

# Stallion Choice Search for the Ultimate Combination

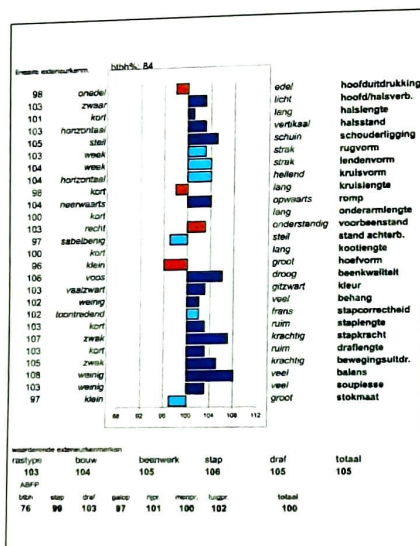
For horse breeders the stallion choice for their mare is always a fun puzzle. The starting point is of course the mare with her qualities and things to improve on. It is important to select a stallion with which you can produce a foal that is better than the foal's dam. It does not sound very difficult but there are many factors to take into account to be able to produce the best result from the combination.

Text: Marja Teekens • Translation: Anneke van den IJssel.

How does the mare owner make the best possible decision between all the KFPS studbook stallions? The offering of stallions is after all very large. Some of the breeding stallions are often seen in the limelight, e.g., the champion of the Stallion Show or the winners of the Pavo KFPS Stallion Competition. Some stallions breed many mares. The offspring presented at the inspections give a good overview of the breeding qualities of the stallions that are used often. Other stallions, however, remain more in the background but a responsible breeder, of course, also wants to include those stallions in the stallion selection. It is, after all, all about the most suitable combination: which stallion can most improve on the mare?

## Evaluation of the mare

In order to make a good stallion choice the breeder has to first of all know his or her mare. When breeding for quality the good characteristics of the mare in question are after all anchored and the less desirable characteristics are improved on. Important aid in the evaluation of the mare is the linear score form. The linear score form provides an overview of 25 linear characteristics that have been evaluated by the judges at the time of inspection for studbook registration. If the mare is a bit older and has she already had a few foals then the owner already knows a bit more about her breeding qualities. Also important is knowledge of the dam line of the mare.



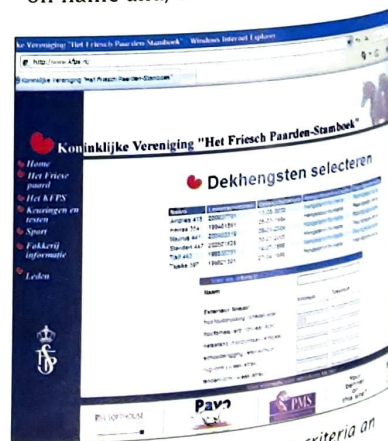
By applying the different colors the breeder can quickly see if a characteristic belongs to the optimum or maximum characteristics. Breeding values for the maximum characteristics are dark blue (favorable) or red (unfavorable). The optimum characteristics are light blue.

When subsequently the most important characteristics have been determined that need to be taken into consideration in the stallion selection, the search for a suitable stallion can start. All (breeding) information of the KFPS studbook stallions are maintained by the studbook office. Because it is impossible to have all this information completely up-to-date in print, this information is available through the studbook website, [www.kfps.nl](http://www.kfps.nl). This information is free for

members. Breeders can to their heart's delight browse the data of both their own horses as well as KFPS studbook stallions.

## Website

How can the data be reviewed? First log on to the website and click on the button 'leden/members' in the menu on the left-hand side. Then enter the member R-number and password. Once logged in you may use all the options in the menu on the left-hand side. Click under 'Fokkerij informatie/Breeding Information' on 'KFPS stamboekhengsten info/KFPS studbook stallion info.' Then click on 'Selecteren uit alle stamboekhengsten met dekverguning, op basis van naam en/of fokwaarden/Select from all studbook stallions with breeding permit based on name and/or breeding values.'



After filling out the selection criteria an overview is produced of the stallions that meet the selection criteria.



