

Responsibility

The WBFSH will meet in Lyon, France at the beginning of next month, when their General Assembly is hosted by the Selle Français studbook celebrating its 50th birthday. And, in our opinion, there are two main subjects from the ordinary agenda that are prime discussion material.

One is cloning. As we know, some sporting bodies have an opinion about allowing clones to compete in regular competition, but the FEI will need to pass their judgement about this. Gem Twist's cloning announcement (see 'brief' on pg. 4) is a new development which has placed emphasis on the subject. But let's revisit this in our November column.

This month we would like to focus more on the ramifications of the Hong Kong doping affair in showjumping. Because the fact that too many riders are not behaving as true horsemen (when we say this we mean of course "fair" horsemen: women and men who fundamentally respect the integrity of the horse) has two consequences. The first is public and press disappointment, disagreement, and anger, with further risks to the future of the sport. But the second conse-

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KWPN studbook claims top honours at WBCYH

BELGIUM (by Jo de Roo and Julien Counet) The sun did not hide for this edition of the WBCYH, and clear conditions allowed these young horses to present themselves in the best possible conditions. In fact, half of the five-year-old horses qualified to contest a jump-off against the clock, with the BWP Donna Furtuna (Nagano x Grandeur) going so fast she couldn't be caught. "With this mare I can maintain speed and continue to jump the same way, so I took the chance ... successfully!" said her rider, Marcel Willems.

"I must say that I was astonished to see so many horses still had the resources to jump like they did today, when the course was already large. But you can't put it higher for horses of this age," he explained. This young man was not only with the angels on his side, given the image of Joseph Meulemans who had just received the cheque of 5.000 euros awarded to the breeder of the winner. "When one is in a championship, one always has a hope obviously. I knew that



Seven-year-old winner, the KWPN mare Ubalia (Indoctro x Starsky de Brix) ridden by Michael Greeve (Netherlands)

the mare was fast, but she still needs to do it," he said, very happily for his young pupil. "I sold her last February because my goal is to raise horses to sell them between three and four years."

Five-year-old runner-up, Simon Crippen was very happy with his result riding the Dutch mare Wembley

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Maubach: "Thinking in generations"

NEW ZEALAND (by Annie Studholme) NZ Hanoverian breeder Berny Maubach grew up on a farm, Gut Vollrath, in Germany – in Rhineland's heart of horse country between Düsseldorf and Aachen, but did not get involved with horses himself until he immigrated to New Zealand in 1978. Since establishing Vollrath Hanoverian Stud in 1982, near Wanganui in the North Island, the former detective chief inspector has become one of the country's most successful breeders.



Berny and Jutta Maubach with Vollrath Lessing (Londonderry - Prisca x Prince Thatch xx)

His breeding centres on his motto: "Thinking in Generations," as well as his goal to produce a multi-talented horse for all equestrian disciplines.

Initially he used the syndicated Witzbold (Winnetou) and Dis-

telfink (Diskus) and privately owned stallion Genius (Garibaldi I) in New Zealand to establish foundation mares. Even with the onslaught of frozen semen, Berny has gone to great expense to import stallions from Germany, starting with Dynamit, by Dynamo (Don Carlos - Goldmodell x Gold-

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Maubach: "Thinking in generations."

folk) out of Elfi, by Eger II (Agram - Fechterkind x Fechtmeister), from Germany. He arrived at Vollrath in January 1992, and instantly became a very popular sire. Four years later, Maubach imported Worldwide P.B., by Weltbürger PB (Weltmeyer - Erina x Eisenherz I), out of Bella (Brentano II - Palinka x Pandur PB), to complement Dynamit and other Hanoverian stallions. Worldwide P.B. was provisionally licensed in December 1996, ranking 16/40 for rideability in his 100-day test in Adelheidsdorf. Worldwide P.B. is registered with the NZ Warmblood Horse Association and began his first season in Spring 1998, the year Dynamit tragically died. Worldwide has since been sold to Australian Grand Prix dressage rider Claire Wickins.

