

IN BRIEF

EFFECT OF GROUND AND STUD CHOICE

A STUDENT is asking riders to take part in a questionnaire she hopes will benefit equine welfare.

Rebecca Ross, who is studying equine science at the Royal Agricultural University, wants to explore how riders interpret cross-country ground conditions and how this affects stud selection. She is also to investigate whether the combination of factors relates to injuries, particularly musculoskeletal injuries below the knee and hock.

Ms Ross is hoping for a large number of responses for accurate analysis. Email: rebecca.ross@student.rau.ac.uk

CALLS FOR LOWER SPEED LIMITS

A former master of foxhounds is urging fellow riders to sign a petition calling for the speed limit on rural roads to be reduced from 60mph to 30mph.

Ian Anderson, who still hunts occasionally with the Ashford Valley Tickham, said the danger from traffic to horses near his Kent home is exacerbated by the downgrading of bridlepaths and housing development.

Mr Anderson said anyone "interested in the preservation of country life" should share the petition. Visit horseandhound.co.uk/rural-roads-speed-petition

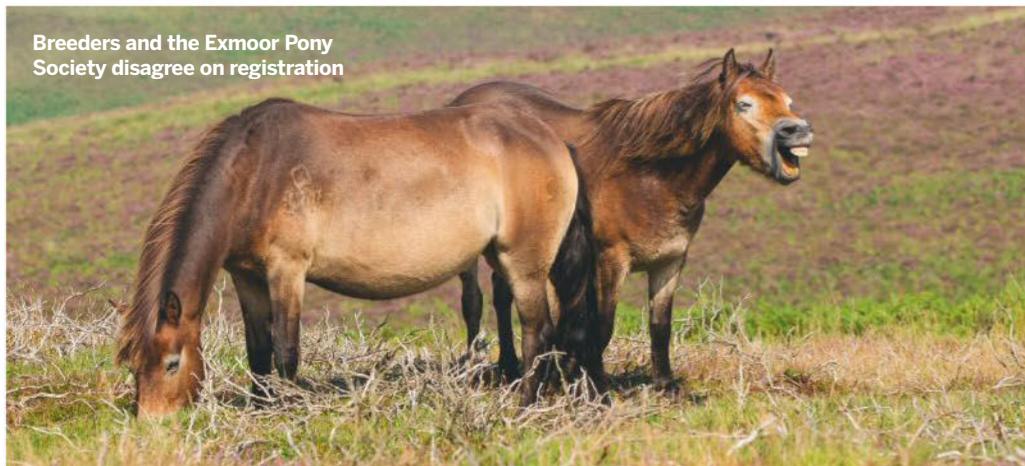
GENDER FAIRNESS PLEDGE BY FEI

EQUESTRIAN sport is leading the way in gender equality.

The FEI pledged to join the Gender Champions network, which pushes for gender parity in sport, on International Women's Day (8 March). FEI president Ingmar De Vos joined the heads of four other sporting bodies in making the pledge. The organisation promised to increase female membership of FEI committees and will offer male employees one-month paid paternity leave for each child.

A Women In Sport study found women made up more than 60% of the British Equestrian Federation's senior leadership roles.

Breeders and the Exmoor Pony Society disagree on registration



Rare native breed genes at risk

Exmoor pony breeders are calling for change in the registration process, amid concerns of overzealous rules

By SARAH RADFORD

A GROUP of moorland breeders is pressuring the Exmoor Pony Society for change, claiming the approval and registration process is stopping important genetic stock from entering the studbook.

They say overzealous interpretation of the "no white markings" rule has meant some ponies — particularly rare paler duns and red bays — are excluded for having pale undersoles. Paler ponies are also failing inspections for having smatterings of pale hairs that are not white markings.

Rex Milton runs herd 23, which has some of the oldest bloodlines in which these colour variations often appear.

"Last year I presented what I would have called my best yearling filly and the inspectors said she was outstanding but reluctantly couldn't pass her because of a pale undersole," he told *H&H*.

"I'm passionate about the issue because I can see it's going to cost the Exmoor pony some critical genes at some point unless the stupidity stops."

He added that while the society offers the chance to re-inspect, it is too late for buyers at the autumn drift sales.

"It's drastically affecting what is already a difficult market," Mr Milton said.

While the offspring of registered parents can still be included in "section X" of the studbook if they fail inspection, this excludes them from approved breeding or entering breed classes.

The Moorland Exmoor Pony Breeders Group (MEPBG) is campaigning for a supplementary section to be added so pure-bred ponies that have for some reason

fallen outside of the registration process are not "lost".

"If we waste genetic stock it's not fine," said MEPBG founding member Dawn Westcott. "There are high inbreeding co-efficients and we need to safeguard everything we can."

Exmoor Pony Society secretary Sue McGeever said the breeders in question "had repeatedly been advised they can put resolutions to the AGM or to a general meeting".

"The committee is aware that in some instances foals with a 'pale sole' rather than a 'white sole' may have been registered into section X but with the re-inspection process available within six months of the original inspection, such instances are few and can be rectified."

She added that members would be asked to vote at the 2017 AGM on whether sole inspections should be stopped.

OBITUARIES



BRENDA WICKHAM
BRIDLEWAYS campaigner Brenda Wickham has died at the age of 92. A dedicated member of the British Horse Society (BHS) she was appointed MBE in 2007 for

services to public rights of way.

She was a driving force behind the National Bridleroute Network and helped to create numerous long-distance routes across the UK. The BHS awarded her a golden jubilee medal in 2002 and an access award in 2000.

TRISTAN VOORSPUY

THE former Guards officer was killed on his Kenyan ranch on 5 March in what is believed to be unrest involving land invasions.

Born in South Africa, Mr Voorspuy was raised in the UK and

joined the army in 1975. He started guiding mounted safaris and in 1990 founded Offbeat Safaris.

A memorial will take place on 6 July at Greens Norton, Towcester.

MICHAEL SPACKMAN

EVENT organiser Mr Spackman died on 21 February, aged 91.

With his wife Veronica, Mr Spackman organised Stilemans and Iping Horse Trials for years, and Tweseldown in the 1990s.

A life member of British Eventing, he received an award in 2004 for services to the sport.