Equine Passports and the National Equine Database – current situation and future prospects
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Abstract
Since 2002 Government and the equine industry have been in partnership to develop a National Equine Database (NED) to provide a central source of reliable information on horses and ponies bred, owned or registered in the United Kingdom. NED will provide both buyers and breeders with a one-stop-shop access to a horse or ponies name, ID number, breed, sex, colour, height and pedigree together with performance, evaluation and grading results. NED’s other benefits are that it will help to provide more accurate information on the size and shape of the equine industry and assist with equine welfare in that owners, and eventually keepers, will be traceable (when used in conjunction with microchipping) with regard to abandoned and badly-treated equines. NED’s existence will also demonstrate the UK’s compliance with EU passport legislation which was the trigger for the development of the partnership. The capital development and initial running costs are being met by Defra. Thereafter, NED will have to be self-funding from the sale of data. Defra will continue to make a financial contribution in respect of the up-keep of the data required to administer the passport and disease surveillance and control schemes. PIOs are mandated under the four sets of UK passport legislation to provide the core data required for the database and breed societies, stud books, competition disciplines and other responsible bodies will supply verified pedigree, performance, evaluation and grading (PPEG) information on a voluntary basis.

Equine Passports
Introduction
The term ‘passport’ was introduced into the UK with The Horse Passport Order 1997 and served to add further confusion to an already complicated issue. The Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) correctly uses the term for its document which is designed to allow ‘this horse to pass freely without let or hindrance, and to afford the person responsible of (sic) the horse such assistance as may be necessary’. The European Union (EU) Commission, whose Decision 90/427/EEC, introduced these documents across Member States used the term ‘identification document’ from 1990 until 2000 at which point the word ‘passport’ appeared in parenthesis after ‘identification document’.

Thus there is now in circulation a document attempting to fulfil several purposes. At the first level it is an identification document containing a written and visual description of the equine and at the second level it contains information about the pedigree of the equine. Ancillary to this the document has space for information on the health status of the horse to be entered, recording of the occasions when the equine has been checked against its documentary description and finally a declaration as to whether the equine is, or is not, eventually destined for the human food chain. There is an argument that, for a large percentage of the equines in the UK, much of this information is unnecessary and, indeed, is currently unavailable.

Brief history
Two EU Commission Decisions (90/426/EEC and 90/427/EEC) were made, and published simultaneously, in 1990. These recognised that ‘the breeding and rearing of horse is generally included in the farming sector where it constitutes a source of income and should be encouraged. It was also recognised that satisfactory results in that respect depended partly on the use of equidae registered in studbooks maintained by officially approved organisations or associations’. It was further recognised that ‘disparities existed regarding entries in studbooks and that these should be harmonised as they constituted a barrier to trade’. Thus, the initial reason for introducing ‘passports’ was established. The Decisions also defined ‘Equidae’, ‘Registered Equidae’, Equidae for Slaughter’, Equidae for Breeding and Production’ and ‘Studbook’. These definitions were important in that not all of the contents of the various Decisions referred to all groups. The EU also gave notice that the EU would establish criteria for the approval or recognition of studbooks,
criteria for entry and registration in studbooks and criteria for drawing up the certificate of origin and identification document. Specific requirements were also given as to the information and diagrams which must be contained in the identification document.

An EU Decision (92/353/EEC) made in 1992 laid down the specific criteria which must be met by organisations and associations in order to be recognised.

Further instructions as to the contents of the identification document were given (93/623/EEC) in 1993 together with an instruction that these documents must accompany registered equidae born on or after 1st January 1998.

At this point, the UK Government enacted The Horse Passports Order 1997 which came into force, in respect of Great Britain, on 1st January 1998 (subsequently amended to be operative from 19th October 1998) which was designed to meet the requirements of the above three EU Decisions. This piece of legislation was followed, in 1998, by the issue of guidelines for its use. Similar Regulations were published by the Northern Ireland Assembly in 1999 on behalf of NI and which became effective from 21st April 1999.

In 2000, EU Decision 2000/68/EC amended Decision 93/623/EEC in two very important aspects. It extended the requirement to have an identification document to all equidae and not just specific groupings as previously. It also made provision for the use of an unique equine life number (UELN), and modified the format of the identification document to include a section to record the use of certain veterinary medicines for animals that were or might be destined for human consumption.

