

Reproduction results of draught horses included in genetic resources conservation programmes for horses in the years 2008-2014

Summary

In the years 2008-2014 the number of Sztumski and Sokolsky mares included in conservation programmes increased more than threefold, from 567 to 1,934, which means that these are the fastest growing horse populations in Poland. Owing to this significant population growth it is possible to conduct stricter selection and to choose the most typical individuals, which in turn enables more rapid standardization of type and achievement of the goals set by the conservation programme. At the same time, due to strict selection and elimination of sires that fail to meet the criteria of the programme, there has been a twofold decrease in the number of stallions qualified for mating. In the years 2008-2014 a total of 958 stallions were mated, but as many as 62% produced fewer than 5 foals, which means that they were not fully exploited. The results of the analysis indicate that stallions with average conformation sired the highest number of offspring. In draught horse populations, where numerous conformation defects are observed, particularly affecting the limbs, this may mean that these defects will appear persistently. During the seven years analysed (2008-2014) the number of foals born increased in proportion to the increase in the number of mares. Statistically, each mare gave birth to three foals while participating in the programme – in total 6,611 foals, of which 781 (698 mares and 83 stallions), born in 2008-2012, have already met the criteria to qualify for the programme.

KEY WORDS: Sokolsky horses, Sztumski horses, conservation of genetic resources