



The Irish Cob Society

THE IRISH COB STUDBOOK BREEDING PROGRAMME

1. Name of the breed and the establishment of the Irish Cob Studbook

When in 1998 the Irish Cob Society established the first breed studbook for the feathered cob created in Ireland by Irish Travellers, the Irish Cob Society named the studbook the Irish Cob Studbook. In 1998, the Irish Cob Society was officially approved by the Irish authorities in accordance with Article 2(1) of Decision 92/353/EEC to maintain its Irish Cob Studbook as an EU-recognised studbook in respect of which the Irish Cob Society was therefore authorised to issue the identification document (passport) established in Decision 93/623/EEC and subsequently as amended in Decision 2000/68/EC, and subsequently to issue identification documents (passports) and the '*organisation or association officially approved by the Member State*' referred to in Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) 504/2008.

Because the Irish Cob Studbook established by the Irish Cob Society was the first studbook in the EU for the breed, the Irish authorities also notified the European Commission in 1998 that the Irish Cob Society was regarded as the body (organisation or association) which maintained the Irish Cob Studbook as the studbook of the origin of the breed (aka the 'mother' Irish Cob Studbook)—as referred in 2(2)2nd indent of Decision 92/353/EEC.

2. Characteristics of the breed / The Irish Cob Breed Standard

GENERAL APPEARANCE – The Irish Cob is compact and powerful, ample both in muscle and bone, yet, with an ability to perform as a good all-purpose animal. Some Irish Cobs tend to be more “stocky” than others. The Irish Cob is well balanced and proportioned, standing straight and square and offering an imposing appearance.

TOPLINE – The head, which should be held proudly should be carried on a powerful and arched, well “set on” neck. The neck should appear to “carry on” through good withers and to finish at the start of the back (this feature should be particularly evident in stallions). The back, which should be short and straight, should slope gently upwards to a well-muscled croup (the back bone/spine or the hip bones should not be apparent). The croup, which is quite high and generous, should have both croup muscles well defined, the top of the quarters being exceptionally well muscled, broad and ample. The angle of the spine from the croup to the tail should slope gently downwards and should not be exaggerated, this allows for a high, well “set on” tail and contributes to good well-rounded quarters.

BONE – Irish Cobs are from medium weight to heavy weight (some allowance in bone measurement can be made for mares and geldings only).

IN MOTION – Irish Cobs with their unique action, luxuriant hair and feathering and the large range of colours available, combine to present a beautiful and varied sight to see when turned out at their best, particularly when in motion.

TEMPERAMENT – The Irish Cob should possess a docile and willing nature, with a friendly disposition towards humans and other animal species. Displays of aggressive and threatening behaviour such as ears back, kicking, biting, rearing and not being under control of the handler, will result in expulsion from Approval Inspection and the Show Ring.

HEIGHT – Under 170cms

HEAD – Should be straight, handsome and in proportion to the rest of the horse. The forehead should be broad, and the muzzle, jaw and cheek should be generous.

MOUTH – Should have a level bite.

EYES – Should be quite bold, open and set well apart.

EARS – Should be neat and well set on.

NECK – Should be compact, but not too short and should be generously muscled including the crest (stallion's necks should be particularly well muscled and crested).

SHOULDERS – Should be ample, powerful and sloping.

WITHERS – Should be of average protrusion or height and should be encased in plenty of muscle and flesh.

CHEST – Should be powerful, well-muscled and not too broad or narrow.

BACK – Should be short, straight, well covered in muscle and flesh and slope gently upwards towards the croup.

HINDQUARTERS AND HIND LEGS – The hindquarters should be very generous, well rounded, broad and powerful with a well-muscled high croup. The second thigh should also be very generous, quite long and well coupled to good straight powerful hocks. The hind legs should be well boned and muscled.

BODY – Should be short and compact with ribs well sprung to barrel shape.

FORELEGS – Should be powerful and not too short. There should be a good length of well-muscled forearm and generously boned shins.

KNEES AND HOCKS – Should be well developed and of generous dimensions but should be in balance with the proportions of the horse.

FETLOCK JOINTS – Should match the other joints in power, size and build.

PASTERNS – Should also be of sufficient bone and not too long (straight or over angled pasterns are a fault).

HOOVES – Should be well shaped, neat and of a size capable of carrying the frame of the horse without stress.

LEG HAIR/FEATHERING – Leg hair/feathering is a characteristic and decorative feature of the Irish Cob breed. This is especially prominent in the heavier Irish Cobs. However, the amount of leg hair/feathering present may vary considerably, particularly in the case of medium weight Irish Cobs. Leg hair/feathering should, at the very least, fall from the back of the knees and hocks, down to a thick covering of hair/feathers on the heels. Leg hair/feathering should also fall over the front of the hoof, from at least the coronet.

MANE AND TAIL – The mane and tail should be luxuriant and capable of growing to a substantial length.