Purchased from Hof Heitgress in Germany, Vollrath Lessing, by Londonderry (Laurie's Crusador xx - Windsor Queen x Warkant), out of Prisca (Prince Thatch xx - Aische x Aircraft) joined the stud line-up in 2004. He stood his first season in 2005.

At a weanling auction in Handorf, Berny recently purchased the Westfalian colt Fürst Patrick (Fürst Piccolo [Fidermark x Mephistopheles] - Rieke x Red Patrick).

◆ **What was your involvement with horses before you left Germany?**

I had nothing to do with horses before I came to New Zealand. I was in the German Police, resigning as detective chief inspector. I grew up on a farm but had never ridden. We had draught horses.

◆ **Why did you choose the area in which you now live?**

I had a family connection to Wanganui through my ex-wife, Debbie Smith.

◆ **Did you know you would breed Hanoverians, and what was your plan in terms of starting a stud farm?**

It was a natural progression. I bought initially a 10-acre block of land and wondered what I was going to do with it. Gay Carroll, a neighbour of mine at the time, was the press officer for the NZ Hanoverian Society. It was through her that I got involved in the Witzbold syndicate. Once I had a taste for it, I was hooked. I decided what I liked and set myself a goal. I am not a horseman as such, I just have a lucky eye for a horse. It's a case of knowing bloodlines and how to combine them. Over the years I have successfully imported four stallions from Germany. My great complement is my wife Jutta, the horsewoman. I don't think I'd be still breeding without her absolute professional support.

◆ **What are the essential differences between breeding Hanoverians in Germany and breeding them in New Zealand?**

You don't have to be a millionaire or own a large farm. There is also a huge difference in the climate. In New Zealand the horses run all year in paddocks, whereas in Germany they run in paddocks during the summer months until they're under saddle and then they're boxed. New Zealand has a real advantage. We produce horses with natural ability and reared in natural environments. It is much more expensive to breed horses in Germany than it is here.

◆ **Were you already very familiar with Hanoverians, or did you first do a lot of research into the various studbooks and bloodlines?**

No. When I made up my mind in the 1980s I really had no clues as to what was happening. I just knew Germany had successful riding horses because they were on the television all the time! I then did a huge amount of study and research. At the time, New Zealand was the only country in the world where selective thoroughbred mares could be entered into the Hanoverian studbook. This showed acknowledgement and appreciation for our environment in New

Zealand. It was also a huge money saver for our breeders as we could access relatively cheap but good thoroughbred mare which stood equal in the German Stud Book. It would have been faster to import a mare and stallion – but who could afford it living at the end of the world!

◆ **How did you decide on your foundation stock?**

Dynamit was our foundation sire imported from Germany in 1991. Assessed 16 out of 74 at his performance test, I agreed to buy him without even seeing a photograph. I just bought him completely trusting the selection system of the Hanoverian breed, and when I saw a video of him, wow! What a joy. He was my horse; I was the only one that rode him. I had him for just less than seven years. He was put down after breaking a bone in his shoulder.

Next I imported Worldwide PB because of his huge gene pool. He provided a wonderful cross with Dynamit and other Hanoverian mares. When I decided on Dynamit it was pivotal that his bloodlines were enhancing the existing ones in New Zealand. We needed quite a bit more solid Hanoverian blood as we were still on the thoroughbred mare base. Hanoverian blood guarantees the riding qualities for dressage and jumping as a technique. Dynamit's sire Dynamo was ranked fifth for producing showjumpers and eighth for dressage, a very unique and high ranking for both disciplines. That was very important to me. Then, Worldwide PB with his absolutely world-class pedigree via his grand sires Weltmeyer and Bolero. In 2004, we had bloodlines at Vollrath that were represented at the Athens Olympics four times in the top ten in dressage.

◆ **What is the size of your breeding operation today, in terms of broodmares, young stock, land, staff, etc?**

In terms of size we are quite small. There is just my wife, Jutta Rosenblatt, and myself. We are certainly not a meat market, but are here to pro-

duce quality riding horses. On average we breed about four foals each year. Jutta does all the riding, breaking and shoeing, and I'm the breeder and maintenance man. I can only produce the raw diamond; Jutta is responsible for making the final cut and polish. We try to hover around the 20-horse mark, no more. The farm itself is set on 36 acres.

