

DANISH WARMBLOOD ON THE WORLD MAP

By Staff of Dansk Varmblod



The logo of the Danish Warmblood Studbook symbolizes a kingdom surrounded by the sea. This very small country in northern Europe has provided the international equestrian scene with top sport horses through several decades and plays a rapidly growing role on the international breeding scene. Let's take a closer look at the small studbook that has the wind in its sails.

Breeding horses has always been a tradition for Danish farmers. The Danish Warmblood (DWB) was developed through excellent relations with breeders and the high standards they upheld. The first Danish breeding association, which was the foundation of the Danish Warmblood, dates back to 1962. At the time, only 150 mares were registered, most of German origin. In 1979, the two leading sport horse studbooks in Denmark merged and took the name Dansk Varmblod (Danish Warmblood Studbook).



Danish Warmblood's headquarters are located in Mårslet.

In the years that followed, the founders of the new, merged studbook worked to transform Denmark's existing horse population into modern riding horses. They wanted to combine the best bloodlines in Europe using strict selection criteria. In a relatively short time, a population of noble riding horses with appealing looks and a lot of expression started to emerge and the Danish Warmblood was born. The original breeding philosophy within the DWB was to breed "all-round" horses, suitable for both dressage and jumping.

The North American Danish Warmblood Association is a division of Dansk Varmblod and is a full service registry that handles registrations, memberships, ownership transfers, participation in the dressage All-Breeds awards program and more. They also conduct bi-annual breeding inspections around the U.S. Their next tour will be in 2018. You can visit their website at www.danishwarmblood.org.

The Stallion Show in Herning

In the 1960s and '70s, the Danish stallion licensings were held in Naestved. They moved to the MCH Center in Herning in 1980 and have since then developed into an immense event. Averaging over 55,000 visitors and a total surface area of 20,000 square meters, the Danish stallion show is one of the biggest equestrian events in Europe.

Alongside the annual stallion approvals, there are also dressage and jumping classes at the highest level, young horse championships and various interesting clinics by international top trainers and riders. Every year, the Danish studbook's Gala Show sells out the house. The show has grown into a mega event through the years, attracting thousands of international visitors to Herning.



The annual stallion show held in Herning has grown to a major, popular event in Denmark.



A Constant Development

The Danish studbook has a clear vision and is very open to improvements. This has contributed to its development as one of the leading sport horse studbooks in the world. Breeding policy and goals are continually adjusted to the demands of the users.

In order to further develop the quality of the breed, for example, it was decided in 2004 to specialize in two directions. Radical changes in the selection system were implemented. Most crucial of these changes was that dressage horses would no longer be judged on free jumping. Selection on jumping qualities had shown a proven negative influence on the walk and trot of the horse. And vice versa, less importance was placed on the walk and trot of the show jumpers. The 'new' breeding goal was described as breeding a modern-built, easily rideable sport horse with a lot of flexibility and a strong and sound physique, able to perform at the highest level of the dressage or show jumping sport.

The studbook has mainly focused on durability, and has collaborated with specialized veterinarians to chart the most common conditions. Linear scoring was introduced in 2014 to gain objective and informative evaluations of the DWB population, while at the same time genomic selection can improve the breed and reduce generation intervals. In short, genomic selection enables the studbook, through a blood sample, to have very reliable breeding information of a young mare or stallion that would normally take an old elite sire fifteen years of covering before this level of information is collected. The studbook also calculated indexes based on conformation, performance tests, young horse competitions and official sporting results.

To live up to the high standards of its breeding philosophy, the studbook introduced specialization to select those horses able to perform at the highest level of their disciplines. To guarantee quality, only the very best horses from other studbooks are allowed into Danish breeding.

Strong Foundation

The success of the Danish studbook can be traced back to the four pillars the studbook was built on. Successful breeders, strong dam lines firmly established over the years, and a proven, functioning selection system are the first three. But above all, the stallion managers with their vision of the future have time and again succeeded in selecting the most interesting bloodlines from abroad for Denmark.

Influential Trakehner stallions such as Donauwind, Ibbikus and Schwadroneur have made a considerable mark on the breeding of the modern sport horse. The same goes

for the Hanoverian Allegro and the Oldenburg-bred Aleksander, along with many others of their time. From the start, an attractive conformation and three good, powerful gaits were considered key for the dressage horses. But the stallion managers also kept on selecting the best stallions from Holstein for their modern jumping horse breeding. Lagano, one of the best jumping progenitors of his time, is a fine example of this, while stallions such as Limelight, Loran and Leandro with their typical Holsteiner model and strong movements, produced top dressage horses

over and over again when crossed with Danish mares.

