

Dear Sirs,

In response to P-04-333 I would like to submit the following comments:

Current Equine Passport Legislation is not being enforced in Wales as robustly as is needed. There exists a real problem of both abandoned and illegally grazing equines across Wales. Legislation was introduced in 2009 with the intention of identifying every equine with an owner. When welfare problems arise identification of an owner would assist those persons or organisations involved in dealing with abandoned and illegally grazing equines as well as abuses of the 2006 Animal Welfare Act.

There also needs to be a clear strategy for animals which are found to be abandoned where no owner can be traced.

Welfare Charities have done much to assist Local Authorities in policing the 2006 Animal Welfare Act. Providing training, a collection, transport and rehoming service. Nearly always services are provided free of charge. The relationships built between the two respective arms of the equine welfare network across Wales, should be further enhanced. However the failure to enforce fundamental Passport / Microchip legislation will not benefit these relationships nor our ability to enforce the 2006 Act.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Philip".

Philip York
Head of Equine Operations
Bransby Home of Rest for Horses

Background

I am Chairman of The Welsh Local Authorities Animal Health and Welfare Panel. I am also Lead Officer for the UK Animal Health and Welfare Panel on Welfare, Transport, Import/Export and Equine Issues.

I sit on a number of DEFRA project boards which includes Equine Passports. I also represent local authorities on the National Equine, Health and Welfare Strategy along with various other national groups.

Equine passport legislation was first introduced into the UK in January 1998. In February 2005 the legislation changed to introduce new European regulations.

On the 1st October 2009 the legislation again changed to bring Wales into full compliance with commission regulation 504/2008. This saw the introduction of micro-chipping of equines.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to enforce Animal Health Legislation and all local authorities in Wales normally allocate this duty to the Trading Standards Service or Environmental Health Service under the umbrella of the Public Protection Department.

Local authorities receive payment for undertaking statutory responsibilities from central Government by way of the R.S.G. if new legislation would require resources to be provided by Local Authorities to enforce the legislation.

At the time of the introduction of equine passport legislation DEFRA stated:-

“This legislation will not place any burdens on local authorities and therefore workload will not increase. No extra monies will be allocated to local authorities or enforcement. In addition we would like to see a light touch enforcement policy”.

Following the foot and mouth disease outbreak of 2001 local authorities received extra funding under an agreed framework (which covered the extra workload resulting from the outbreak).

The funding enabled local authorities to appoint staff for both enforcement activities and data input. This funding continues until 2015 but is now on yearly reductions. 2011/12 being the first year and this reduction amounted to 30%, next year sees a further 16% reduction.

These reductions along with the general cuts for local authorities is resulting in staff losses in Animal Health and Welfare. There was another source of income for this local authority function which ended on 31st March 2011. This was to fund the “Companion Animal Welfare Enforcement Scheme”.

Following the introduction of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which is a non-statutory function but local authorities along with Police are given powers to enforce it was direct funding from Welsh Government for a period of three years.

The funding applied to baseline work and special projects. As a consequence Wales was seen to be leading the UK on Animal Welfare and both The Welsh Government and Welsh

Local Authorities were held in high esteem by other Governments, but more importantly by welfare organisations and the general public. Within Wales a considerable amount of work undertaken centred on equines. Two major projects were undertaken both of these lasting for the lifetime of the scheme.

“Operation Mustang” being undertaken by Cardiff which looked at strays and tethered horses and horses placed on land which they had no right to be on.

“Is Equine Welfare a Problem in North East Wales” was led by Wrexham and shared with Denbighshire and Flintshire.

This project was chosen as a result of prosecutions taken under the act. Four major equine prosecutions occurred within the two of the counties and one just in England.

One of the two prosecutions in Wrexham although a successful resulted in the owner of the equines being sent to prison the authority ended up being out of pocket by £180,000. The project quickly became all embracing due to statutory and non-statutory work being inseparable. The report was submitted to Welsh Government O.C.V.O. on 31st March 2011.

The findings show major problems not only with welfare but equine ID and passports.

Questions you pose

1) Do you feel that the action called for is reasonable and/or feasible?

I believe the action called for is both reasonable and feasible but does not go far enough.

There are a number of reasons why we need stronger enforcement within the equine sector but it should be looked at as a broader issue than just the petition.