◆ **Are the stallions primarily there as stallions or competition horses?**

It's a mixture; they are competition horses first and foremost. That's what we do. Breeders have to fit in around us. We try to accommodate everyone, but if he's competing, he's competing. Jutta competed Worldwide up to Grand Prix and openly declared at Taupo that she wants to take Lessing to the London Olympics in 2012. So far it hasn't been a problem, but if Lessing gets past 40 mares in a season, it could be critical. I have never brought a stallion into New Zealand to make money out of him. I couldn't give a hoot if we get 10 outside mares or 20. I want to breed a horse that is highly capable and if people want to join me, super. We want to support ourselves with these stallions – it's our life and we are here only once! Personally I am not in favor of frozen semen. For me it's more about the lifestyle. I like to have a horse here to put a saddle on. It's a bit hard to put a saddle on a sperm! If that's the way the world wants it, fine, but I am not interested in exporting semen or milking my stallions. A stallion wants to be ridden and make you proud.

◆ **Do you typically sell youngsters each year or do you prefer to keep them until after they have started their training with you?**

Of course I would like to sell them all as weanlings or yearlings because then I have eliminated a great deal of risk. As everyone who deals with horses knows, any horses can get injured tomorrow, but in reality the majority are sold under saddle.

◆ **When you sell horses, do they usually stay in New Zealand, go to Australia or the Far East, or is there a global market for NZ breeders?**

Most are sold here in New Zealand, but a number are sold-on overseas and we hardly hear of them afterwards. Personally I would rather see them here competing.

◆ **Do you consider that you have already achieved certain goals in terms of the success of your horses in competition?**

To breed and then bring the youngster on to age three or four and pass it on to a capable rider who is happy and grateful for having a well brought on horse. That is our success. What happens later on is the responsibility of the rider and we as breeders/producers can only hope for the best.

◆ **What do you consider to be your best achievements to date?**

- Vollrath bred GV Braveheart. Placing eighth at WEG Rome 1998 with Australian Olivia Bunn aboard was a huge thrill.
- Worldwide's being National Novice Dressage Champion on his first outing and consequently winning the Medium title at the Horse of the Year Show.
- Dynamit's son Dornkaat winning the National Dressage Championships with Jutta.
- Lessing's win in the National Grand Champion Young Dressage Horse 2008 at Taupo this March was magnificent. I can only take the credit for spotting the horse at 18 months old and bringing him back from Germany to New Zealand. Jutta has done a fabulous job. He was a rough diamond who Jutta polished with great ability into a shining one now. It was an emotional time for us all, especially when Australian Olympic rider, trainer and judge, Dr Ricky MacMillian asked candidly if she could take him home after

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the ridden phase.

◆ Do you have a life plan and a strict philosophy in terms of your breeding, or do you think you can also be open-minded and flexible?

Certainly, my own philosophy is that breeding is a thing you do in generations not one-offs, but I would be stupid to be rigid in my thinking. I totally admire the German system, but I prefer to work independently as there is much power-play and politics going on in big societies. I do, however, adhere to the basic principles of what they do because it's good, the results of which we are seeing in Lessing, and I am certain in young Fürst Patrick as well.

◆ All your stallions have a strong influence of thoroughbred blood, can you tell us why?

After establishing solid Hanoverian blood in our mares it was time to re-inject thoroughbred blood again via very modern-bred stallions. Just look at Lessing, with his beautiful body and long legs which he passes on to his progeny.

◆ If you could start from the beginning, what would you change if anything?

I like how it all started, working my way through, learning step by step, feel-

ing the thrills, seeing improvements at foaling time.

◆ In general are there too many stallions in NZ for the number of mares?

