



WBFSH General Assembly 2025 (South Africa)

Motion of the Board

PROPOSAL FOR ADOPTION OF DNA TESTING FOR MAIN STUDBOOK PEDIGREE VERIFICATION IN WBFSH AFFILIATED STUDBOOKS

1. Introduction:

At the WBFSH General Assembly 2024, the BHHS submitted a motion regarding mandatory DNA testing for WBFSH studbooks. The motion outlined the importance that all WBFSH studbooks should commit to full DNA testing for main studbook pedigree verification, as it is a crucial step in ensuring the security, integrity and credibility of bloodlines within the equine community.

The principle of the motion was accepted by all members. However, questions were raised with respect to the practical implementation and additional costs to studbooks and their breeders. It was agreed that more time was needed to propose a practical implementation.

The WBFSH board is re-submitting this motion with a timeline for implementation. An informative webinar was held for the members in July 2025, to allow for questions and an open discussion, and enough time for members to consider the implications internally.

On 28th July 2025 an online members' webinar was held, presented by Sonja Egan, the head of breeding at Horseport Ireland, on the importance and methods of DNA testing in equine populations, discussing the scientific aspects and guidelines for selecting laboratory partners. The webinar covered DNA's role in genetic inheritance, parentage verification, and the transition from microsatellite to SNP testing methods, with Sonja explaining the benefits and challenges of each approach. Participants discussed the implementation of DNA testing requirements for studbook registration and the need for flexible protocols that accommodate different regional circumstances, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and continued discussion.

2. Purpose:

The primary purpose of this proposal is to advocate for the mandatory DNA screening of all foals going forward. The benefits of this initiative include:

- **Security of Bloodlines:** Ensures that the lineage of every horse is accurately documented.
- **Fraud Deterrence:** Reduces the risk of fraudulent claims regarding a horse's pedigree.
- **Enhanced Credibility:** Strengthens the reputation of the organization as a leader in maintaining ethical breeding practices.
- **Informed Breeding Decisions:** Provides breeders with accurate information, leading to more informed breeding decisions, and contributing to transparency and traceability.



3. Background:

Equine DNA screening has become an increasingly common practice in the industry. Advances in genetic technology allow for precise identification of parentage and verifying-lineage claims. Many leading warmblood studbooks have already adopted DNA screening to uphold the integrity of their registries.

4. Proposed Implementation:

- **Mandatory Screening:** All foals born within the jurisdiction of WBFSH member studbooks must undergo DNA screening before registration.
- **Registration Process:** DNA results must be submitted as part of the foal registration process. No registration will be complete without verified DNA results.
- **Database Integration:** DNA profiles shall be stored centrally by the studbook and may be accessed by relevant parties exclusively for pedigree verification; ownership of the data shall remain with the studbook.
- **Enforcement:** Implement strict penalties for non-compliance, including refusal of registration or fines.
- **Certified Labs:** Designate or partner with certified laboratories to conduct DNA tests, ensuring standardization and accuracy.
- **Practical guidance:** A SAC-led working group can be appointed to assist studbooks that require guidance on practical implementation such as choice of laboratory, and streamline implementation during the transition period.

5. Timeline

Time Frame		
October 2024	Motion passed at the WBFSH General Assembly Portugal	All member studbooks to complete DNA verification in the studbook pedigree recording process
July 2025	WBFSH Host Webinar	Inform on the purpose, importance, methods and timeline for DNA verification in member studbooks.
October 2025	WBFSH General assembly South Africa	Motion re-presented and shared with timeline for voting
2025-2027	Transition Period	Member studbook transition phase where they do not already DNA test.
2027	Implementation	DNA testing for all stallion, mare and foals mandated by the WBFSH starting in 2027 (optional microsatellites or SNPs)
2029	Mandatory DNA testing for all main studbook pedigree verifications	From 2029 non-compliant members may face exclusion



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6. Benefits:

Security of Bloodlines: With DNA screening, the organization can ensure that each registered foal has a verifiable and accurate lineage, protecting the value of pedigrees.

- **Fraud Deterrence:** DNA screening serves as a powerful deterrent against fraudulent practices, such as misrepresenting a horse's lineage or substituting foals.
- **Market Confidence:** Buyers and breeders will have increased confidence in the accuracy of pedigrees, boosting the market value of horses registered with the organization.
- **Reputation:** The organization will be seen as a leader in promoting transparency and integrity in horse breeding.

7. Supporting Information:

The PowerPoint presentation of the webinar held 28th July 2025 is submitted with the motion as supplementary information. The recording for the Members-Only webinar on DNA testing is accessible to all studbook representatives in the Members-Only Access (<https://cms.wbfsch.com/>).

(Note: A notification has been sent by email to all members on 18th August 2025 how Members-Only material can be accessed. Please follow the instructions to gain studbook access)

8. Conclusion:

The adoption of mandatory DNA screening for all foals is a proactive measure that aligns with the long-term goals of WBFSH to uphold the highest standards in horse breeding. This initiative will safeguard the security of bloodlines, deter fraudulent activities, and enhance the overall reputation of the WBFSH. We strongly recommend the immediate adoption of this proposal to ensure a secure and credible future for our equine community.