

PSSM1

The Swedish NF Society carried out extensive testing during 2020 and unfortunately a UK-bred mare tested positive, but she was not from the currently recognised lines known to be affected with PSSM1. NFPBCS carried out tests on some deceased stallions to help narrow down the source – Buckland Dragonslayer, Pilley Prince William, Portmore Prince and Farriers Rambler all tested clear/negative. We thank our colleagues in Belgium who kindly tested an old sample of Monkshorn Trooper – again he was negative.

Following this additional testing we have identified the ‘source’ as the mare **SKYLARK OF SOWLEY** (b. 1981) – we cannot go back any further than this, but for the record, her sire was Gilpins Apollo, and dam-sire was Mockbeggar Cream Cracker. Her two daughters Sowley Ivory (1990) and Sowley Dunlin (1992) were both definitely affected. Testing continues on the Bella VI daughter line, but so far they are all clear. We do not yet know the status of the two daughters Sowley Linnet (1988) and Buckland Walnut (1996).

If you have any descendants of these ponies, then please contact us and we can advise you on how to get your pony tested.

Naturally, it is very disappointing that another ‘pocket’ of PSSM1 has been found, but it is not really surprising, and we always knew that more would be found. We are very grateful to all those owners who have had their ponies tested and made their results available to us, so that we can build a bigger picture. And this new find serves as a timely reminder to all breeders on how important it is to test all breeding stock. We have heard some very upsetting stories about affected ponies, and while we cannot do anything about older ponies bred before we became aware of PSSM1 in our breed, we can stop future owners from suffering the same heartbreak, and we can stop future ponies from suffering pain.

We know that many mares, fillies and filly foals have been bought recently for breeding purposes and the responsible way forward is for these mares and fillies to be tested, so that you know they are definitely clear of PSSM1 before putting them into your breeding programme. Foals that are ‘clear by parentage’ are given a sticker in Section IX of their passport.

For current breeding herds, we are always willing to advise on the best way to test your herd. Generally, it is best to test the older active breeding mares, then their daughters (provided they are by tested stallions) are clear by parentage, and do not need testing themselves. Testing is therefore a one-time exercise and many breeders will not have to test all their mares.

Council has recently drawn up a PSSM1 Breeding Policy, which has immediate effect, and is posted on the website.

The list of PSSM1 clear stallions is now also available on the website.