

selecting A Stallion For Your Mare

by Judi Knapp

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This article first appeared in THE FRIESIAN four years ago. It has been updated to reflect the advances in information available to FHANA/KFPS members since that time. Much of the information can now be obtained on the web sites of FHANA and KFPS and these sites are continuously in the process of making more information available and easier to understand.

Many North American horse breeders select a stallion for their mare based on geographic proximity and/or a nice photo in an ad for stallion service. Members of FHANA/KFPS, on the other hand, have a vast amount of information available to help in choosing a sire for their next foal.

Available Stallions

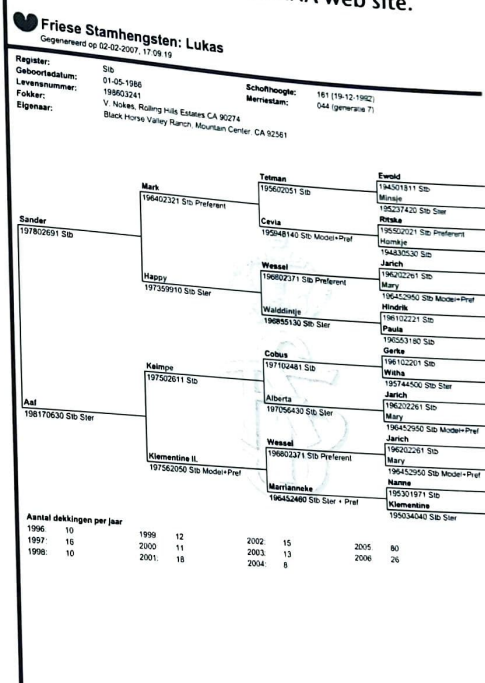
The FHANA web site, www.fhana.com – *Approved Stallions*, has a listing of KFPS stallions currently licensed for breeding and standing in North America. Stallion owners usually have ads in FHANA publications and have web sites showing photos and other information about their stallions and often the breeding contracts are also available online.

About the Stallions

The FHANA web site has recently added valuable information about each North American stallion, available by clicking on the stallion's name in the *Approved Stallions* list. This includes basic information about the stallion with a 4 generation pedigree. It also lists a great deal of statistical information regarding the qualities and characteristics of the stallion's progeny. You'll learn more about this information later. At the time this article was written, this stallion information was in Dutch, but can be easily translated by most experienced Friesian breeders. **Thanks, FHANA Office, for making this valuable information so easily accessible!**

For those FHANA members who subscribe to the (all Dutch) *Phryso* magazine—contact FHANA for subscription information—a Stallion Information booklet is published each winter. This booklet contains, in one handy place, all of the up-to-date statistics about all the KFPS stallions. In past years some of this information has also been available on the KFPS web site. The linear score chart is shown for every stallion who is approved on offspring, based on all of his get who have entered the adult studbooks. Other information is shown in list format, so it's easy to see which stallions are most reliable at passing on particular qualities in their offspring.

A sample four generation KFPS Approved Stallion pedigree from the FHANA web site.





Inbreeding Co-efficient

The first, and least subjective, tool in stallion selection is the inbreeding co-efficient. This is the percentage of inbreeding that would occur in the first five generations of the prospective foal's pedigree if your particular mare were mated with a particular stallion.

The KFPS recommends that the inbreeding percentage should be kept under 5%. Go to the FHANA web site and *Sign On* - FHANA can give you a login code and password if you don't have one. Then, under the *Member's Menu*, click *Inbreeding Coefficient*. You can request a calculation of the inbreeding coefficients for foals resulting from a mating of your mare to the various KFPS stallions. Or, if you don't have internet access, you should avoid having the same ancestor appear more than once within the first three generations of the prospective foal's pedigree.

Don't make the mistake of many new Friesian breeders and assume that the lowest inbreeding co-efficient is the all-around 'best' mating! Inbreeding percentage is only one factor of many to consider.

Once you have defined the stallions you can breed your mare to and stay under 5% inbreeding coefficient, you are ready to click on the various stallions' information at the FHANA web site. (Click on the relevant stallion names after opening *Approved Stallions*.)

Annual Services Per Year (Aantal dekkingen per jaar) This is the number of mares bred by the stallion each year. Typically, when a stallion is imported into North America his number declines due to the smaller number of mares located here.

Aantal dekkingen per jaar			
1996: 10	1999: 12	2002: 15	2005: 80
1997: 16	2000: 11	2003: 13	2006: 26
1998: 10	2001: 18	2004: 8	

Results of Central Examination (Resultaten Centraal Onderzoek)

These are the results for the stallion himself when he passed the stallion testing and was approved for breeding. These marks

Resultaten Centraal Onderzoek

stap	7
Draf	7
Galop	7
rijproef	8
menproef	7
trekproef	8
showproef	5
trainingsrapport	8
stalgedrag	9
karakter	9

are useful when breeding to a younger stallion who doesn't yet have any—or many—adult offspring who have been evaluated. One hopes that the best qualities of a stallion will be passed on to his get.