## How to request

There are different ways to consult the data base.  
Select from all studbook stallions  
Select from all studbook stallions with breeding permit, based on name and/or breeding values.  
When selecting from all studbook stallions a list is shown with all known studbook stallions. Part of this list are also stallions that are no longer breeding, e.g., because they are deceased. When selecting on all studbook stallions with breeding permit based on name and/or breeding values, horse owners can fill out the name of the stallion or based on desired breeding values they can make a list of studbook stallions that meet the criteria selected.

## Breeding values in a glance

The linear characteristics, which a breeder can select on are divided in two kinds.

Optimum characteristics: an average score (25) or breeding value (100) is most desired. Examples are: shape of the back, conformation of the front legs and hind legs.

Maximum characteristics: the higher the better, such as, e.g., expression of the face and expression in movement. Also characteristics for which the desired score is clearly above the average, such as slope of the shoulder and shape of the croup, are part of the maximum characteristics. When selecting for a maximum characteristic the desired lowest value is filled out. For selection on optimum characteristics the highest value is filled out. Please note: it concerns breeding values. They range between 80 and 120.

How does the mare owner know if it concerns an optimum or a maximum characteristic? The breeding values for the maximum characteristics are indicated in dark blue (favorable) or red (unfavorable). Breeding values for optimum characteristics are indicated in light blue.

## Filling out criteria

When determining the selection criteria the mare owner needs to make sure that he or she does not include too

many characteristics. When you select on just a small number of characteristics the result is often bigger. As an example we take 16 year old ster mare Danique. Danique is a mare with a strong trot with length in the trot. Attention needs to be paid with Danique to her front: she could have a more uphill conformation. Her neck is nicely vertical but the head/neck connection could be a bit lighter. Conclusion: the strong movement of the mare needs to be anchored. The stallion has to have a high breeding value for direction of the forehead: the head/neck connection needs to be light. All selected characteristics are maximum characteristics. We need to, therefore, find a stallion with a breeding value greater than 100 for all three characteristics.

How to fill out: in order to find a stallion with the desired traits fill out the value 105 for trot and direction of the forehead. For head-neck connection 103 is filled out. Now the database can process the request. After filling out the selection criteria an overview of stallions that meet the criteria will appear.



photo: Bart van der Hoek

*A good stallion choice needs to lead to a foal in which the good characteristics of the dam(line) are anchored and lead to an improvement on the less good characteristics of the dam.*

## Stallion information

It turns out there are six stallion that meet the criteria entered for Danique. Now the breeding results of the six stallions will be further looked into. To this end we click on the link 'Hengsten-informatie/Stallion Information.' The stallion information includes pedigree, number of breedings, breeding values, results Central Performance Testing, data birth registration, foal data, inspection results of the offspring, breeding values exterior, average scores ABFP, and breeding values for sport aptitude. With the pedigree of the stallion you can see the quality of the dam line, a very important piece of information for the stallion choice. By comparing this stallion information and comparing it with your own preferences it will already be a bit easier to make a choice between the six stallions that meet the criteria for Danique.

## Making the final choice

The choice can be finalized by setting additional criteria: for what purpose will the foal be used in the future? The aptitude for riding or driving horse can be included in the decision. Or is it a preference to use a breeding stallion approved on offspring? Of the stallions that then remain the inbreeding percentage can be calculated. That is a free service through the KFPS website. The kinship percentage also plays a role and of course above all it is important to avoid risky combinations. That means that in the combination breeding stallion-mare stallions with known hereditary issues in the pedigree need to be avoided on both the sire's and dam's side. Known stallions that carry a risk for both the dwarfism gene as well as the hydrocephalus gene are Jarich, Wessel, and Oege. In addition a selection can be made in the stallion information on the topics 'aftekeningen/markings' or 'premies van de veulens/premies of the foal crop.' And last but not least: how does the mare owner like the stallion? In the end you have a stallion choice for which the breeder made as much use as possible of all available information. And then we have to see what the result will be, because breeding is of course never completely predictable. •