In order to comply with this Decision the UK devolved administrations introduced individual legislation as follows: - The Horse Passports (England) Regulations 2003 replaced by The Horse Passports (England) Regulations 2004. Subsequently, The Horse Passports Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004, The Horse Passports (Wales) Regulations 2005 and The Horse Passports (Scotland) Regulations 2005 followed. All four Statutory Instruments conformed to the same pattern with minor variations to encompass different circumstances and interpretations in the devolved regions. The most significant of these being with the Welsh Regulations which, in Section 13, states that the ‘declaration in Section IX, Part II or III-A as to whether or not the horse is intended for human consumption’ must be signed by ‘the owner of a horse or the owner’s representative, on receipt of a passport’. Whereas with the other three Statutory Instruments the wording is ‘an owner may at any time sign the declaration in Section IX concerning whether or not the animal is intended for slaughter for human consumption, or may choose not to sign it’.

The European Commission have been working on a draft Regulation which would replace and consolidate equine identification legislation. The indications are, from revision 10 of SANCO document number 10723/23/2002, that this might establish a closer link between the equine and the means of identification by requiring the animal to be marked with an electronic identifier (e.g. microchip) and a minimum set of relevant data to be recorded in a database. Opportunity to introduce ‘smart cards’ as an alternative to paper documents to accompany equidae during national movements is also being suggested. Interestingly, the SANCO document uses the phrase ‘a unique identification document in the format of a passport’.

**Compliance**

Though the use of a standard EU format document was only compulsory for Registered Horses born after January 1988, many Breed Societies provided a service to issue passports for non-registered horses. It was already becoming clear that legislation would be introduced to require passports for all horses, ponies and donkeys; owners were, consequently, being encouraged not to wait.
Legislation requiring all horses, ponies and donkeys to have a passport was introduced for England in November 2003. This legislation underpins a control system to ensure those equines which have been treated with veterinary medicines not authorised for use in food-producing animals cannot be slaughtered for human consumption. If the UK had not introduced this wider passport legislation it ran a real risk of losing the use of 70% of medicines currently used in the treatment of horses. For this reason, the UK veterinary authorities stressed the importance of this measure for equine welfare in the UK.

In July 2000 the Animal Health (Disease Control) Division of MAFF (subsequently Defra) circulated a consultative paper seeking views on the implementation of Commission Decision 2000/68/EEC regarding the administration of certain veterinary medicines. The British Equestrian Federation (BEF) responded to this paper and subsequently produced two further relevant papers, the first, in December 2001, entitled Breeding and the Database Dilemma was precipitated by the sudden closure of the British Horse Database in November 2001 and the second, in December 2001, entitled Passports and the Breeding Organisations - a Passport Recognition Scheme.

The initial BEF proposal, entitled Supporting Defra’s Potential Passport Legislation and Possible Disease Surveillance Requirements which was a response to the Minister’s consultation document on the action to be taken in the light of the EU Commission Decision 2000/68/EEC, was set out in a letter to the Minister on 17th January 2002 and then repeated, in a verbal presentation on 25th January 2002. The proposal was that BEF, on behalf of the entire equine industry, would assist Defra in the introduction of any new legislation as its objectives and those of the Government were generally in accord. The matter was raised again on 20th February 2002 at a meeting of the Defra /Equine Industry Liaison Group.

BEF felt that there were significant incremental benefits associated with the proposed legislation for all horses to have passports to assist in protecting human health. These were to: -

- assist with disease surveillance in horses
- assist in improving the breeding of British horses, particularly sport horses and, in turn, to: -
  - enhance Great Britain’s potential to win Olympic medals
  - promote the British economy in producing high-class horses for export
  - reduce the indiscriminate breeding of poor horses
- promote equine welfare.

Thus a case for a database to underpin the passport requirements was made. In turn the core information could be used to support disease surveillance work. It was equally evident to BEF that there was no point in seeking a separate database facility to assist British breeders to improve the quality of British-bred horses and ponies. Indeed the BEF plans for breeding looked to be entirely complementary and, therefore, a concept was sought to avoid the duplication of effort.

Government and the equine industry agreed to form a partnership to develop a National Equine Database. This sensible move was announced in a news release dated 14th February 2002.

