

**P-04-629 Review and Enforcement of Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014 –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking team, 20.05.2015**

Dear Ms England,

Thank you for the opportunity to add comments to the petition.

I would like to suggest that, although it would appear that the structure is in place to improve the welfare and problems around fly-grazing, very often the procedures are not being put in place.

The Act for the control of horses is an excellent tool for equines that have been abandoned in fields etc and can be easily caught and identified however, this does not alleviate the problems on the commons where most of them are semi-feral and not easily identifiable. And while the Welfare Act places a duty of care upon owners, again that is difficult to enforce if owners cannot be traced.

It is simply unacceptable that ponies are being allowed to starve to death on the Welsh commons. The numbers of ponies on commons such as Cefn Golau and Gelligaer have become more than those areas can sustain without intervention from local charities.

Although I note that the option to freeze brand is down to the Commoners, I fail to see why this cannot be made a condition of them having grazing rights. Surely this would also benefit responsible owners and make their animals identifiable and therefore exempt from any subsequent gatherings/disposal. Those owners who do not care for their animals would be subject to the Welfare Act, and rightly so. Other areas, such as the New Forest, use a marking system to identify their ponies and, together with regular round-ups of fly-grazed and abandoned ponies, they seem to be successful at controlling the numbers and maintaining the breed. Surely our Welsh Ponies deserve no less.

The overriding problem, however, is the indiscriminate breeding due to colts and stallions being either abandoned or left out on the common all year round and this needs to be addressed. There has recently been a contraceptive darting program carried out by the SWHP charity targeting feral stallions and colts. Another charity, The Welsh Pony Rescue and Re-homing Project has been fundraising to geld the colts and stallions they have rescued from the common to increase their chances of being re-homed and, to date, they have had a very good success rate. Both of these

charities are doing their best to address the problem, however, with additional funding they could do so much more and reduce the numbers without the need for a mass cull which would not be a popular move with the vast majority of the general public. If the numbers of ponies could be stabilised over the next 2 – 3 years abandoned ponies (easily identified if freezebranding/marking was introduced) could be gathered on a regular basis and then I believe the Control of Horses Act and The Welfare Act could be used to great effect and to the benefit of the true Welsh Ponies.

If these measures can be used in other areas in the UK why do we have to be different? The only ones suffering because of this resistance to change are the ponies and surely we all have a duty of care to those who cannot speak for themselves.

Many thanks for this opportunity,

Lynne Tamblyn