

## UK-EQUINE-SURVEY-2020-ALL

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16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### **Attention: UK pony breeders / owners / overseers / managers**

Dear Herd owner / breeder / overseer / manager,

### **Ref: UK EQUINE WILDNESS SURVEY 2019-20**

In 2013, a 10-point equine Wildness Scale was designed (1 = extremely domesticated, 10 = extremely wild, 10\* = feral). This scale is based upon a 20-question QUESTIONNAIRE and a weighted points system. To test the scale's reliability, a survey of Fell Pony Society herds was conducted in 2013 and again in 2017. Results were presented at an International Geography conference (R.G.S.) in 2018.

The author is now conducting a NATIONAL SURVEY of UK Equine Wildness, and all UK Native Pony Societies / Associations have been contacted. Additionally, several conservation organisations are participating in the Survey. Survey QUESTIONNAIRES may be downloaded via the website [equine-wildness.uk](http://equine-wildness.uk) (or can be emailed upon request). Completed questionnaires may be returned using the email address [equine-wildness@hotmail.com](mailto:equine-wildness@hotmail.com).

The Wildness Scale will determine the present (between 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020) Wildness Level of any pony / herd. The extensively grazing Przewalski's horse (China, Russia) would likely score 10/10 (= Extremely Wild). The scale is based largely upon environmental factors, which may enhance the value of genetically important equines.

#### **The Wildness Scale will:**

- Provide an indicator, if used repeatedly, of increasing domesticity / wildness.
- Identify factors that may influence Wildness Level and 'Learned Grazing Characteristics Erosion'.
- Provide an additional, universally acceptable designation that enhances the biodiversity value and capital value of genetically important equine herds, especially those considered to be an integral part of their ecosystem(s).
- Assist an understanding of whether any herd is capable of withstanding future UK extreme climate events.
- Help to identify more precisely a relatively small sub-population of equines within the UK that, more or less, are grazing extensively, are hefted and are acclimatised.

The accuracy of Questionnaire answers is essential to ensure the Survey's success. It is hoped that every relevant owner / breeder / overseer will return the Questionnaire. If any person does not wish her / his name to be associated with later published findings, I shall try to ensure that confidentiality is protected. Your input will be extremely valuable.

Yours sincerely,

*D A Murray*

David Murray

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