Due to the petition only concentrating on micro-chipping it must be appreciated if the rest of the legislation is not enforced the micro-chip is valueless.

Micro-chips show the following detail:

Country of Origin	1 st three digits
Manufacturer	2 nd three digits
Identification	last nine digits

The details of micro-chips would only be useful for tracing purposes if the breeder still owns the equine or when an equine has changed ownership the passport was returned to the issuing P.I.O. or change of detail.

The passport / micro-chip are genuine

The equine has only one micro-chip implanted

Action is called for due to a number of reasons:-

Passports and micro-chips are primarily required by legislation to protect the human food chain.

They can assist in disease control by identifying owners so allowing tracing of movements and locations to be arrived at quicker. (Becoming more important was exotic equine disease becoming nearer to Wales).

Tourism and Trade

Wales relies heavily on tourism welfare incidents could persuade the public to shy away from visiting and holidaying in Wales.

Trade is estimated to be worth approximately £3000 per equine in Wales. This represents a significant income if this was threatened due to disease outbreak and controls applied. It could prove catastrophic to the Welsh Equine Industry.

The Tri-Partite Agreement between France, Ireland and the UK only requires equines to be moved on their passport, health inspection and certification is not required.

This again relies on the chip and passport being genuine and complete.

Local authority enforcement highlights many problems in these areas and produces a mindset that the system is unreliable.

I believe Question Two is answered by the same answer as given to Question One.

Question 3

What are the barriers to enforcing micro-chipping?

The main barrier to enforcing micro-chipping is that the whole of the legislation requires enforcement. You cannot just take one article from the regulation and enforce that in isolation. Each article relies on one another.

The reasons have been explained for the barriers in the opening background remarks. Lack of resource provided to local authorities to enforce. Lack of Government interest in the equine sector until the exotic equine diseases start to appear in Europe appear to me to be the main barriers.

I would be prepared to give evidence in person.

1. Do you feel that the action called for is reasonable and/or feasible?

Local Authorities have had a duty to enforce the Horse Passport Wales Regulations since its introduction in 2005. However without an increase in funding levels, the Local Authority approach has to take into consideration resources and associated priorities. The introduction of the requirement to microchip foals and other equines born after July 2009 has not brought with it increased funding for enforcement either. There has been no direction from central government to increase levels of enforcement within the current priorities and therefore Local Authorities have to consider what is feasible on a local level within current resources.

2. Do you feel that microchipping is being effectively enforced?

Local Authorities are reactive in their enforcement practices rather than proactive due to the resource issue. There is no evidence to show that there have been increased demands placed on Local Authorities to investigate horse passport complaints. Any investigation undertaken may not result in prosecution, as it may not be considered appropriate or in the public interest.

3. What are the barriers to enforcing microchipping?

There are numerous barriers that Local Authorities are faced with when enforcing the Horse Passport Regulations, not just the microchipping aspect. There are resource implications for Authorities. These investigations can also be timely, and take months getting through the court system, only to be considered minor technical offences.

There is currently no requirement to register as an equine premise / keeper so the numbers and movements are therefore unknown.

There is no central database that maintains a register of all equines. Tracing the passport issuing organisation, and having integrity in the system is not always straight forward. Obtaining information from these parties, can prove difficult and hinder enforcement.

There is no requirement for keepers to keep a record of movements or sales, which does not assist with microchipping enforcement, nor would it in a disease situation.

Passport Issuing Organisations only require the purchaser to notify them of a transfer of ownership. If the buyer does not do this, and the horse passes hands several times, the new owner becomes untraceable, and enforcement action can be difficult. If the seller and purchaser had to notify the authority of the sale, then

this would make things easier. If there was a fine imposed for failing to do so, as with a car log bog, then I believe this would encourage keepers to ensure the records are up to date.

The current low value of some horses, means that ownership is sometimes handed over many times and proving the transaction took place can be extremely difficult.

Stray horses are problematic for Local Authorities. Whilst there is an expectation for LA's to deal with stray animals, currently there is only a responsibility on them to deal with stray dogs. External agencies can become frustrated with this, and can often say that there is a welfare problem, rather than a straying issue in order to get the matter resolved. If a central database was introduced then it would be useful for landowners to be given access to identify owners of stray horses in order to deal with this problem.