MOVEMENT – Movement should appear sound and free from obvious hereditary defects.

COLOUR – The following colours are considered most typical.

- All solid colours including black, bay, brown, chestnut, palomino, grey and roan.
- All solid colours including black, bay, brown, chestnut, palomino, grey and roan, which contain white body markings.

White body markings are measured in percentages and exclude the head, legs and underbelly. Irish Cobs which have white body markings are described as COLOURED.

Irish Cobs which have white markings on the underbelly are described as SPLASHED or BLAGDON.

3. Breeding objectives of the breeding programme

The breeding objectives of the Irish Cob Studbook Breeding Programme are:

- (a) To preserve the Irish Cob breed in its traditional form and type, as a compact, powerful, yet agile working horse (a cold blood).
- (b) To protect the Irish Cob breed by the following means of selection and grading:
 - By selecting animals that do not have both parents registered in the studbook, for registration in the supplementary section of the studbook so that their progeny can be upgraded to the main section of the studbook.
 - By grading animals registered in the studbook as Main Section Class 2, Main Section Class 3 or Supplementary Section Class 4, with a view to upgrading their registration status in the studbook to Main Elite Class 1 or Supplementary Elite Class 1.

CLASSIFICATION – The Irish Cob is classified as a working draught horse, so as to ensure that the breed is never allowed to become light of bone, which would also have the effect of losing one of the breed's renowned characteristics, the leg feathering.

4. Division and conditions for entering the studbook

Main Section Class 2

Where an animal has both parents registered in the main section of the studbook, the animal will be registered in the main section as Main Section Class 2.

UPGRADING OF PROGENY OF ANIMALS REGISTERED IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION TO REGISTRATION IN THE MAIN SECTION

Main Section Class 3

Where an animal has one parent registered in the main section of the studbook and the other parent registered in the supplementary section of the studbook or, if the animal has both parents registered in the supplementary section of the studbook, then the animal will be registered in the main section of the studbook as Main Section Class 2.

Supplementary Section Class 4

Where an animal has one parent registered in the main section of the studbook, and the other parent is not registered in the studbook, then the animal will be registered in the supplementary section of the studbook as Supplementary Section Class 4 – provided that the animal has been approved by at least one qualified Irish Cob inspector/judge having scored a minimum of 8 points for 'Breed Type' on the Irish Cob Society (ICS) Supplementary Section Registration Inspection Sheet.

Where an animal has one parent registered in the main section of the studbook, and the other parent is registered in the supplementary section of the studbook, then animal will be registered in the supplementary section of the studbook as Supplementary Section Class 4 – provided that the animal has been approved by at least one qualified Irish Cob Studbook inspector/judge having scored a minimum of 8 points for 'Breed Type' on the Irish Cob Society (ICS) Supplementary Section Registration Inspection Sheet.

UPGRADING THE REGISTRATION STATUS OF ANIMALS REGISTERED IN MAIN OR SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION TO ELITE CLASS 1 REGISTRATION

Main Elite Class 1

Where an animal is registered in the main section of the studbook as Main Section Class 3 or Main Section Class 4, then the animal is eligible for grading with a view to upgrading its registration status in the main section of the studbook to Main Elite Class 1.

Supp Elite Class 1

Where an animal is registered in the supplementary section of the studbook as Supplementary Section Class 4, then the animal is eligible for grading with a view to upgrading its registration status in the supplementary section of the studbook to Supp Elite Class 1.

5. Grading rules

Stallions: All stallions graded by the Irish Cob Society must be registered in the main or supplementary section, must have reached three years of age, must be graded by at least two qualified Irish Cob inspectors/judges at a grading inspection using the Irish Cob Society (ICS) Stallion Grading Sheet, must pass an examination carried out by a qualified veterinary surgeon, and be PSSM/1 and FIS negative.

Mares & Geldings: All mares and geldings graded by ICSI must be registered in the main or supplementary section, must have reached three years of age, and must be graded by at least two qualified Irish Cob inspectors at a grading inspection using the Irish Cob Society (ICS) Mare Grading Sheet or the Irish Cob Society (ICS) Gelding Grading Sheet.

MAIN SECTION CROSS BREEDING PROGRAMME

The Irish Cob Part Bred, Irish Piebald and Skewbald, Skewbald and Piebald, Traditional Gypsy Cob, Gypsy Cob, Coloured Horse, Tinker (or Irish Tinker) and Gypsy Vanner Horse breeds can take part in the main section cross breeding programme provided that they have full recorded pedigree of those breeds and have been judged to conform to the Irish Cob Breed Standard.

5. Geographical territory for the breeding programme

The geographical territory for the Breeding Programme covers Ireland and Northern Ireland and any other geographical territory where there is a demand for registering Irish Cobs in the studbook of origin of the breed in Ireland.

