

Exmoor Pony Society
Information for first time breeders
FREE-LIVING

This short guide explains the inspection procedure and how inspectors are selected. All pure bred Exmoor foals must be inspected by two EPS foal inspectors before they are eligible for entry into the Stud Book.

Inspectors

EPS inspectors must first pass a stringent assessment as to their suitability before being invited on to the Society's three-year probationers' scheme. During that time they must attend three inspections each year, one of which must be a Moorland inspection. At each one, they are assessed by a senior 'panel inspector' and a written report is made each time. This ensures that only the most knowledgeable and competent people qualify as foal inspectors.

Inspections have traditionally been a sociable time, when new acquaintances and friendships are forged and new breeders are welcomed. Most inspectors expect to put on weight in the Autumn, thanks to the generous hospitality which has so long been a feature of EPS foal inspections!

The following advice will help to ensure that your inspection runs smoothly

- Inform the EPS Secretary that you have a breeding herd and when the first foal is on the ground advise the Secretary. This makes planning inspections easier for the Society. The Society will allocate you a herd number. You can also register a prefix and the paperwork is available from the Secretary. Before your inspection the Secretary will ask you approximately how many foals have been born in order to ensure there adequate time is set aside for your inspection.
- Your foal(s) must be micro-chipped. The Society has a number of members who are trained veterinary surgeons who are able to assist at inspections so that the foals can be micro-chipped, silhouetted and, if done in accordance with DEFRA Code of Practice for the Identification of Semi-Feral ponies as it applies to Registered Exmoor Ponies, branded.
- Foals may be branded with a maximum of four symbols to identify herd and number in herd on the near hind pin with a single iron. All new free-living herds must apply for a symbol to represent their herd number. Examples of symbols include letters of the alphabet and an anchor, horseshoe or other such open symbol. Such branding iron are made up by the Society's blacksmith to a uniform size and type.
- Make sure you have a secure area where the foal can be inspected. The Society has a mobile unit which can be used by free-living herd owners to gather and inspect their foals. The Secretary will provide you with more details.
- The inspectors will look at the foal to ensure that it has markings according to the breed standard and no serious conformation defects. They will check its jaw conformation closely and examine its mane and tail for groups of white hairs. Most foals have pale "foal" hairs around the outside of the tail. These are not a problem. They will also make sure it has no white markings on its head, body or legs and will look to see that the walls of the feet are uniformly dark and there are no white marks.
- If the foal passes inspection, it will be entered into the main body of the Studbook and issued with a passport. If it does not pass its inspection it will be entered into Section X of the Studbook and it is recommended that the pony is not used for breeding purposes. Any foal not meeting the breed standard is eligible for re-inspection.