Annwyl Rhodri

Diolch am eich neges.

Please find below some points of information to consider in respect of the proposed Petition:

- Weatherbys has had a mandatory microchipping rule for over 10 years, significantly predating the Legislation. It is not understood to have been difficult to impose.
- Microchipping is being enforced by UK Passport Issuing Organisations at point of passport issue, in the majority of cases. For a list of Passport Issuing Organisations please see www.nedonline.org.uk. The barriers to enforcement of passport Legislation at a local level could very likely be ones of insufficient resource/cost of implementation and lack of awareness about the equine species by enforcement bodies. It is likely that equine organisations may be able to assist with awareness raising on a practical level if required. Please contact us to facilitate this if you see fit.
- There are many events where equines collect to compete or show, where adherence to passport Legislation could be checked. The more examples there are of passport checks being effected, the greater the awareness is likely to become of the Legislative requirement.
- Microchipping has been mandatory for every horse at first registration, since July 2009, whether it is a foal or not (this therefore means adult horses which were not passported prior to July 2009).
- It may be the case that in the situations you refer to in your letter, a targeted approach could be considered. Perhaps a practical, cost-effective solution could be provided whereby, for example, a Passport Issuing Organisation in conjunction with local vets (microchips may only be inserted by a veterinary surgeon) may be able to offer a packaged solution for microchipping and passporting where there are large numbers of unidentified equines in a population which give rise to concerns about welfare and public safety.

CC BHIC committee, if you have anything to add please do let me know.

Kindest regards

Jan

Jan Rogers
Head of Equine Development

British Equestrian Federation

P-04-333 Stop neglect and abandonment of horses and ponies by enforcement of microchipping laws



Petition wording:

The Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies has been inundated with calls for assistance from concerned members of the public, horse owners and the Police for horses found abandoned, neglected and injured. Many have been injured from wandering on to the roads causing great risk to Motorists.

None of these horses are microchipped which has been a legal requirement for foals born after July 2009 which means the owners cannot be traced. We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure effective enforcement of microchipping and Equine passports as laid down in the 2009 Legislation.

The Response of The British Horse Society

1. The British Horse Society (BHS) is also responding on behalf of the British Equestrian Federation (BEF).
2. The BHS represents the interests of the 4.3 million people in the UK who ride or who drive horse-drawn vehicles. With the membership of its Affiliated Riding Clubs and Bridleway Groups, the BHS is the largest and most influential equestrian charity in the UK.
3. The BHS is committed to promoting the interests of horse riders and owners and the welfare of horses and ponies through education and training.
4. The BEF is the national governing body for horse sports in the UK, affiliated to the Federation Equestre Internationale. The BEF is an umbrella organisation representing the interests of riders, vaulters and carriage drivers in Great Britain via 18 independent member bodies.
5. Our response to the three questions as set out in the consultation letter dated October 2011 are as follows:

Question 1 - Do you feel that the action called for is reasonable and/or feasible?

Answer - It is considered that the action is reasonable and urges the National Assembly to identify the necessary resources to enforce the legislation. Many of the horses that have not been microchipped in accordance with the legislation are those that are more likely to end up being

slaughtered in the abattoir. Consequently failing to enforce the microchipping legislation is failing to protect the human food chain.

Question 2 - Do you feel that microchipping is being effectively enforced?

Answer - The law regarding micro chipping and horse passports is not being effectively enforced. There are a considerable number of young horses in Wales that do not have a microchip. It was recently reported in the press in South Wales that there were several hundred horses belonging to one individual many of which had no microchips or passports. It is understood that no legal action has been taken against this individual.

Question 3 – What are the barriers to enforcing microchipping?

Answer - The main problem to enforcing microchipping and horse passports appears to be the limited resources that are available to local authorities to enforce the current legislation, and the lack of officers in some Trading Standards departments with the necessary equine knowledge.

6. The BHS is prepared to give evidence in person to the Committee.

Dated 15 November 2011

Mark Weston
Director of Access, Safety and Welfare,
The British Horse Society.