Sport horse breeding in New Zealand is quite small; we are still a racing country. There are plenty of thoroughbred mares, and too often people breed from sub-standard mares or fail to match it to the correct stallion. It's not good enough to just import the best frozen semen and put it to any old mare and expect to get a top horse. For me, the mare is extremely important. I place the mare's importance at 60 percent. Here at Vollrath I have made a point of keeping mares. It's taken 25 years to develop the depth of blood that we have got now, and we are just starting to see the benefits.

◆ Being so isolated geographically, how do you feel the NZWHA and other NZ Sport Horse Organizations could best serve their members?

I think breeders in New Zealand should be sensible and pool their resources, marketing our horses from under one roof as a New Zealand Sport Horse rather than doing it by themselves and going it alone. Furthermore the organizations should produce competent inspectors/advisors who would help the breeders.

◆ If you could be president of a sport horse breeding or-

ganization in New Zealand, what changes would you make?

I don't know if I would want that job! I would start a New Zealand-wide organization that can encompass any registered breed under the New Zealand sport horse umbrella without losing its breed identity. I firmly believe New Zealand could have a place in the world market. With a joint marketing system we would all benefit. I suggested it 20 years ago and it hasn't happened yet so I'm not holding my breath. However, it would take a great deal of commitment from the breeders and in New Zealand most are hobby breeders with just one mare, which is primarily bred for own use. This in itself would make a professionally viable system doubtful for lack of support.

◆ What are the main problems facing New Zealand sport horse breeders today?

Aside from rising fuel prices and living costs, New Zealand's biggest problem is the lack of education amongst breeders. Even being seen as arrogant. I dare say they have to wise up in knowledge about breeding, and leave their emotions about their loved but useless mare behind. I say this from experience because some folks want to breed a mare they own, because she's not rideable! ... Say no more! ■

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Stallion winners

onships 2002, 2003 and 2005, bronze medal at the dressage World Championship for Young Horses 2005, Trakehner champion stallion 2006, qualified for the Nürnberg Burg-Pokal final 2006 and 2007.

This premium stallion passes his outstanding movements and charisma on to his offspring, and very high prices are paid for his foals at auctions. The previously mentioned qualities could be noticed in his first offspring under the saddle. Insternburg follows in his father's steps, the Trakehner top sire Hohenstein. Having become a premium stallion at the licensing in Neumünster in 1993, one year later he was runner-up at his performance test with a total index of 134.05 points. In 1995 he was Trakehner champion and finished third at the Federal championship; 1999 proclaimed elite stallion; 2002 stallion of the year and his son, His Highness, became champion of the stallion licensing in Verden. In 2006 he had three premium stallions at the Trakehner licensing and two in 2007.

The third stallion at this final in fifth place, was the nine-year old KWPN Scandic (Solos Carex x Amiral) with Sweden's Patrik Kittel who is based in Germany. His sire Solos Carex, with Tinne Wilhelmson-Silven and the Swedish team was fifth in the

2008 Beijing Olympic Games in Hong Kong, and 12th individually. Sadly, after competing at the World Equestrian Games in Jerez 2002 (seventh with the team and 24th individually), he had to be gelded due to severe allergy problems. Another Solos Carex offspring, the 10-year-old Danish-bred gelding Shogun, out of a Schwadronneur dam finished 11th with Dieter Laugks in Donaueschingen's final. Patrik Kittel commented on Scandic by saying, "He is a great talent. I have never had a horse that has learned Grand Prix movements as quickly as Scandic. Once he has understood, he can perform the movement time after time. I hope for a reunion of the families by placing Scandic alongside his father on the Swedish team".

The stallion also excelled in breeding, scoring a 9.0 for trot and 9,5 for canter at his performance test, the highest marks of the year. His first approved son, Zambuka, out of a Biotop dam, was reserve champion at the Pavo Cup for four-year-olds in Holland. Another son, Sir Scandic, was recently approved in Oldenburg. Scandic brings power, imprint and tact in dressage breeding, and his breeding index is 170. The chestnut has two Olympic sires in his origins, the mentioned Solos Carex and his dam's sire, the Swedish bred Amiral, who competed with Peter Markne at the games at Sydney. What a performance line ! ■

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