



## **AESE CEIS Case Study Media Release**

### **For Immediate Release**

# **A New System for a New Era of Horse Owners**

The UK's horse passport regulations are in urgent need of simplification and strengthening after sector-wide survey results revealed a dramatic lack of confidence and worrying shortcomings in most parts of the system meant to safeguard the human food chain.

Following the announcement of the closure of the National Equine Database in September 2012, UK passport issuing organisations, welfare charities, local authority enforcers, organisations set up to trace and locate equines as well as members of the public have been emphatic in their need for a new central system, which is pivotal to a robust equine passport system.

At the 2013 National Equine Forum, Secretary of State Owen Paterson stated "in order to do this [set up any new central equine information system] we need to work together, the sector itself has already taken a lead". One of the sector's responsive leads has been Advancing Equine Scientific Excellence's (AESE) ground breaking collaborative case study.

The case study has involved calling UK academic establishments to challenge their students to survey their peer group and local owners, riders and businesses to share their vision for any potential new central equine information system (CEIS).

Participants followed the guidance of a detailed study pack and tailored their studies according to the challenges the horse world faces today, tomorrow and into the future. They collated responses from a wide variety of sources and came up with some innovative suggestions for the operation and funding of any new CEIS.

Without fail, all of the respondents envisaged the CEIS as being more than a database and in effect acting as a central hub and trusted information source. This core concept makes it attractive for users because any interaction results in benefits - such as being able to obtain centralised accurate information about current important horse related matters and to empower themselves to keep their own horse's data record up to date online.

Shortlisted institutions, which presented to a panel of industry experts, were Bicton College, Duchy College, Glyndŵr University, Hartpury College, Myerscough College, Sparsholt College, Warwickshire College and Writtle College. Of these excellent shortlisted establishments, Glyndŵr University, Hartpury College and Myerscough College went on to present the results of their case studies to an

advisory panel of representatives from the Equine Sector Council, Defra and the British Equestrian Federation (BEF).

Glyndŵr University's excellent pilot study yielded a great amount of attitudinal data which will be useful in shaping any new system's public face to be able to appeal to a diversity of users.

Hartpury College's study made some innovative recommendations for alternative revenue streams for studbook passport issuing organisations should the wherewithal to issue passports be shifted to a single body. Hartpury had considered in some detail the effect such a change might have on the current systems.

Myerscough College's complementary sales based system focused on a business idea to meet the needs of everyday horse owners and riders, making it easier to source equestrian products at affordable prices.

Advisory panel members were highly complimentary about the depth and integrity of the work which had been carried out. Said BEF Chief Executive Andrew Finding, "I am immensely impressed with the quality and delighted that the academic community is working so positively with the wider industry. The outcomes benefit all of us".

Jeanette Allen, Chief Executive of the Horse Trust and Chair of the Equine Sector Council steering group reinforced this view "I am reassured that the students' findings have endorsed some of what we have felt already and that they have provided a real evidence base for our assumptions and some innovative thinking which has the potential to be deliverable".

At a meeting on 22 May the Equine Sector Council steering group presented the key outcomes from the case studies to Lord de Mauley (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Resource Management, the Local Environment and Environmental Science) and Defra officials whilst they explored how the equine passports system might be improved in the short and longer term.

Environment Minister Lord de Mauley said "By working closely with the equine sector we are making good progress to strengthen the horse passport system in this country. Together, we will continue to work with the European Commission to introduce a robust, centralised passport issuing system."

**ENDS**

**Further Information:**

Advancing Equine Scientific Excellence (AESE) is an initiative backed by the British Equestrian Federation (BEF), British Society of Animal Science (BSAS), representatives from Industry (including Alltech and WALTHAM) and representatives from academia (including The Royal Veterinary College and University of Glasgow) to help continue to raise the quality of equine teaching and research in the UK through improved collaboration between the equine industry, research institutes, colleges and universities.

Full details, including the background to AESE and information on upcoming events, can be found at: [www.bef.co.uk/Equine\\_Research/Advancing\\_Equine\\_Scientific\\_Excellence.html](http://www.bef.co.uk/Equine_Research/Advancing_Equine_Scientific_Excellence.html).

Advancing Equine Scientific Excellence (AESE) is an independent initiative facilitated by the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) and British Society for Animal Science (BSAS).

**The aim of AESE is:**

- To advance scientific excellence through improved collaboration between the equine industry, research institutes, colleges and universities throughout the British Isles.

**The objectives of AESE are:**

- To provide support to those carrying out equine research
- To provide continuing professional development to those carrying out equine research
- To coordinate collaborative research projects across all disciplines which benefit the equine industry as well as those carrying out the research and their respective institutions
- To assist in the dissemination of the findings and information from research throughout the industry, utilising peer-reviewed journals and other appropriate mechanisms
- To offer a link between organisations (both commercial and not-for-profit) who want research carried out and those who wish to undertake research into any area or aspect of the equine industry
- To build a UK-wide equine research community, encompassing all disciplines

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