The BEF subsequently produced a Work Programme and established an Equine Passport, Disease Surveillance and Breeding Implementation Planning Team which met for the first time in February 2002 approved its terms of reference and those of the various sub-groups and subsequently engaged in an information and opinion gathering exercise. As part of this process a consultant was engaged to produce a draft tender document for the provision of hard and software, with two years of maintenance, for a ‘data warehouse’ combining a central disease surveillance register and a breeding resource. In addition a consultative document was produced and published on several equine websites. This paper included the case for, and gave the contents of, a simple ‘smart card’ aimed at horses not registered, not used for breeding and not intended for the human food chain. The proposed system would require such horses to be microchipped. Until 2000 only veterinary
surgeons could insert microchips with the attendant cost. The passing of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (Schedule 3 Amendment) Order 2000 allowed veterinary technicians, under specific circumstances, to insert microchips. This proposal for a smart card was not accepted; on the basis that the EU Decision of 26th June 1990 stated the specific manner in which equines shall be identified. The proposal being outwith those requirements, to have introduced a smart card and microchipping would have required Defra to lobby the EU Commission to introduce an amendment to their Directive 93/623/EEC. The document Passports, Central Disease Surveillance Register and National Equine Database’ and a copy of the Tender Document were sent to the Minister in June 2002.

Subsequently, the BEF, on behalf of the equine industry, has worked very closely with Defra officials; as a result the 2004 Passport legislation was introduced with minimum negative impact upon the equine industry. Thus the equine industry fulfilled, in this respect, its agreement with the Minister. At the same time, the Government/Equine Industry partnership pressed on with the second part of that agreement i.e. the establishment of a National Equine Database.

National Equine Database

Brief history
When Government was required by the EU to introduce a form of registration for equines it became apparent to the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) that a database would be needed to administer the scheme. At about the same time (2001) a disease surveillance and control scheme was also being discussed within the Animal Health Division of MAFF and the British Horse Database (BHD) was under threat and subsequently mothballed which meant that the BEF was seeking a mechanism to find a replacement. Both objectives required a set of basic, core, data in order to effectively identify an equine and its current location. Such data included the name of the equine, its unique identification number, sex, date of birth, colour and height, the name and address of the current owner and keeper. Arguably, to effectively identify an equine it is also necessary to know the identity of the Sire and Dam. Much of this data is, as required by The Horse Passport Regulations 2004, included in the passport (identification document), under which regulations this information has to be provided ‘in such form and at such intervals as she (the Secretary of State) may require’ (Article 5 – Records). The equine industry has, however, requirements over and above these, for example, breeders and purchasers of horses and ponies need information regarding the pedigree of the animal and its performance and that of its ancestors and progeny.

Consequently BEF proposed a partnership arrangement to Defra whereby, in return for Defra opening up the new database in such a manner that it would be of value to the equine industry, BEF would assist in developing and introducing a passport scheme for equines. This was welcomed by Defra who offered to fund the establishment of a National Equine Database (NED) and the running costs for the first two years.

Operation
Both Defra and the equine industry have provided manpower and expertise to develop NED with a company called Momenta being appointed to develop the systems. Both Defra and the equine industry require identical core data for their individual purposes. This includes equine name, identification number, sex, dates of birth and death, colour, breed, height, name of breeder etc. In addition, Defra requires details of the owner, and ideally keeper, to assist them in administration of the passport scheme and in disease surveillance and control. Access to this latter information is restricted to Defra. On the other hand, the equine industry requires information on sire and dam (to determine extended pedigrees) and Pedigree, Performance, Evaluation and Grading (PPEG) data.

The core data is mandated to be supplied by the Passport Issuing Organisations (PIOs) and is obtained from the information they receive from owners applying for a passport. The implications of the Data Protection Act (DPA) have been fully investigated and there are no problems in
releasing this data provided that PIOs (and other data providers) comply with the instruction issued by Defra with regard to the placing of public notices on their websites and publications. The PIOs have recognised the wider value to the industry of such data and have, by and large, readily made it available.

