RESOLUTION

Government of Manipur
Secretariat: Vety. & Animal Husbandry Department

Imphal, the 8th November, 2016

No. 1/16/2016 - Vety(Pt.):

Whereas the State Government is keen to lay down a Policy for the Conservation and Development of Manipuri Pony, one of the five recognised equine breeds of India and in pursuance of a decision of the State Cabinet taken in its meeting held on 17th October, 2016, the Governor of Manipur is pleased to resolve to publish the draft “Manipur Pony Conservation and Development Policy, 2016” for inviting comments from all stakeholders and the general public. The comments shall reach the undersigned by 4:30 p.m. of 22nd November, 2016 either by letter or email to spuii_123@rediffmail.com.

“Manipur Pony Conservation and Development Policy”

The Manipuri Pony is one of the five recognised equine breeds of India which is very important and critical for the State as well as the country as a whole. The Manipuri Pony has been of high importance to Manipuri society for centuries and has been an integral part of the socio-cultural life of the people of Manipur. The Manipuri Pony has been used as a draught animal, as a mount for the Manipur Horse, and in traditional cultural events such as “Lai Haraoba”. The Manipuri Pony is highly regarded for its unique stamina, agility, intelligence, speed, manoeuvrability and great adaptability to harsh geo-climatic conditions. It is rightly regarded as the original polo pony as the modern polo is derived from the traditional Sagol Kangjei of Manipur.

Manipur ponies figure prominently in the Manipuri way of life. They have been used as a draught animal, as a mount for the Manipur Horse, and in traditional cultural events such as “Lai Haraoba”. The Manipur Pony was used in traditional events of Manipur such as “Lai Haraoba” and in the sport of polo. Its antecedents are not clear, as one source stated Tibetan ponies as its ancestors while another source stated its origin to be a cross between Manipuri stallions and Arabian mares. However, all agreed that it was derived from ancient stock. In some manuscripts, it is referred to as Mangal-sa or Mongolian animal. In Manipuri mythology, the Manipuri pony was regarded to have descended from “Samadon Ayangba” the winged steed of Lord Margjing, one of the guardian deities of Manipur.

The population of this highly valued breed is dwindling rapidly in recent times, from 1898 nos. of Ponies in 17th Quinquinial Livestock Census 2003 to only 1101 nos. in 19th Quinquinial Livestock Census 2012. The population of Ponies is currently not being monitored properly in several districts. From 1898 nos. of Ponies in 17th Quinquinial Livestock Census 2003 to only 1101 nos. in 19th Quinquinial Livestock Census 2012.

Food and Agriculture Organisation publication on World Watch List on Domestic Animal Diversity has listed the breed as “Endangered Animal”. Shrinkage of wetlands which is the natural habitat of Manipuri Ponies due to rapid urbanisation and encroachment, lack of polo ground/polo playing areas in the Rural, restriction of use of ponies except in the game of polo, uncontrolled diseases and the exodus of ponies to the neighbouring states and countries are some of the attributing factors for the decline of the population of the Pony in the State.
Now, the situation calls for immediate implementation of the conservation programmes through formulation of a holistic policy on conservation and development of the Manipur Pony. The State Govt. has also declared Manipuri Pony as an Endangered Breed in 2013. Therefore, the conservation of Manipuri Pony will require not only the policy and programmes of the Government but also the collective efforts of all stakeholders like NGOs, Pony lovers, owners and subjects of State of Manipur towards the goal of conservation of this precious breed of pony in the State. In view of the above, a draft policy on Manipuri Pony Conservation and development is hereby drafted.

1. **Title**: The Title of the Policy will be as "Policy on Conservation of Manipuri Pony"

2. **Implementing Agency**: The State Veterinary & A.H. Department shall be the Nodal Department for implementation of the Policy.

3. **Fund**: The State Government shall provide a continuous and a sufficient fund for implementation of the Policy preferably with the opening of a separate Head of Accounts for the purpose.