Inspection Results of Offspring (Keuringsresultaten nakomelingen)

These are the cumulative numbers of various categories of adult studbooks and adult offspring who have entered the

Keuringsresultaten nakomelingen

Merries Stb.	25
Merries Ster.	24
Merries Sterperc.	49%
Merries Model	0
Merries Preferent	0
Merries Prestatie	0
Merries niet opgenomen	2
Ruinen Rb.	7
Ruinen Rb Ster.	9
Hengsten Stb.	0
Hengsten Vb Ster.	4

includes the percentage of star mares for the stallion. From this it's possible to evaluate the overall quality of the stallion's get if we look for the higher the percentages of star mares and the numbers of model, preferent and prestatie mares, star geldings and studbook and star stallions. For older stallions with a large number of adult

offspring, these statistics are very significant. But like all tools used in stallion selection, these numbers can't be taken in isolation. For example, one stallion with more than 150 adult daughters, a star mare percentage of 50%, three model daughters and two approved stallion sons, lost his breeding approval due to the inconsistent quality of his offspring. This was Nammen 308.

Percentage of White (Gegevens geboorteregistratie)

Here we see the stallion's cumulative percentage of get with allowable white markings (small star, white hairs on muzzle) as well as the percentage who could not advance to the adult studbooks due to unacceptable white markings (white on legs or body). These statistics are especially crucial if your mare was born with any white hairs or has had previous foals with white. Some stallions have a greater tendency to pass on white markings. These stallions may not be good mates for your mare with a white star.

Gegevens geboorteregistratie

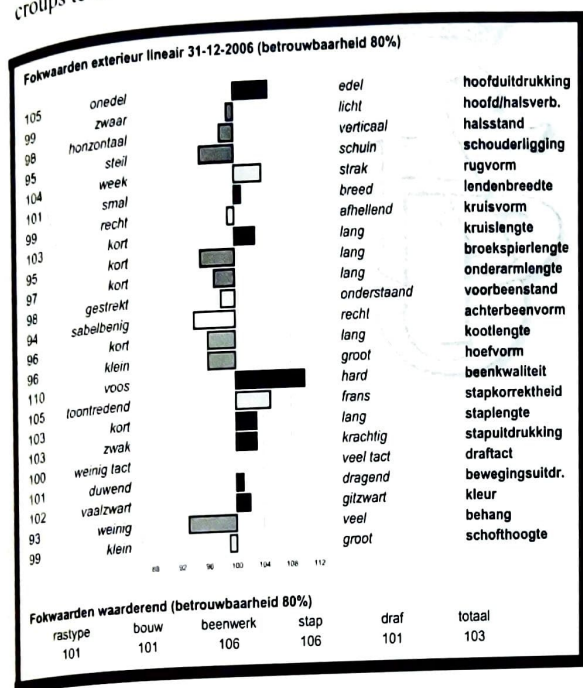
Percentage aftekening toegestaan:	0.5% (1)
Percentage aftekening niet-toegestaan:	1.4% (3)

Exterior Linear Scores (Fokwaarden exterieur lineair)

This chart displays the cumulative linear scoring results of the stallion's get when they were evaluated for the adult studbooks. For the characteristics shown in gray/blue, the ideal would be 100 on the scale. The remainder of the characteristics would ideally fall to the right side of the scale, over 100. Important cumulative marks are given for racial type, conformation, feet/legs, walk and trot. The reliability (*betrouwbaarheid* or *bthb* %) of these statistics is based on the number of horses evaluated and statistical reliability should be carefully considered when applying this information to stallion selection.

Another point to consider is that while 100 represents the

average for the breed, within the group of horses representing the average for the breed there is variation (known as standard variation) and the index points ranging from 97 to 103 are still considered within the average range. Thus if you want to have a significant chance of lengthening the croup of your prospective foal, for example, you should select a stallion with an index for croup length **exceeding** 103. If you select a stallion with a large number of adult descendants and a croup length index of 108, you've selected a stallion who strongly transmits longer croups to his descendants.



Sport Ability (Fokwaarden sportaanleg)

Sport Ability numbers reflect the actual performance of the stallion's get as shown in standardized ABFP tests. These performance tests (ridden and driven) are designed to measure the sport aptitude of young horses. In order to be approved on offspring, a minimum number of a stallion's get must undergo ABFP testing. The Sport Ability scores are cumulative for the offspring of the stallion and again must be utilized with a careful eye on the reliability percentage.

