

Funding our breeding and health research programmes

The [Horserace Betting Levy Board](#) has supported non-Thoroughbred breeds since the early 1960s through the award of grants to breed societies to help them improve and maintain the quality of pure breeding among Britain's native breeds of horse and ponies.

Since 2010 they've concentrated that support on breeds listed on the [Rare Breeds Survival Trust's watchlist](#).

As a [Mother Society for the Eriskay Pony Breed](#), recognised by the [RBST](#), [BHS](#), [Defra](#), Scottish Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate and having worked with the [UK Government's Farm Animal Genetic Resources Committee](#), [Scottish Equine Database](#), we are eligible to apply for a grant from HBLB. Our council took a decision to apply for this for the first time in 2020.

After a lengthy application and verification process, supported by the RBST, during which we had to satisfy a number of stringent criteria, we were fortunate to be awarded a grant of £6000 which we used to further research into AI and embryo transfer techniques in Eriskay ponies. As is the case with all HBLB grants, this was conditional upon us contributing 20% of the funding.

For 2021/22 we have again applied and been successful in gaining funds of £9000 which we have already started to use to fund free DNA tests for all Eriskay pony owners to provide a baseline DNA profile specific to the breed which can be further developed for research into characteristics and health - this will work in tandem with the [RBST SPARKS breeding toolkit](#) already employed by the Society and an animal health survey run by EPS.

We will use this information to work with researchers and owners to help us give owners the best possible support, breeding and welfare advice based on empirical evidence and the latest scientific knowledge, so we can help build a healthy, growing and successful population of ponies for the future.

You can read more here:

[Work started on DNA Profile for Eriskay ponies. – THE ERISKAY PONY SOCIETY](#)

[HBLB Supports Rare Native Equine Breeds. – THE ERISKAY PONY SOCIETY](#)