With the emergence of fresh and frozen semen from stallions worldwide, breeders are no longer bound to their nearest stallion station. However, stallion managers still play a vital role in searching out and bringing the most interesting

and talented stallions to Denmark. Danish breeders can consider themselves very fortunate that several influential stallion managers bring top progenitors such as Quidam de Revel and Don Schufro to Denmark.

Along with other imported stallions such as Michelino and Come Back II, we find these top progenitors in the highest echelons of the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses rankings, which were led for a long time by the Danish-based Don Schufro. The Danish studbook has the vision and investments of several resourceful stallion managers to thank for this success. These stallions have serviced large numbers of mares from the very start of their stud careers, contributing to their widespread fame. Most recently the Danish stallion Blue Hors Zack (by Rousseau), who debuted at Grand Prix level last year, is shaping up to become another star in the breeding world.

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Grand Prix Stallion Blue Hors Zack (Rousseau x Jazz) has become one of the Danish Warmblood's more influential stallions.



DWB medals at the FEI/WBFSH World Breeding Championships for Young Dressage Horses

- ▶ 2008 silver for 6 y.o.: **Polka Hit Nexen** by Sandro Hit/Temple Wind xx (bred by Stutteri Nexen)
- ▶ 2009 silver for 5 y.o.: **UNO Donna Unique** by Blue Hors Don Schufro/Falkland (bred by Stutteri UNO)
- ▶ 2009 gold for 5 y.o.: **Hønnerups Driver** by Blue Hors Romanov/Blue Hors Don Schufro (bred by Stutteri Hønnerup)
- ▶ 2010 gold for 6 y.o.: **UNO Donna Unique** by Blue Hors Don Schufro/Falkland (bred by Stutteri UNO)
- ▶ 2014 gold for 5 y.o.: **Sezuan** by Blue Hors Zack/Blue Hors Don Schufro (bred by Linette Jæger)
- ▶ 2015 silver for 5 y.o.: **Fiontina** by Fassbinder/Blue Hors Romanov (bred by Hanne Lund og Henrik Hansen)
- ▶ 2015 gold for 5 y.o.: **Fiontini** by Fassbinder/Blue Hors Romanov (bred by Hanne Lund og Henrik Hansen)
- ▶ 2015 gold for 6 y.o.: **Sezuan** by Blue Hors Zack/Blue Hors Don Schufro (bred by Linette Jæger)
- ▶ 2016 gold for 6 y.o.: **Fiontini** by Fassbinder/Blue Hors Romanov (bred by Hanne Lund og Henrik Hansen)
- ▶ 2016 gold for 7 y.o.: **Sezuan** by Blue Hors Zack/Blue Hors Don Schufro (bred by Linette Jæger)



The 5-Year-Old silver and gold medalists at the 2015 FEI/WBFSH World Breeding Championships for young dressage horses were (left) **Fiontina** by Fassbinder/Blue Hors Romanov and (right) **Fiontini** also by Fassbinder/Blue Hors Romanov.

International Success

The Danish dressage rider Anne Grethe Jensen (now Törnblad) was the first to bring a Danish Warmblood registered horse to international fame when she won the European Dressage Championships aboard the gelding Marzog (by Herzog), helping the Danish team to the silver medal. This performance put the Danish studbook firmly on the map and elevated Danish breeders to among the leading dressage breeders in the world overnight. Marzog himself was crowned the dressage horse of the century in 1999 by an international jury of dressage judges.

Many a Danish Warmblood horse has since then achieved international success. The Danish show jumping stallion Lando (by Lancier) won the individual silver medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics under the Dutch flag, and the dressage horse Mistral Hojris (by Michellino) has won medals at the European championships, the World Equestrian Games and the Olympics with his rider Laura Bechtolsheimer (now Tomlinson). Of the same era was the leading Danish team horse Digby (by Donnerhall), ridden by Princess Nathalie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein and bred by her mother, HRH Princess Benedikte, who is the patron of the Danish Warmblood. When HRH Princess Benedikte took on the patronage of the studbook, she received the mare Øxenholm Pamina as a present from the studbook. This mare is the dam of the renowned Digby and still runs in the blood of several of the Princesses' current broodmares.

