

## Drum Beat

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### Isobel Answers

Why we breed the Breeds that we do. Confused? You won't be with Izzy's history lesson!



I was asked a question only the other day, and it shows me that there is still some confusion surrounding the IDHA's percentage breeding guidelines and the reduction of Gypsy percentage with each successive Drum generation. This is the question I was asked, and the subsequent answer I gave.

Why is the IDHA closing the Foundation Register to Gypsy Cobs?

The IDHA is not closing the Foundation book to Gypsy Cobs, in fact far from it, we need as many F1 Drums as possible to help ensure that we have a large gene pool from which we can build our future breed "The Drum Horse"

Perhaps we should look at another question that is often asked.

A DOG IS MANS  
BEST FRIEND,  
BUT A HORSE  
WROTE HIS  
HISTORY

Why was the Gypsy Cob chosen to be one of the Foundation breeds?

In order to answer this we have to look back to the history of the Shire breed. Some of you may already know the answer to this question, but for those of you that do not, I will give a brief history of the link between the Gypsy Cob and the Shire horse.

As a Shire & Drum horse breeder, I am well aware of the link between the Coloured Shire of old and today's Gypsy Cob. Many years ago, the Shire Horse Society and its members made the decision to concentrate their breeding on solid coloured horses with minimal sabino markings. Black, Bay, Brown, and Grey were the only permitted colours, with the exception of Roan being allowed in mares, but never in Stallions. All Coloured Shires would no longer be eligible for registration, and those that were already registered were removed from the Stud books. No longer acceptable for registration, and now unable to be used for Shire breeding, many of these coloured Shires found themselves being sold off at local horse sales for a fraction of their true value.

Ever on the lookout for a good deal, and with an eye for a good horse, many of these coloured Shires found themselves being bought by local Travelling families; who wanted to use them in their own breeding programs, to add height, colour and abundant feather to their much smaller ponies, together with helping to create a sturdy type of horse that could pull their wagons.

The Gypsy Horses that were bred from the introduction of Shire blood were a great deal taller than today's Gypsy Cobs, and the travelers soon found themselves having to foot much larger feed bills and pay out more for the upkeep of these large horses. The travelers began to breed down in size to create a smaller and more cost effective horse, but one that was still able to pull their wagons, and that is where today's Gypsy Cobs have come from.

It is this shared history with the Shire, and the need to maintain the feather we desire in our Drum horses, that saw the Gypsy Cob being chosen as one of our three foundation breeds. Careful selection of a homozygous Tobiano Gypsy Cob is needed if Drum breeders wish to breed Tobiano Drums. Although all colours are acceptable, it is the Tobiano Drums that are seen as the most highly prized and sought after in the Drum Horse.