*Abbey Equine Centre
Llansabbath Barns
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To whom it may concern

As Veterinary Surgeons providing veterinary care to the horses and ponies rescued by the Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies (SWHP) we have close professional contact with many rescued horses and ponies which, contrary to legal requirements, are frequently not microchipped. This means that positive identification of their owners is extremely difficult. If, as the law requires, all adult horses and ponies are passported and microchipped, owners would be aware that they could be identified and held responsible for their animals. They would, therefore, be more likely to take better care of their animals. As most of the animals are in an advanced state of neglect by the time that they reach the care of the SWHP, we believe that enforcing this legislation would lead to a huge improvement in animal welfare.

Currently, while many horses are being passported and microchipped these animals are in the care of the responsible horse-owning population. Little attempt appears to be made to ensure that the law is enforced effectively among the less responsible owners.

Unfortunately, correct passporting and microchipping, while not expensive, is often not justified in the minds of many owners of animals, particularly when the animals themselves have a low economic value. However, if these animals were required to be individually identifiable it may discourage the indiscriminate breeding of large numbers of unwanted animals, and encourage more responsible horse management.

R.J.Fisher, MRCVS, (Director) and E.Jones, MRCVS, (Manager), Abbey Equine Clinic, Llanover, Abergavenny.

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES'
PETITIONS COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO
STOPPING THE NEGLECT AND
ABANDONMENT OF HORSES AND PONIES
BY THE ENFORCEMENT OF
MICROCHIPPING LAWS**

Response from the Farmers' Union of Wales

November 2011

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES' PETITIONS COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO STOPPING THE NEGLECT AND ABANDONMENT OF HORSES AND PONIES BY THE ENFORCEMENT OF MICROCHIPPING LAWS

Response from the Farmers' Union of Wales

INTRODUCTION

1. The Farmers' Union of Wales welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Petitions Committee's Inquiry into stopping the neglect and abandonment of horses and ponies by the enforcement of microchipping laws, with particular reference to the issues faced by farmers and graziers caused by the abandonment of unidentified equines on farm land in Wales.
2. The Union previously responded¹ to the Welsh Government consultation on 'European Commission Regulation EC No. 504/2008 – Equine Identification' which outlined the regulations for the compulsory microchipping of equines in Wales.
3. The main impetus for EC Regulation 504/2008 was to strengthen the link between the animal and the information contained on its passport, particularly any medical treatment it had received, as a means of providing traceability for equines destined for the food chain. In a UK context, the amount of horse meat consumed is very low and the export trade of equines destined for human consumption in other countries is insignificant.
4. Therefore, the Union believed that the Regulations would only serve to increase bureaucracy and costs for keepers of horses and, once implemented, create significant welfare problems across Wales.

Questions

Question 1

Do you feel that the action called for is reasonable and/or feasible?

5. The Union believes that overriding reason why this petition was raised was due to the increasing number of horses and ponies being abandoned and neglected particularly on areas of common land in South Wales.
6. The FUW strongly condemns any cruelty which is inflicted on either domestic or farm animals and believes that agriculture in Wales has some of highest animal welfare standards in the European Union. These welfare standards are not only enforced in legislation but also by the Cross

1

http://www.fuw.org.uk/tl_files/FUW/article_images/ConsultationResponses/Consultation%20response%20Equine%20Identification.pdf

Compliance standards which farmers have to adhere to as part of their Single Farm Payment contract.

7. The Union believes that the imposition of the 2009 Regulations requiring all foals born after July 2009 (in addition to adult horses not previously identified) to be microchipped is one of the major reasons why an increasing number of horses and ponies are being abandoned as owners either do not want to or are not able to afford a passport or pay for microchipping. The current economic climate is certainly contributing to this problem which is of increasing concern to the Union.
8. Abandoned equines represent a significant issue for graziers and/or the grazing associations on a number of commons on which many are being abandoned. Often the owners of these horses do not have any grazing rights on the common which then impacts on the legitimate graziers' ability to graze their own stock and the lack of identification means there is no means of tracing the owner.
9. In many situations, the graziers are left with no option but to remove these abandoned equines. However, due to the requirements of the Equine Identification Regulations it is not possible to dispose of these animals without the expense of microchipping and obtaining a valid passport. This can be extremely expensive for graziers as they have to bear the costs of meeting the Regulations before they can be moved or sold.
10. The cost of microchipping a horse varies depending on the price charged by the local vet but it is in the region of £25 to £35 pounds² with an application for a horse passport costing £25³.
11. The Union believes that a derogation should be sought from the Regulations to allow graziers to remove these animals from the area of land on which they have been abandoned for welfare reasons, without the need to incur the costs of microchipping and passporting these animals.
12. Concerns have also been raised by members regarding the need to microchip horses, as part of submitting a retrospective application for a passport, particularly those older horses owned and kept on the farm for most of their lives which will never leave or enter the food chain.
13. While the Union accepts that these horses will need to have a passport, it believes that they should be exempt from the requirements of microchipping.
14. The FUW also believes that the stricter enforcement of the Regulations will, at a time of severe budget cuts, inevitably lead to an increase in costs for Local Authorities and the Welsh Government without actually removing the root cause of the issue which is owners abandoning their horses as they are not willing, or can't afford to, adhere to the Regulations.