4. **Constitution of Manipuri Pony Development Board**: Constitution of Manipuri Pony Development Board with resource persons from Government, university and non-government organizations including experts from out of state is immediately required. The board will coordinate with all the stakeholders of the state for effective coordination to the policy and to achieve its objectives. Action plan is as below:

   The state government shall constitute "the Manipuri Pony Development Board" with the following members:

   1. Hon’ble Chief Minister, Manipur - Chairperson
   2. Hon’ble Minister (Vety. & A.H.), Manipur - Vice Chairperson
   3. The Principal Secretary/Commissioner/Secretary (Vety. & A.H.) - Member
   4. The Principal Chief Conservator (Forest & Environment) - Member
   5. The Commissioner (Revenue) - Member
   6. The Director General of Police - Member
   7. The Director (Veterinary & A.H.) - Member
   8. The Director (Tourism) - Member
   9. The Director (Youth Affairs & Sports) - Member
   10. The President, Manipuri Horse Riding & Polo Association - Member
   11. The President, All Manipur Polo Association - Member
   12. The President, Manipuri Pony Association - Member
Breeding strategies of the Breed.

True to breed multiplication of the Manipuri Pony is important at this juncture. This could be achieved through the establishment and strengthening of the Manipuri Pony Farms where all breeding data are recorded. It will provide a holistic approach that recognises, respects and strengthens the indigenous traditional knowledge of keeping the animal.

It is pertinent to mention that the main utility of this animal at present is for the game of Polo and most of the pony owners practiced castration/gelding of their ponies at early age, so that their ponies are easily controlled during the game. In the process, great quality ponies possessing unique genes responsible for good performance in polo, has been withdrawn or removed from the population. The practice of using geldings in polo should be reconsidered and the use of mares as practised in the current polo playing countries may also be introduced and encouraged in the state.

Selection of Stallion and mare having all the true characteristics of Manipur Pony for breeding purposes:

i) Selection of Stallions and Mares having all the true characteristics of Manipur Pony for breeding purposes.

ii) Development of a breeding tract in every District of the state by establishment of a common preserve for natural breeding with participation of local community.

iii) Scientific breeding programmes shall be carried out through establishment of Farms of true to breed Manipuri Pony by the state Government where scientific records are kept.

iv) Relevant laws shall be framed to prevent early castration of Stallions.

v) Regulation of export of Manipuri Ponies from the State to other States and countries through appropriate laws which may continue till the population is stabilised in the state with complete banned of export of Manipuri Ponies.

vi) Cross breeding of Manipuri Ponies with the breed of horses imported from outside the state shall be strictly banned.

vii) Cryo-preservation of semen of good pedigree Stallions shall be undertaken under available facilities in the state for ex situ conservation.
Feeding Plan of Manipuri Pony.

Lack of grazing land and the natural habitat in the valley Districts are one of the key factors for the decline of pony population in the state. Shrinking grazing areas deprived the ponies nutritionally in terms of quality and quantity. Therefore, fulfilment of nutritional requirement of the animals is the need of hour. While planning feeding plan, the following action plan may be taken up.

i) The existing laws (Cattle Trespass Act, 1871) shall be strictly enforced to keep the ponies off the roads and the Board shall oversee its enforcement.

ii) The available wastelands near the foothills or any other area formally adjacent to the breeding tract in each district may be declared as reserved/preserved for the purpose of shelter, fodder production and grazing area for the ponies taking into account the availability of water sources in the area.

iii) The maintenance of the area may be entrusted to the local communities/ bodies, pony owners / lovers, clubs etc. under the supervision of the Board. The area may also be developed to attract the tourists.

iv) Pasture development programmes in places wherever feasible such as common grazing grounds must be initiated.

v) A feeding schedule and requirement of feed and fodder for different categories of ponies need to be formulated.

vi) The reserved/preserved may also be developed to cater to tourism and recreational spots.

7. Prevention and Control of Pony Diseases –

Health and Prevention/Control of Diseases will be monitored by the implementing agency.


