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CAMBRIDGE, England, May 8 (UPI) -- British researchers say they've used DNA science to settle the question of where modern domesticated horses originated.

Archaeological evidence had long suggested horse domestication originated in the western part of the Eurasian Steppe -- Ukraine, southwest Russia and west Kazakhstan. However, the large number of female lineages in the domestic horse gene pool suggested multiple domestication "events" across a wide geographic area.

Scientists at Cambridge University report a genetic database of more than 300 horses sampled from across the Eurasian Steppe shows the extinct wild ancestor of domestic horses, *Equus ferus*, was domesticated in the western region of the steppe, and that herds then were repeatedly restocked with wild horses as they spread across Eurasia.

"The spread of horse domestication differed from that of many other domestic animal species, in that spreading herds were augmented with local wild horses on an unprecedented scale," zoologist Vera Warmuth said in a Cambridge release. "If these restocking events involved mainly wild mares, we can explain the large number of female lineages in the domestic horse gene pool without having to invoke multiple domestication origins."

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Read more: http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2012/05/08/Origin-of-domesticated-horses-pinpointed/UPI-39821336515599/#ixzz1uJysnbyM