



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

ALASDAIR ALLAN

MSP for the Western Isles - BPA airson nan Eilean Siar



Mairi Gougeon MSP
Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment
Rural Economy
Scottish Government
St. Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Our Ref: AA5291

28 September 2020

Dear Mairi,

Re: The Eriskay Pony Breed

I am writing on behalf of Comann Each nan Eilean – The Eriskay Pony Society who recently contacted me seeking clarification on the current situation regarding the Eriskay Pony breed.

The Society (CEnE) previously notified me that the Eriskay Pony Society (EPS) was granted mother society status for the Eriskay Pony breed in 2018. I understand that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) now lists both societies as managing studbooks of origin for the breed.[1]

CEnE explained that a breed is defined by the studbook of origin and has expressed concern that the creation of two mother societies may lead to two definitions existing for the same equine breed. CEnE informed me that they define an Eriskay Pony to be 100% pure, traceable through their studbook to the foundation stock. They are unsure whether the EPS breed definition corresponds to their own breed definition, as established in the original studbook of origin. If the two studbook definitions do not agree, does this mean that a distinct new breed has been established for the Eriskay Pony?

The Society is concerned that this is a critical facet of their conservation work, in that the breed definition directly impacts the reported numbers of Eriskay ponies in existence. According to the breed definition, CEnE believes that there may only be

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50 purebred Eriskay ponies in existence and that it may represent the most critically endangered equine breed in the UK.

I would appreciate your comments on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Alasdair Allan', with a horizontal line underneath.

Alasdair Allan MSP

Cc: [REDACTED] (Registrar, Comann Each nan Eilean)

[1] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/919135/pio-list.pdf