² <http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/397/198227.html>
³ http://www.bhs.org.uk/Horse_Care/Passports/FAQS.aspx

Question 2

Do you feel that microchipping is being effectively enforced?

15. The Union firmly believes that the microchipping Regulations are being effectively enforced within the agricultural sector. As part of the Inspection process for the Single Farm Payment, any equines present on the farm, require valid passports and, if applicable, need to be microchipped.
16. The Union also believes that the microchipping Regulations are being effectively enforced as part of the sale of horses and ponies, either privately or through auctions, including specialist auctions for semi-feral horses and ponies.

Question 3

What are the barriers to enforcing microchipping?

17. The Union believes that the main barrier to enforcing the microchipping Regulations is the difficulties posed in identifying the owners of animals which have been abandoned.
18. As outlined above, this represents a significant issue for farmers especially if the animal has been abandoned on agriculture or common land.
19. The Union also believes that any increased enforcement would have considerable cost implications for owners, Local Authorities and the Welsh Government with only minimal improvements in compliance with the Regulations.

17th November 2011

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:
Your Ref/Eich Cyf: P-04-333
Date/Dyddiad:
Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:
Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol:
Email/Ebost:

17 November 2011
Simon Wilkinson
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WLGA • CLILC

Mr. Rhodri Wyn Jones
Team Support – Petitions Committee
Committee Service
National Assembly for Wales

Dear Mr Jones,

**WLGA response to National Assembly for Wales Petitions
Committee Consultation: P-04-333 STOP NEGLECT AND
ABANDONMENT OF HORSES AND PONIES BY ENFORCEMENT
OF MICROCHIPPING LAWS**

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, and the three national park authorities, the three fire and rescue authorities, and four police authorities are associate members.

It seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.

I am pleased to provide this information on behalf of the twenty two local authorities in Wales.

1. Do you feel that the action called for is reasonable and/or feasible?

The WLGA believes that the action called for is reasonable. However, it is not considered feasible without appropriate funding being made available to local authorities to ensure enforcement happens in a timely, consistent, appropriate and proportionate manner.

Legislation has been in force since 2009 making it a requirement to microchip foals and any other equines not already identified and supported by a valid passport. It is the duty of the local authority to enforce this legislation. What is reasonable and feasible would depend on many factors locally - none more relevant than the available resource and strategic and operational priorities of both local and central government.

Steve Thomas CBE
Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr

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www.wlga.gov.uk

Since equine identification was introduced in 2005, local authorities have received no funding for this area of work. Hence most do what they are able, within their current resource levels.

2. Do you feel that microchipping is being effectively enforced?

It may be considered that the legislation it is not being effectively enforced but based on the resource available most local authorities are hamstrung into being reactive rather than proactive in their enforcement duties.

Due to conflicting local and national priorities, lack of resource and the “better regulation” agenda; local authorities increasingly visit and inspect premises on an intelligence led basis.

It would appear that few incidents relating to equines are being reported to local authorities. There are however hot spots of activity in Wales, where the level of horse related incidents create significant problems for under resourced local authorities – and consequently the public, businesses and communities generally.

Local authorities must also to consider the public interest tests during any investigation which may lead to prosecution - it can be the case that appropriate action for an incident has been taken, however, this may not always be through formal action in the courts.

