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There are over 60 "active" studbooks in Britain, registering around 16.000 foals per annum – producing a population of 320.000

There are 7 Studbooks aimed specifically at breeding sports horses and ponies (2017 figures):

AES: 1258 (2017)

BHHS: 122 (2017)

SHBCB: 339 (2017, WBFSH)

Trakehners: 16 (2017)

Breeders Elite: 326 (2017, WBFSH)

SPSS (Sports Ponies): 246 (2015)

WBS-UK: 178 (2017)

The total annual number of registrations with UK sport horse or pony studbooks in 2017: 2485 (only 15% of registrations)



The UK Equine Industry

- There are around 900.000 to 1 Million horses in Britain

There are far more horses in Britain than the official registration figures could produce:

Imports and non-registered horses

- According to industry surveys, around 15% of all horse owners in Britain do some dressage, 12% do some showjumping, 9% do some eventing

Compare that to the fact that only 15% of registrations are with sports horse or pony studbooks

IMPORTS and non purpose-bred horses (retired racehorses etc.)

British Breeding Futurity - A Quick Overview

- **A numbers game:** Individual studbooks are too small to generate useful data:
 - Costs of evaluations, systems, etc.
 - Volume of data
- An evaluation system for all British bred sports horses AND ponies aimed at one of the FEI disciplines (Dressage, Showjumping, Eventing, Endurance)
- Originally run by the National Federation, taken over by us 2 years ago, 400 entries in 2018 and 480 entries in 2019

British Breeding Futurity – A Quick Overview



Veterinary Evaluation (10-20 minutes):

- On hard ground with senior veterinarian and trained linear scorer
- Also on the lunge on soft ground for older horses
- With a senior veterinarian (panel of 3 vets) and trained linear scorer

Conformation (topline) and Gaits (10-30 minutes):

- In-hand and loose evaluations of 0-2yos (all gaits)
- 3-4yos, loose in indoor around a shoot, also over jumps
- 4-5yos also under saddle (on flat and over jumps)
- Panel of discipline experts (judges, riders, trainers, studbook evaluators) and trained linear scorer
- Follow-on programme (performance test format, with training session, test riders, and feedback from farriers, vets, saddle fitters, physio)
- Far ahead: Olympic selections: use linear criteria?

The Futurity and the Studbooks

We support all the studbooks and offer our venues and resources:

- SPSS and AES accept the Futurity scores and results
- Trakehners & SHBGB grade youngstock and mares at our venues
- We grade mares for WBS-UK and BHHS at Futurity venues

Aims



Support “BETTER” Breeding

- Educate the Breeders
- Support the Sport (transparency, information, trust)
- Collect Data for Analysis and Further Projects

The Basic Assumption

We can establish direct links between phenotype features and suitability for the sport (performance):

- Soundness (correctness of gaits and conformation), foot balance, management
- Ability (length of stride, balance, elasticity, impulsion etc.)

These should be similar across all studbooks that aim at breeding for the sport, regardless of studbook-specific considerations of type

The Basic Assumption

- We should be able to identify areas of the linear profiles that can provide “objective” indicators of performance.
- These will vary between disciplines
- Subjective evaluation by the judges (numerical marks) should therefore be supported by linear profiles
- People can then understand why they received a particular numerical mark, and what they can do to improve



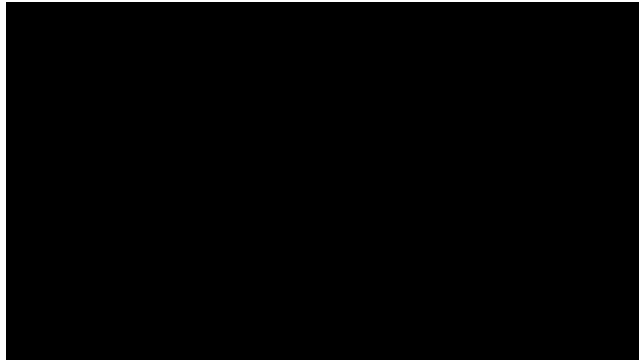
The Challenge

The Challenge

A group of 4yo horses and ponies presented for their first evaluation under saddle in dressage



<https://british-breeding.com/database/7240151503gb153-maximo-jlba/25641>



The Obvious Challenges

Diversity of Type: How do we compare a pony with a warmblood type with a PRE type (and others), using the same set of criteria?

- Is this fair?
- Is this accurate?
- Is this something we SHOULD try to do?





The Challenges

Is this fair?

Remove or mitigate warmblood type bias:

Evaluation panel needs to be broad, representation from different stakeholders

Link between linear profile and numerical marks needs to be more relaxed/independent

Maintain the guidance (see education goal) of the colour coding, but adjust the colour coding to shades of green, rather than using oranges and reds, which are perceived as negative



The Challenges

Is this accurate?

The challenge is the volume of data, non warmblood types are still an exception.

Increase cooperation with breed societies to understand the thinking behind breed characteristics in terms of functionality.

Keep doing it, so we get more data to build on.

The Challenges

Is this something we SHOULD do?

Going back to the beginning: we know a variety of types is used in the sport.

The needs of the sport are very diverse (different types of horses for different levels and different riders).

The needs of the sport also evolve over time.

We have to start somewhere...

Ultimate Challenge

Is it that easy to decide whether one particular trait is “good or bad”?

- In jumping: different demands between summer competitions, Derbys etc. (Aachen, Hickstead, Hamburg) and winter, indoor (extreme case: Olympia)
- In dressage: ability to collect vs. ability to extend
- In eventing: ability to gallop, stay sound cross country but also score high in dressage

The Opportunities

- Projects between studbooks and futurity data:
 - Comparisons
 - Supplementation
- Meaningful data, which might even lead to interesting new interpretations and could challenge preconceptions

What about DNA?

Next on the horizon:

- Sampling at the Futurity?
- Enough data?
- Relationship with the studbooks
- How many markers?
- Partnerships: Labs, owners, studbooks