Lack of polo playing grounds in the village level, loss of interest of playing polo as village game and lack of race courses in the state are also the contributing factors for the sharp decline of pony population in the state. In the past, polo games and horse races were regularly organised at Hapta Kangjeibung and other local polo grounds under the Royal patronage as a result many pony owners were enthusiastic of breeding good ponies for participation in the polo game and races. Nowadays only few grounds are available for playing Polo in the State. Therefore, there is urgent need for preservation of polo playing grounds and race courses in the state so that the enthusiasm of polo playing and learning on horse back again and the below mentioned action plan may be taken up.
Initiative must be taken up for preservation of at least one polo ground in each district which may be developed with adequate infrastructures. Mapal Kangjeibung /Imphal Polo ground may be preserved for yearly events of polo at the state level as well as International level. The management of polo ground in the village level should be entrusted to local communities and polo clubs.

The state may initiate to develop a race course in Imphal City only for the purpose of popularisation of Manipuri Pony, with careful monitoring by the Board so that it may not used in the wrong way. Such areas may also be used for pony related events like polo, equestrian games etc.


In erstwhile Manipur kingdom the animals were utilized for defending the boundary of the state and for welfare of the common people, transportation and foes. But due to the changing political scenarios and increasing mechanisation, the animal was withdrawn from warfare and transportation activities. The Pony is a sacred animals used in rituals and traditional and Cultural activities of Lai Haraoba.

At present, keepers are losing money by feeding of pony and other ritual activities. Keepers are not earning any income from rearing of pony which is one of the most important factors for decline of pony population. It is now desirable that keepers are utilized for economic activities, which will ultimately help in the conservation of the breed. Points to be considered are as follows.

Pony based employment schemes may be introduced at the Government level and may pursue Banks to sponsor schemes for economic utilisation of Manipuri Pony in eco-tourism activities.

Re-establishment of Mounted Police in Manipur Police which will be very helpful in controlling of crowds and traffic in the congested areas.

Establishment of a pony unit as body guard of Governor of the state which may be used on any state functions like that of the Presidential body guard of the Union Government.

Introduction of pony /horse riding school wherein interested young boys and girls may be imparted training on horse riding and other related activities so as to popularise the pony amongst the youths of the state.
Efforts should be taken up to carry out extensive research work for scientific utilisation of Manipuri Pony at appropriate centre. Ponies may be introduced in the tourist spots like Sendra, Waterfalls of Leimaram, Santhel eco tourist park of Andro and other tourist spots for pony ride around the centre for the visitors as well as photo session on payment basis as done in famous sea beaches of the country.

10. Incentives Programme to Pony keepers.

Most of Pony owners are landless and generally dependent on agriculture and allied activities. As they are unable to invest in maintenance of the Pony, they keep them in or near the hostels, markets, bus stands, changing areas depending on the left over of the hotels, markets, garbages and cheap feed and on the mercy of the nature thereby damaging their health. It is right time that Government may have a relook for providing maintenance allowance to polo club owners. Action plan to be taken up in this regard are as follows:

i) To organise awareness programme on scientific management practices.

ii) To provide incentives to the Polo club/ individual farmer by organising health camps and providing maintenance allowances for Pony in kind i.e. feed ingredients, medicines etc.

iii) To organise Pony shows regularly so as to encourage Pony owners to maintain proper pony health status.


Manipur state in addition to its beautiful landscape diversos flora and fauna and salubrious climatic condition is well known as the birth place of game of Polo. Organisation of polo tournament/festival, equestrian sports as eco tourism activities are required on regular basis to attract both domestic and international tourists.

i) To organise Polo Festival, Pony shows, Polo tournaments regularly as part of eco-tourism activity.

ii) To formulate strategic plan and time bound work schedule for development of Sagol Kangjei & Polo. The state should develop Imphal as an International Polo city as the state being the birth place of Polo. This will attract both domestic and foreign tourists.

iii) To introduce other activities of pony other than the game of polo, such as equestrian games, arambai throws for the tourists.