to achieve those objectives. We can now set rules and procedures that support our approach without reference to CEnE and this gives us the flexibility to set rules and procedures that we believe will promote the achievement of our goals in the best manner. Discussions on such matters, which have taken a considerable amount of time and effort in the past, can now be diverted to work that is beneficial to the breed.

The final, but very important, benefit is that we believe this should promote co-operation with CEnE. We believe sensible co-operation between the societies can only be a good thing and this recognition promotes that view as it allows the two societies to work towards a common goal, but to do so in different ways. This will hopefully remove a lot of the friction that existed in the past as we are no longer both forced to use approaches that one or other objected to. It leaves it open to us to co-operate where appropriate, and to go our different ways where we have different views.

EPS Registrar