To have started to populate NED with data only commencing with the 2005 crop of foals (from the date of implementation of the Horse Passport (England) Regulations 2004) would have resulted in NED taking a very long time to contain sufficient volume of information to be of any value to either Defra or the industry. Consequently the PIOs were asked if they would supply to NED the legacy data they already held. The response to this was encouraging, with the majority of the 76 PIOs responding, resulting in over 600,000 records being supplied in the first year of development. For many organisations this required a considerable amount of research and often the introduction of new recording systems. Momenta helped considerably during this phase in providing assistance and advice to PIOs in transmitting data to NED, to the extent of accepting hard copies of data. From 1st August 2005, however, all data had to be submitted electronically. It is a requirement of the various Regulations that all equines in the UK shall be accompanied by a passport. It follows, therefore, that as from 2005 the core (mandatory) data of all foals born will, by statute, be submitted to NED. Progressively, as horses and ponies reach the end of their lifespan, the percentage of the total population of equines in the database will increase.

**Organisation**

NED will be managed by in independent organisation for, and on behalf of, the equine industry/Government partnership. Government is providing the bulk of the funding required to establish NED and the organisation to manage the processes involved; with the equine industry making a significant contribution through participation in the planning process, providing professional advice, contributing data and in public relations and publicity. When fully established the NED organisation will need to be self-financing to cover servicing and development costs. Revenue will be derived from the sale of data, with an on-going contribution from Defra to cover its interests in the maintenance of the core data system. There may also be other income streams to tap into once NED is established.

**Data**

Remains in the ownership of those who provided it. Once the running and development costs of NED are covered, any surplus revenue will be returned to the data providers in proportion to the amount of data sold. A System of points will be used which will be turned into cash at appropriate intervals when the value of a point will be determined, based upon the surplus available to distribute. In addition, all voluntary data providers will have free access to all data on the site for their own use, with a contractual restriction that they do not pass on, or sell, any data not originating from themselves.

**Mandatory data**

The mandatory data will help Defra, the Scottish Executive and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD), the Welsh Assembly Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside (WADEPC) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland (DARDNI) to administer the horse passport schemes. The address of the keeper(s) is essential in order to conduct an ideal, efficient disease surveillance and control scheme which would be of incalculable value in the event of an outbreak in the equine population of any of the 13 notifiable diseases and be helpful in monitoring the non-notifiable diseases which affect equines. However, apart from the Thoroughbred racing industry, such information is not collected; therefore, disease surveillance and control work will have to be undertaken through the person recorded as having been issued with the passport. This depends upon such people notifying the appropriate PIO whenever a change of owner or owner address occurs.
**Voluntary data**
The voluntary, PPEG, data is the part of NED which is of real value to the equine industry. The competition, evaluation and grading organisations have been most helpful and co-operative in providing, or promising to provide such data. Unfortunately, the provision of pedigree data is less forthcoming.

The competition results, at the ‘go-live date’ in 2006, will only consist of the most recent individual equine lifetime ratings from eventing, dressage, show jumping, endurance, reining and arab horse, flat and national hunt racing. Later phases, yet to be developed, will extend the data contained in NED to include the results of individual events and also include in-hand and ridden showing results.

**Delays**
The project has fallen behind schedule due to several factors, including; Governmental processes, the introduction of five pieces of passport legislation, slowness in industry responses and the complexity of producing a fully interactive database available 24/7. These include: -

- **The OGC Gateway™ Review process**
  A five-stage process through which all Government department acquisition and procurement projects have to pass
- **State Aid Regulations**
  A European Community process to ensure that a National Government is not aiding an industry in a manner which may give it an unfair advantage over similar industries in other Member States.
- **Legal requirements**
  Many of the developments have had to be cleared by the legal department in order to ensure that no infringements were being created e.g. Data Protection Act issues and determining the format of the organisation to run NED.
- **Unique equine life numbers (UELNs)**
  It had been anticipated that UELNs, as provided for in the 2000/68/EC Directive, would have been operative well in advance of the database being written. This has not proved to be the case and has added considerably to the work load in de-duplication of identical horses entered onto NED and which bear several different ID numbers issued by various organisations for their own purposes.
- **Interaction with the equine industry**
  There has been a determination in the NED team from day one to build a top class product that the equine industry would find valuable and, therefore, both use and assume ownership. Agreement was reached at an early stage that data, in particular details of breed and pedigree, should only be entered on NED if it was verified. This created problems which were overcome but created others in their wake. The variety of descriptions used to describe colour are endless. For disease surveillance and control purposes it is essential that NED contains the date of death in order that time is not wasted in chasing up dead animals which pose no health threat. Currently it is rare for PIOs to be notified of the death of an animal by its owners. These and similar issues have diverted team members away from development work. However, by far and away the greatest effort has been diverted into encouraging breed societies to submit details of sire and dam. Not only is this pedigree data of significance for its intrinsic value but without the details of sire and dam of each equine it is impossible to build a relational database. There is a critical mass of data required in order for NED to be financially viable. The NED Shadow Board is of the view that without this critical mass it is better not to launch the industry side of NED rather than launch and have NED fail.
Benefits of NED

When fully established NED will be available for the undertaking of two major functions.