6. System for identifying animals

MAIN SECTION

A breeding animal that is qualified for registration in the main section of the studbook must be identified within 12 months of its date of birth and have a transponder implanted by a qualified veterinarian, and the covering certificate and DNA parentage verification (by hair sample) provided. If the breeding animal is not identified within 12 months of its date of birth, it must be issued a replacement passport in which it will be classified as not intended for slaughter for human consumption. The Irish Cob Society Zootechnical Certificate is also included in the studbook passports.

SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION

A breeding animal that has qualified for registration in the supplementary section of the studbook must be identified within 12 months of its date of birth and have a transponder implanted by a qualified veterinarian, and DNA parentage verification (by hair sample) provided if one parent is registered in the studbook. If the breeding animal is not identified within 12 months of its date of birth, it must be issued a replacement passport in which it will be classified as not intended for slaughter for human consumption. Zootechnical Certificates are included in the studbook passports.

7. System for recording pedigree

Where an animal that is being registered in the studbook has had its pedigree verified in accordance with 6 above, the animal shall have its verified pedigree recorded on the database and in its passport. Any verified recorded ascendants will also be shown in its passport.

8. Population of animals in the breeding programme

All entire males and all females registered in the studbook are breeding animals and are therefore included in the breeding programme.

9. Number of breeders in the breeding programme

All breeders who register breeding animals and/or their progeny in the studbook are included in the breeding programme.

10. Rights and obligations of breeders and the breed society

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF BREEDERS

(a) Breeders' rights shall be respected; breeders shall not be discriminated against, and the right of breeders to ownership of their animals shall be recognised. All breeders who register animals in the breeding book (main section or supplementary sections) are involved in the breeding programme but have free choice in the selection and breeding of their breeding animals and the right to enter them in the breeding book.

(b) Breeders are obliged to identify their animals in accordance with S.I No. 254/2023.

Non-discriminatory treatment of breeders

The Irish Cob Society shall ensure that all breeders are treated equally, and that in the event of a breeder (or other ICSI customer) raising a dispute regarding a decision made by the Irish Cob Society, the aggrieved breeder (or breeders) can invoke the appeals procedure referred to in the Irish Cob Society dispute resolution procedure.

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE BREED SOCIETY

(a) The breed society shall have the right to define and carry out the breeding programme autonomously in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/1012.

(b) By way of derogation to 1(a) above, the breed society shall have the right to exclude breeders from participating in the breeding programme where those breeders fail to comply with the rules of that breeding programme or with the obligations set out in the rules of procedure referred to in point B(1)(b) of Part 1 of Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2016/1012.

(c) The breed society shall have the right to exclude breeders from membership where those breeders fail to comply with their obligations set out in the rules of procedure referred to in point B(1)(b) of Part 1 of Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2016/1012.

(d) The breed society shall, without prejudice to the role of the courts, have a responsibility to settle disputes that may arise between breeders, and between breeders and the breed society or breeding operation, in the process of carrying out breeding programmes approved in accordance with Article 8(3) of Regulation (EU) 2016/1012 (and where applicable Article 12) in accordance with the rules of procedure referred to in point B(1)(b) of Part 1 of Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2016/1012.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

Where a dispute arises regarding a decision made by ICSI in relation to an animal registered in the Irish Cob Studbook, or in relation to an animal in respect of which registration in the Irish Cob Studbook or in the Part Bred Irish Cob Studbook is sought, the owner or keeper of the animal shall have the right to have a considered written representation on the issue.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

STAGE I – An owner or keeper who feels aggrieved in relation to any matter pertaining to the Irish COB Society, in the first instance, write to the Irish Cob Society CEO making it clear that Stage I of the Appeals Procedure is being invoked. The Irish Cob Society CEO will issue a reply to the owner or keeper as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any case, within 30 days from receipt of the letter from the owner or keeper.

STAGE II – If the grievance is not resolved at Stage I, or if a reply is not forthcoming from the Irish Cob Society CEO within 30 days, the owner or keeper may request in writing that they attend a meeting with the Irish Cob Society. The Irish Cob Society will allow the owner or keeper to attend the meeting during the period that the grievance is being considered. At the discretion of the Irish Cob Society, the owner or keeper may be allowed to make an oral submission at the meeting on the grievance. If the oral submission is allowed at the meeting, the Irish Cob Society will then reconsider the dispute issue and shall communicate its decision to the owner or keeper within 30 days.

STAGE III – If the dispute remains unresolved after Stage II, the owner or keeper may request an independent hearing, usually by an official of the competent authority. The Irish Cob Society shall grant such a hearing. Appeals at Stage III will be heard by an individual or group of individuals with appropriate expertise, agreed by both parties to the dispute. From the date of appointment of the person(s) hearing the appeal, the case will be heard, and the decision taken will be communicated to both parties within 3 months. The person(s) hearing the case will decide on the apportionment of costs, as appropriate.

STAGE IV – Any dispute that remains unresolved after Stage III may be pursued by the owner or keeper or by the breed society according to the 1963 Companies Act.