Gemiddelde scores ABFP			
ABFP vanaf 01-01-2000		ABFP vanaf 01-04-2004	
stap	6.2 (2)	stap	6.3 (7)
Draf	6.4 (2)	Draf	6.8 (7)
Galop	6.4 (2)	Galop	6.3 (7)
rijproef	6.4 (2)	rijproef	6.7 (7)
menproef	6.3 (2)	menproef	6.8 (7)
sledeproef	6.1 (2)	showproef	6.6 (7)
showproef	5.6 (2)	werklust	6.8 (7)
werklust	6.4 (2)	totaal	72
totaal	68.8		

ABFP vanaf 01-12-2004	
Stap	6.3 (13)
Draf	6.2 (13)
Galop	6.1 (13)
HSW	6.3 (13)
Overgangen	6.2 (13)
rijproef	6.3 (13)
Stap	6.1 (13)
Draf	6.4 (13)
HSW	6.5 (13)
Overgangen	6.3 (13)
menproef	6.4 (13)
showproef	6.2 (13)
Werklust	6.7 (13)
Gebruiksgemak	6.9 (13)
totaal	138.1

Sport Ability Scores of a stallion, from FHANA web site.

It is very interesting to find significant variances between the exterior scores (evaluated in-hand) for walk and trot and the scores a particular stallion's descendants received when they were evaluated in actual performance. A flashy performance in-hand doesn't always translate to quality, usable gaits under saddle or in harness.

Fokwaarden sportaanleg 27-12-2006 (betrouwbaarheid 76%)

stap	103
draf	101
galop	104
rijproef	104
menproef	102
tuigproef	100
werklust	103
totaal	102

Linear Scores of the Mare

You may be saying, "Wait a minute! I thought this article was about stallions." That's only partially true, because stallions are only part of the breeding equation. The most important factor in selecting a stallion for your mare is the mare herself! The more you know about your mare and her strengths and weaknesses, the better you can utilize the tools in your stallion selection toolkit. The more foals you've seen from your mare, especially by different stallions, the more you know about the characteristics she tends to pass on to her sons and daughters.

But if you don't know much about your mare's produce, and perhaps feel unqualified to critically evaluate the mare herself, the very best objective evaluation is her linear score sheet. Since 1993 all horses presented for studbook entry are scored and the score sheets are passed along to the horse owner with the adult registration certificate.

As breeders, our task is to select stallions who will compliment our mares and improve their weaknesses. Ideally the foals will be better than their dams. If my mare is especially weak in a specific area, I may decide that one of my primary criteria in selecting a stallion is to improve that area in the prospective foal. In order to improve upon the mare I have to first recognize what should be improved. The linear score sheet is a great tool for that.

(Note: Some sellers do not automatically pass along the linear score sheet when they sell an adult horse. Knowledgeable buyers should request it but must realize that the seller is not obligated to provide it.)

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Stallion Book (Friese Stamhengsten)

Something like perpetually updated yearbooks for graduates of "KFPS stallion school", the stallion books are a tool that many breeders consider essential. This weighty multi-volume set contains a conformation photo (standing, side view) of each stallion, his stallion examination results and remarks (in Dutch) about the stallion's performance at the central stallion exam.



Each stallion's section is later updated with the report from his offspring evaluation and other important data. These books are published by the KFPS and update pages are available annually. Check with the FHANA office for sources of the books and their translation.

Offspring Judging Reports

There is no Day of Reckoning more important for a stallion than his offspring evaluation. That is when he either receives KFPS approval to continue breeding, or because he has not shown by his descendants that he improves the breed, his career as a sire is ended.

The offspring evaluation report for each stallion is a comprehensive compilation of the average scores of his offspring in various elements of the performance tests, his percentage of star mares, foal inspection results, and reports on conformation, type and gaits of his descendants. Based on all of these aspects, in addition to how well the stallion fits the current breeding goals of the KFPS, he is approved on offspring or withdrawn from future breeding.

The offspring judging report provides important information to the mare owner and is typically available in English on the FHANA web site and/or in *The Friesian*. It is also included, in Dutch, in the stallion book updates. (See 2006 offspring reports in this issue).

Conclusion

The amount of information available to us about the KFPS approved stallions and their descendants is terrific, but it can also give us a terrific headache if we let the statistics overwhelm our common sense. Sometimes we have to select a stallion with the cooled semen that survives for 72 hours, because we live in the middle of nowhere. Or we have to select a stallion at a farm that will breed our mare natural cover because she refuses to get pregnant any other way. Or we don't feel capable of handling a foal with excessive energy from an otherwise excellent stallion known for "hot" sons and daughters. None of these important factors appear in the KFPS statistics but they all figure into our decision-making.

We are extremely fortunate to have numerous very high quality stallions available to our mares here in North America. The quality and selection has never been greater for the FHANA mare owner.

No single, or combined, statistic or chart from the KFPS will tell us which stallion to breed our mare to. But each is an additional tool in the large toolkit the KFPS/FHANA provides us, in an effort to constantly improve the breed.

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Tsjerk 328



Haitse 425



Teeuwis 389