One: It will provide sufficient basic details about UK equines to feed the Defra processes for administering the passport scheme and provide valuable information for the purposes of disease surveillance and control. In addition, NED will be used to provide data to underpin both the Horse Industry Strategy and Health and Welfare Strategy for the Horse, Pony and Donkey

Two: It will generally inform on the size and shape of the equine industry and contain information on the performance of equines and on their parentage which information will be of significant value to all breeders in the improvement of British-bred horses and ponies and also to those buying and selling horses and ponies. There will also be value to those researching the industry be it for scientific or charitable purposes. In particular:

General information source
For anyone with an interest in equines that they have seen or heard about and those writing articles, news stories and books.

Information source for breeding
Making decisions concerning which horses to breed together is complicated and requires skill and knowledge. Shrewd breeders have the ability to visually assess horses and ponies and make value decisions as to what the likely outcome will be. Behind this art, however, lies a bank of accumulated knowledge concerning the performance of the ancestors, siblings and progeny of the animals in question together with details of competition performance and similar matings. Such people are, however, few and far between. In addition with the increasing use of frozen semen and embryo transfer the stock of breeding animals available for use has increased dramatically and is truly global. The knowledge requiring to be stored is thus much greater. For the amateur/first time breeder without this knowledge the chances are that a wrong decision will be made. NED offers the appropriate decision-making tools for both the professional and amateur breeder.

Encourage better breeding
The easy availability of verified information should reduce the number of unsuitable animals currently being used for breeding.

Information source for horse/pony purchase
To a greater or less degree, dependent upon the purpose of purchase, the information referred to above is of value to those seeking to purchase a horse/pony. In addition to pedigree and any performance, evaluation or grading data of the animal itself and its ancestors, progeny, siblings and progeny there is a requirement to know the age, colour and height and to be certain that the information given is correct. NED has a twofold role here in that it can be used to check out details of a horse being viewed and also to check out advertised details before making a visit. In the course of time we should no longer find ‘not known’ entered against sire, dam and breeder.

Verified data
Data is only accepted into NED from recognised organisations that have vested interests in ensuring that the data they supply is accurate and up-to-date.

One-stop-shop with 24/7 web access
With few exceptions, the data contained within NED is already in existence. However, to access the data requires knowledge of its existence, were it is kept and how to gain access. In some cases access is limited to members of organisations. In addition, to fully accumulate all the data required, for example in order to determine suitable matings, it is necessary to visit many reference points often within normal working hours.
Marketing tool
NED provides the opportunity to assist in global publicity not only of native and indigenous horses and ponies, sport horses and recreational horses and ponies but also of breed societies, individual breeders, competition bodies, evaluation and grading organisations and the whole British breeding industry. When the limit of the information available on NED is reached, the programme offers a hyperlink direct to the appropriate organisation.

Research source
There is a frustration amongst researchers that data is hard to capture in that it is widely dispersed and often requires the sending out of questionnaires to individuals and that it is often unavailable e.g. the numbers, distribution and age profiles of horses and ponies in the UK. NED will provide a valuable research source for research workers, students, insurance companies, those selling to the industry, legislators, planning authorities etc.

Fraud reduction
Once fully populated NED should totally eliminate British-bred horses from being sold as being of a different age to the actual. Future developments could take this a step further and record insurance write-offs.

Improved welfare
NED will underpin the vision and goals of the Health and Welfare Strategy for the Horse, Pony and Donkey. It is generally accepted that it is the lower value horses which are generally neglected. By using the data in NED, the quality of horses and ponies being bred should improve i.e. why use a poor stallion when a good one is available? Why breed from a mare of poor quality when a good weaned foal/yearling can be purchased?

Tracing stolen and welfare-case horses and ponies
Encouragement of the greater use of microchipping in order that it becomes a relatively simple matter to trace abandoned and stolen horses and ponies back to their owners/keepers.

