

FRIESIAN HORSE IN DETAIL

Friesian horse in detail (3)

The Koninklijk Friesch Paarden-Stamboek is the second largest horse studbook in The Netherlands. Many Dutchmen own a Friesian but also outside the Netherlands the Friesian breed is enormously popular. Exterior and character traits clearly have a big attraction. But how do you know what is and is not desired in a Friesian? And what makes a Friesian a Friesian? In the series 'Friesian Horse in Detail' every facet of the Friesian horse is explained. In this third part of the series we cover the breeding goal and the linear scoring form.

Breed Ideal Determined in Breeding Goal

During the years of the rapidly growing popularity of the Friesian horse people tirelessly continued with the improvement of the breed with the objective to breed a versatile horse, suitable for dressage under saddle but also for use in harness (driving and show driving), for combined driving or for people who would like to use the horses recreationally. In order to breed such an all-round horse the members of the KFPS determined a breeding goal.

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The breed ideal has been determined as follows: 'a functionally and harmoniously built users' horse that possesses the Friesian breed characteristics, is healthy and vital, and has the aptitude to achieve in sport.' The breeding goal consists of the components: 1. Exterior and movement. 2. Use. 3. Vitality and

health. The subcategories of these components are recorded in the breeding program as the selection criteria.

Exterior and movement

Exterior and movement is a collective name for the characteristics that fall

Quantity versus quality

The demand for good Friesian horses increased in a short period of time, which breeding technically presented an enormous danger. How can we maintain the quality of the Friesian and rather even improve the quality with such a strong increase in popularity?

under breed characteristics: conformation, legs, and movement. The breed characteristics of the Friesian horse are the characteristic head, front, ample hair, the black color, and the elevated gaits. The breed characteristics make the Friesian a luxurious and proud horse. The conformation relates to the horse's build. The studbook likes to see a harmoniously, functionally, proportionally, and upward built horse with along forearm that is not too heavy in mass. We strive to have the horse stand in a square in which the proportions between front, middle, and hindquarters is 1:1:1. The legs of the



Both a dressage and driving horse benefit from active hind legs that come under the body to carry the horse.

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Friesian horse have to be straight and free from defects. Under movement we count the basic gaits walk, trot, and canter. For movement the purity in rhythm, length, power, and suppleness are of importance.

Linear characteristics

The characteristics of exterior and movement are part of the linear score form. Since 1993, the characteristics of every horse are recorded with studbook registration. 25 exterior characteristics are rated between five and 45 with an average of 25. These linear characteristics are an observation and not a rating. The report on the linear score form gives as complete a picture as possible of the exterior of the horse. The linear characteristics can be divided in two kinds:

Optimum characteristics Characteristics for which the average score (25) is the most desirable. Examples of such characteristics are: shape of the back, conformation of the front legs and hind legs.

Maximum characteristics Characteristics for which goes the higher the better, e.g., expression of the face, expression in movement, etc. Or characteristics for which the desired is clearly above average, such as slope of the shoulder and shape of the croup. The collection of all this information gives the studbook the possibility to determine the pattern of what a stallion passes on. This is reflected in the breeding values for exterior. These breeding values are used by breeders to determine the right combination for their mare. Breeding values are calculated every year for all approved studbook stallions approved on offspring and are also published annually by the studbook.

Rated characteristics

In addition to the 25 linear exterior characteristics there are also five characteristics that receive scores at the time of studbook registration: breed type, conformation, legs, walk, and trot. With linear characteristics it concerns a description, with the rated characteristics it is a score. For the evaluation of the rated exterior characteristics the observation of related linear characteris-

gender		name		reg. no.		date		jury member	
height at withers		markings		none		markings not allowed		judging location	
element		characteristic		Groep		5		10	
head	plain	racial							
head-neck connection	heavy	racial							
neck	short	racial							
	horizontal	racial							
shoulder	steep	frame							
back	weak	frame							
loins	weak	frame							
croup	straight	frame							
	short	frame							
body	downhill	frame							
length forearm	short	frame							
frontlegs	straight	F&L							
hindlegs	sickled	F&L							
pasterns	short	F&L							
hooves	small	F&L							
quality of legs	course	F&L							
hair	little	racial							
color	faded black	racial							
walk	toeing-in	walk							
	short	walk							
	weak	walk							
trot	short	trot							
	weak	trot							
	unbalanced	trot							
	not supple	trot							
		raciale type	6.5	frame	6.5	feet & legs	4	walk	6
		foalbook							
		geen (Vb)							

The linear score form gives an impression of the exterior of the horse. For every characteristic the desired score boxes are shaded in gray.

tics plays an important role. The characteristic trot, e.g., consists next to the linear characteristics length in trot, expression in trot, balance, and suppleness also of, e.g., rhythm in trot. The rated characteristics are rated from 3 through 9.

Use

Friesian horses are used in various disciplines in sport. They are among other disciplines shown in dressage under saddle, show driving, driving, and combined driving. Friesians are used from the recreational level all the way up to the highest levels of competition. The objective for use of the horse within the breeding goal is to improve sport aptitude. Condition for this is that the easy personality of the Friesian horse is maintained so that the horse will for certain also remain suitable for recreational use. The Friesian horse is a much used and versatile horse because of its easy personality, willingness to learn, and impressive and elegant presence. Given the many different disciplines there is room within the breeding goal for specialization without splitting up the breeding efforts in different directions. The demands that are put on a show driving or dressage horse namely

really do not differ that much. In both disciplines we strive for a medium heavy, long legged horse that is built upward, with a long forearm and strong hindquarters. Both disciplines benefit from active hind legs that come under to carry the horse. But there are, of course, slight differences, e.g. the position of the neck. A dressage horse benefits more from a less vertical neck set than does a show-driving horse. In order to improve the position of the Friesian horse in sport high demands are placed on the characteristics that together determine sport aptitude: movement, exterior (conformation), stamina, character (willing to work and sociable), durability, and health.

Vitality and health

The demands that are placed on the horses, especially in the interest of breeding, serve to improve the vitality and health of the Friesian breed. The KFPS wants to have a vital horse, meaning a durable and healthy horse. In addition fertility of stallions and mares is an important topic. The third focus is that the studbook wants to prevent hereditary defects. These three focal points together are determining for vitality and health. •