3. What are the barriers to enforcing microchipping?

- Resources
- No requirement to register equine premises makes the scale of the problem an unknown quantity
- Lack of knowledge by some sectors - e.g private keepers and in some cases professionals - vets not asking for passports when treating.
- Not having a central database of owners/keepers and moves can hinder enforcement. It is resource and time intensive for enforcement officers to contact all issuing bodies in order to prove offences.
- No requirement for keepers to keep records of sales / transfer of ownership.
- The requirement to notify issuing body of "change of ownership" only relates to the buyer and not the seller. If the buyer doesn't do this then the new keepers can often become untraceable and consequently no enforcement action can be taken. The seller has no obligation to keep or report these details, unlike cattle, sheep and pigs which have to be recorded and reported by both parties.
- The return of the ID document only relates to a sale - proving a transaction took place can be impossible in some instances.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Wilkinson
Regulatory services Policy Officer
Welsh Local Government Association



Bronaeron, Felinfach, Lampeter, Ceredigion. SA48 8AG

ALP/jw

15th November 2011

Ms A Phillips
Clerk to the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Phillips

Petition from the Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the above petition.
Please find enclosed two letters from Council members of this Society.

Yours sincerely


Anna L Prytherch
Principal Officer

Encs.

Anna Prytherch

From: Kathleen Jones <annfrongoch@live.co.uk>
Sent: 31 October 2011 17:24
To: Anna Prytherch
Subject: Petitions Committee of the National Asembly

Hi Anna

I only have a couple of points I would like to make re the above.

Firstly I do not believe that the WPCS has any liability as far as these strays are concerned. However, if it was proven that members of the WPCS have been found dumping these ponies they should be dealt with.

I personally believe that the action called for is reasonable and feasible. Times are changing, in view of increase in traffic on the roads and the speed which traffic moves these days, it would surely make sense for the Government to give grants towards fencing off the more notorious areas which have most traffic to try and lessen the accidents to these ponies.

I believe that it is only now that the cost of microchipping is coming through to owners and in view of the present economic climate it is hitting people hard and they are dumping these ponies instead of going to the cost of registering and microchipping them. I think that the government should make it known that they will not tolerate this behaviour and when they find ponies without microchips they should give the owners 2 weeks to claim the pony and pay the cost of registering and microchipping them and also give them a hefty fine. If they do not come forward the pony should then be sold to cover their expenses. This should then make them understand that it is not economically viable to breed unwanted unregistered ponies. Up till now no serious effort has been made to stamp out this practice. It is not fair on the owners who act responsibly and keep their ponies and stallions in a proven breeding policy when these mongols are let out amongst them to create havoc.

K A Jones

Dear Sir or madam:-

Response to assembly gov. Petitions Committee
consultation re Society for the Welfare of Horses
and ponies petition to Welsh assembly gov.

However ruthless the assembly gov., and their
fellow U.K. administrations, may be in their enforcement
of the Equine Passport/micro-chip regulations they
can only enforce on the honest people while those
who flout the law cannot be apprehended in a
democracy.

The logistics of enforcement on these people is
highlighted by the recent enforcement of the law at
Dale Farm! The sheer cost would be impossible for
Trading Standards of County Councils to bear.

The insertion of micro chips and their subsequent
reading require that the animal is physically restrained.
I am not sure about the animal welfare and/or Health
and safety consequences of this exercise.

micro chips are reputedly unreliable, their reading is
via unreliable machinery, and it requires the reader person
to be within feet of the animal. No-one knows how
long these chips will last, will those inserted in 2011 still
be readable in 20 or 30 yrs time?

The sensible alternative is of course freeze-branding
or even hot branding. These brand/marks can be
read with the naked eye without stress to animal or man,
and are believed permanent and very difficult, if not impossible
to tamper with.

Yours faithfully,

B.R. Davies

C.R. DAVIES, HAFDRE STUD



THE SOCIETY FOR THE WELFARE OF HORSES & PONIES

The Horse Hospital

15th November 2011

Dear Sirs

I first became involved with this Charity some forty years ago and in that time developed it with my late husband into the well respected charity that it is today, where the need for our services is greater than even.

In recent years we have seen a surge in multiple equine ownership through indiscriminate breeding. In 90% of the cases we have brought in, there is no microchip and whilst in the majority of cases we know the owners, this cannot be proven for a case to be brought against them for cruelty, neglect and breaking the law.

