

# Friesian Judging 101

## Understanding the KFPS Breeding Goal

By Angie DePuydt

*The breeding goal is what the breeder ultimately hopes to achieve. This is usually related to what is required by the market and the future demands that will be placed on the horse's abilities. Thus, over the years the Friesian horse has evolved from a long-legged carriage horse, to an agriculture horse, and finally into today's modern sport horse.*



Willow f/t Friesian Connection, Star Mare, Epke x Wander, Owned by Judy Cohn, Photography by Lori Ann Thwing

**KFPS Breeding Goal:** A functionally and harmoniously built sport horse possessing all the Friesian characteristics, healthy and vital and with plenty of aptitude for sport performance.

The breeding goal consists of several components which can be divided into the three primary categories below and the components of these categories are interpreted as the selection criteria.

1. Conformation & Movement
2. Use
3. Vitality and Health

### CONFORMATION AND MOVEMENT

#### Breed Characteristics

**General:** A horse that has an elegant and proud

appearance created by its characteristic front, abundant feathers, black color and impressive elevated gaits.

**Head:** A small, expressive, noble head with eyes set wide apart. Preferably a somewhat dished nasal bone. Large and open nostrils. Light jaws and a long mouth opening. Eyes large and bright. Small, alert ears with tips slightly pointing at each other.

**Neck:** The poll and the long neck are set in a light upward arch. A nice, vertically arched neck.

**Hair:** The Friesian horse has lots of hair in the mane, tail and feathers.

**Color:** A jet black color. White markings to the face are allowed if no larger than 3.2 cm and if they do not occur below the eye line. White markings in other parts of the horse are not allowed.



## Conformation

- General:** A harmonious, functional, proportionate horse with an upward build and a long foreleg. Not too heavy in the body. The horse has a rectangular build whereby the proportions of the forhand, mid-section and hind quarters reflect a ratio of 1:1:1.
- Head & Neck:** The head and neck connection consists of a long poll (the width of a hand) with a long flowing connection to the neck. The throatlatch has an open underline with ample room at the throat.
- Neck:** The neck is long with well-developed muscles on the upper half resulting in a light arch. The neck rises high from the chest and has a flowing connection to the withers.
- Shoulder:** The shoulder is long and sloping (at an angle by between 45 and 50 degrees). The angle in the point of the shoulder must be at least 90 degrees.
- Ribs:** The ribs are long and well-sprung.
- Withers:** The high withers have a flowing connection with the back.
- Back:** The back is strong with good muscling (neither tight nor weak). The back has a flowing connection to the withers and loins. The length of the back is in proportion to the length of forehand and hindquarters.
- Loins:** The loins are strong (not raised or sunken) and wide with good muscling and with a flowing connection to the croup.
- Croup:** The croup is long (anatomical length as measured from the point of the hip to the seat bone), with a light slope and good muscling.
- Gluteals:** The gluteal muscles should be long and well-developed.



Maaik Van De Hiltsejemoiswal, Star Mare, Reinder x Jillie, Owned by Sara Calicchia, Photo by Franke Photo Design, LLC

## Legwork

When seen from the front the forelegs are placed in a perpendicular line, leaving space between the two legs the size of one foot. When seen from the side the legs are in a perpendicular line right up to the fetlock. The forearm and the cannon bone are long. When seen from the side the fetlock joints are oval-shaped and dry.

When seen from behind the hind leg is straight (parallel). As seen from the side the angle of the hock joint lies between 145 and 150 degrees. The gaskin has strong muscles. The hock joint is dry, hard and well-developed (wide and deep).

The pasterns are long and elastic. The front pastern is set at an angle of 45 to 50 degrees to the ground. The back of the pastern is set at an angle of 50 to 55 degrees to the ground.

The feet are generous in size with a good shape that is sound and proportionate to the horse. The front feet are wider than the hind feet.



Roelof fan'e Pastorije, Star Stallion, Jasper x Lute, Owned by Susan Dyer, Photography by Cat McKenna

Cicero fan Fenway, Star Stallion, Nanning x Jasper, Owned by Scott and Shelley Kelnhofer, Photo by Franke Photo Design, LLC





## Movement

- Walk:** The walk is roomy with a regular 4-beat rhythm. In the walk, the legs are in a perpendicular line when seen from the front and back. The hind leg shows flexion in the hock joint and is far and powerfully placed under the body. The hind leg sends away the foreleg, which is then generously placed forward with a lot of shoulder freedom.
- Trot:** The trot has a regular 2-beat rhythm. The hind leg is placed far and powerfully under the body showing ample flexion in the hock joint. The foreleg is generously placed forward. The trot is characterized by suppleness and a long moment of suspension. The horse is well balanced and rises in the forehand with an elevated neck. When seen from the front and the back the legs must be in a perpendicular line.
- Canter:** The canter has a regular 3-beat rhythm. The canter must show a good reach in front and a carrying inside leg. The canter must be uphill with a long moment of suspension and a generous amount of suppleness and balance.

relating to its aptitude for sports on the condition that the easy, tractable character of the Friesian breed will be maintained in order to preserve its outstanding suitability for recreational use. The Friesian is an all-around horse that can be used in a variety of ways. This does not automatically mean that all horses should have the same talent and aptitude for all disciplines. When considering the variety of disciplines, the breeding goal offers sufficient room for specialization without leading to separate breeding programs. The description of the breeding goal, with respect to conformation and movement applies to all disciplines. The added value of the Friesian horse in sports is based on a combination of the following characteristics:

- Easy to handle and train
- Inquisitive and intelligent
- Majestic and elegant
- All-around

To improve the Friesian horse's position in sports, the following characteristics defining aptitude for sports need to meet high standards:

- Movement
- Conformation (build)
- Stamina and endurance
- Character (positive attitude to work and friendly)
- Durability
- Health

## VITALITY AND HEALTH

Breeding of Friesian horses is subject to high demands with regard to the following characteristics, which together determine vitality and health:

- No genetic anomalies
- Fertility (stallions and mares)
- Vitality (durability and health)



Amora FX, Star Mare, Alert x Mintse, Owned by Lysa Roman, Photo by Lysa Roman

## USE

The use of the Friesian horse ranges from recreational use to participating in the highest levels of competition sports. The Friesian horse is used in many competition sports. The objective is to improve all aspects of the Friesian horse

*Reference: Judging the Friesian Horse. KFPS, 2013*