Disease surveillance and control
Having better information about the size and distribution of the equine population and easy access to the contact details of the owner, and hopefully in the future keeper, is important to conduct an efficient disease surveillance and control scheme.

Image
The equine industry is diverse in nature making inter-relationships difficult. In recent years the work of organisations such as BEF and the British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) has facilitated much closer working relationships. The development of NED has furthered these relationships and will continue to do so.
Everyone, including the rural economy, benefits if the whole industry thrives and conversely if parts start to falter the knock-on effect is felt throughout. NED has a major role to play in increasing the image and viability of the industry in general and breeding industry in particular. The greater the credibility of the breeding industry and attractiveness of British-bred horses, the more the demand will increase for such animals.
**Future possible developments**

Dependent upon the amount of self-generated funding, several possible developments have been ear-marked, including:

- **Equine Breeding Values (EBVs).** A system for combining potential heritable traits observed in the horse/pony and its siblings, ancestors and progeny into one figure this enabling horses/ponies to be compared and breeding selections made. Such systems are available, to a greater or less degree of sophistication, in those countries with which we compete for sport horse/pony sales and competition success and have been a key factor in the success of their breeding programmes. A three year research programme, funded by British Breeding is underway to develop a model for calculating EBVs. This will utilise data from NED and, in turn, the EBVs will be published on NED against all stallions and mares for which it is possible to make the calculation. Initially, this model will concentrate on developing EBVs for each of eventing, dressage and show jumping. Once developed, the model will then be easily convertible for use in endurance, reining, in hand and ridden showing. Other countries are ahead of the UK in this field but in all cases restrict their calculations to one or two disciplines. The UK EBVs will, therefore, be unique in the breadth of data used in their calculation. All of which will encourage breeders and those who buy and sell horse to purchase data from NED. Without the National Equine Database it will be impossible to put the results of this research into practise.

- Other possibilities exist for NED to be expanded, including indicating horse/ponies for sale, automatic population of competition entry forms, providing data for sales catalogues, recording insurance write-offs.

**Progress to-date**

A great deal of hard work and effort has gone into the project by a large number of people and organisations in particular from the Passport Issuing Organisations (PIOs). Many of the PIOs have searched archives for data and in some instances installed new electronic procedures, and/or employed additional staff; all at a time when they were under pressure to issue passports to those anxious to meet the deadlines.

*Momента* have only been operating for 15 months but have already processed over 600,000 records. This must not be interpreted as the number of equine in the UK. For example, Defra can only legally require data from PIOs based in England to submit data to NED. The Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly have only recently introduced the appropriate procedures to enable this information to be likewise required, though many of the PIOs in those countries have done so on a voluntary basis. Also, amongst the 600,000 will be duplicate and triplicate records and dead horses and it is not known if all equines have as yet been issued with passports.

Acquiring the mandatory data is, however, only half of the story. The verified pedigree, performance, evaluation and grading data (PPEG) is not mandated and NED relies on the goodwill of the Breed Societies, Stud Books and Competition and Evaluation Bodies for its provision. To-date, very little pedigree data has been received.

Funding has now been confirmed for the establishment phases of NED and three staff are in place. The NED Project Team are confident that, provided that NED is fully populated with the majority of the available data, there will be a high demand for the data and the scheme will be commercially viable. This will open up additional income streams for those who supply data to NED which will bring finance directly into the equine industry.
Research conducted by the Henley Centre confirms that there is every reason to be confident that in addition to the value of NED to the equine industry per se, great use will be made of it by researchers, teaching institutions, insurance companies, local authorities and other similar organisations. All of which will provide income streams to contribute to the financial well-being of the enterprise and result in a healthy income in year one that will subsequently increase.

**Criteria for success**
In essence the success or failure of that part of NED of value to the equine industry depends upon three criteria.

- The provision of competition data
- The provision of verified pedigree data and
- The volume of data sold. Failure in these areas means that, as far as the equine industry is concerned, there will not be a National Equine Database.

**Final comment**
After three and a half years of intensive effort the advent of a far-reaching management tool, the National Equine Database (NED), is just around the corner

The equine industry and Government have provided a golden opportunity to develop a National Equine Database of real value to both partners. It is now totally in the hands of the industry whether they make use of the opportunity or let it collapse.

The immediate need is for the submission of more Pedigree, Performance, Evaluation and Grading data in order to reach the critical mass required for launch.

**References**


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