When horses in large numbers are illegally dumped on land without the owner's permission it is usually on badly fenced land. The result is that these horses easily break out in search for food and cause chaos and danger to themselves and humans on the highway. Considerable police time is taken up by these situations. Sadly it is a tragedy waiting to happen. It also means that the Landowner is responsible for the welfare of these animals which he doesn't even want on his land and which were put there without his agreement.

It is really time that the micro-chipping laws which are in place be enforced. It will take time and money to set up but I believe Wales should lead the way (This is a National problem).

We are currently dealing with a situation near Cardiff Airport where 100 young colts were dumped. It is alleged that the owner has now removed 70 and taken them to West Wales and has left 35 behind. There is no water in this field and we are having to monitor it. This owner is well known throughout the U.K. and particularly to Welfare and Trading Standards Officers throughout Wales.

There needs to be a central database along with passports to control this abuse and wilful neglect. In two cases we have found a microchip which has been implanted by the owner, which is illegal. But there is no record of this and it is not a known number.

With colts fetching less than £10 it means that it is not cost effective to castrate (approx £150), passport and microchip (from £50.00).

I have briefly outlined my thoughts on the need for the micro-chipping law to be enforced and would welcome the opportunity to invite your Petitions Committee to Coxstone to see first-hand what we have to deal with on a daily basis.

We believe that the strict implementation of the micro-chipping law would make a huge difference to the serious welfare issues that exist. Whilst it would be costly to set up, in the long term it would save valuable resources not just of the police, fire service and charities like ours, but also the local authorities; monitoring, rounding up and being ultimately responsible for these animals and any veterinary treatment. I am enclosing some photographs of some of our recent cases and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

REGISTERED CHARITY No 266247

Chairman: Mrs J MacGregor, MBE. Secretary Mrs A Davies Patron: Sir Robert Hayman-Joyce

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jennifer MacGregor, M.B.E
Chairman



MRS TIGGYWINKLE Before and After Pictures



ELOISE Before and After Pictures

REGISTERED CHARITY No 266247

Chairman: Mrs J MacGregor, MBE. Secretary Mrs A Davies Patron: Sir Robert Hayman-Joyce

For the Attention of the Committee Clerk

Dear Sirs,

Re: The Society for The Welfare of Horses and Ponies Petition for the Microchipping Laws to be enforced.

We write in support of the Petition calling on the Welsh Assembly Government to implement the microchipping laws.

Having been associated with this Charity for more than 15 years we have seen a great increase in the numbers of cases we are called to attend and subsequently have to take into our care.

These past three years have also seen large groups of horses, particularly colt foals dumped illegally on land ranging from Industrial Estates, council land and privately owned fields. These groups can range in numbers from 10 to 70 and indeed last year we were inundated with calls from the Bridgend area where the number of horses were in the region of 200 some getting loose on the road. The majority of neglect is not caused through lack of funds but indiscriminate over breeding where there is no market for these equines.

The amount local authorities must be spending out of public funds to take care of some of these situations is surely substantial. We are constantly receiving reports of loose horses on the roads and in some cases being killed or badly injured, it is only a matter of time before there is a human tragedy. Valuable Police time is also being taken up in receiving reports of these horses and also having to remove them from busy highways.

In the past eighteen months there have been instances where we have had to involve the help of the Fire Service. In one case 15 Fire Officers spent approximately eight hours with three Rescue vehicles working into the night (please see photograph of Martina send under separate cover)

Last Autumn the Fire Service again came to our rescue when a young colt was found in a stream taking approximately ten fire officers two hours to manually winch the animal which was in a dreadful condition to the surface where it required immediate life saving attention. Due to the dedicated care and expertise received from SWHP both animals have made a full recovery.

There is a real urgency for the Microchipping laws to be enforced and we feel certain that it would help control the appalling indiscriminate breeding that abounds and which would subsequently reduce the amount of abuse and neglect found in equines.

Whilst it will take some time and thought to set up a suitable enforcement programme it is a situation that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency and we would urge the Petitions Committee to take this Petition forward.

As Trustees we would very much like to invite the Petitions Committee to visit SWHP Horse Hospital to see the work first hand and to have the opportunity to discuss our concerns more fully.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course and in the meantime would be pleased to answer any further questions or assist in any way. We are also forwarding under separate cover some newsletters which highlight some of our work.

Our thanks once again for your interest in this matter

Sian Lloyd

Stuart Davies

Trustee

Trustee