Americans Embrace DWBs

On the North American continent, the Danish Warmblood horses have played a major role in competitive dressage here in the U.S. They include U.S. team horses Calecto V (by Come Back II) and Dublet (by Diamond Hit). Heather Blitz made headlines when she trained and competed her 18-hand Danish gelding Paragon (Don Schufro x Loran) to Grand Prix about five years ago. The pair was selected as the traveling reserve for the 2012 Olympic team. In recent years the Grand Prix dressage scene in Wellington, Florida has been dominated by two outstanding Danish Warmblood mares, Mariett (by Come Back II) and My Lady (by Michellino).

In May, at The Dutta Corp. U.S. Festival of Champions held at Gladstone, New Jersey, many top horses were Danish Warmbloods, bred both here and abroad. Goerklintgaards Dublet (by Diamond Hit) owned by Diana Perry ridden by Kasey

Perry-Glass won the Grand Prix championship. Others in the Grand Prix were Lonoir (by De Noir) owned and ridden by Olivia LaGoy-Weltz and Marron (by Michelino) owned and ridden by Mette Rosencrantz.

At the same competition, in the Intermediate 1 championship, Monique (by Tailormade Temptation), owned and ridden by Jane Cleveland, placed second, and Montana (by Rambo) owned by Brenda Duet ridden by JJ Tate also placed well.

In addition, some very talented show jumpers and hunter/jumpers have found their way to the U.S. The mare Strapless (by Leandro) won the AHJF Hunter Classic Spectacular in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, plus she was 2001 National Hunter/Jumper Council National Trails Champion in Regular Working Hunter. Rumba (by Carano) was a multi-hunter champion and The Chronicle of the Horse 2009 Horse of the Year.

Stars in the Making

The Danish studbook has been represented at the FEI/WBFSH World Breeding Championships for both young dressage and young jumping horses for years. Long before the first medals went to Denmark, we saw Danish horses perform at the championships time after time. Finalists such as Milan (by Michelino), Clearwater (by Carpaccio), Schianto (by Gribaldi), Sopranos (by Come Back II), Atterupgaards Cassidy (by Caprimond), Skovens Rafael (by Blue Hors Romanov), Polka Hit Nexen (by Sandro Hit) and Honnerups Driver (by Blue Hors Romanov) have all developed to the highest level.

At the World Breeding Jumping Championships for Young Horses in Lanaken, the DWB stallion Lucky Light (by Lagano) won the 'Sires of the World' competition in 1995, and the DWB stallion Cajus was the first Danish Warmblood to win a medal when he finished third as a six-year-old in 2000. In 2004, the DWB mare Ligitta (by Come Back II) claimed the silver medal in the six-year-old division and, under the name Frida, she later participated in the 2008 Olympic Games in Hong Kong under Mexico's Enrique Gonzalez.

When talking about the World Breeding Championships for Young Horses, one of the most extraordinary horses of the past few years has to be the Danish Warmblood stallion Sezuan (by Blue Hors Zack), who became the first horse in history to win the event three consecutive times (under Dorothee Schneider) and is now making a name for himself at the small tour level. The stallion Glock's Zonik is another of Blue Hors Zack's Danish sons fast on his way to becoming a 'shooting star' under Dutch rider Edward Gal.



The young Sezuan (Blue Hors Zack x Don Schufro) who went on to win the World Breeding Championship three years in row.

Next in line to be able to become triple world champion for young horses is the Danish mare Fiontini (by Fassbinder), who has won gold as a five-year-old in 2015 and again as a six-year-old in 2016 under Spanish rider Severo Jurado. The mare has now sold to a Swedish young rider.

President with an International Focus

Since his election in 1994, Jan Pedersen has been the president of the Danish Warmblood studbook. He has also been the president of the WBFSH since 1999.



Jan Pedersen, president of Dansk Varmblod who also serves as president of the WBFSH.

Sport horses from around the world have become one big family. Most leading stallions nowadays are available for breeding everywhere in the world, through almost every studbook. In order to survive as a studbook in this battle of the studbooks, you need to have unique qualities. The studbooks that have the best mare lines at their disposal, the best

breeders and good breeding directors, as well as the best selection system, will be able to stand out from the rest.

The breeding program of the DWB is based on the latest scientific knowledge. In addition, the DWB is an open studbook, constantly on the lookout for the best genetic material, which is made available to Danish breeders through the Danish stallion stations. Our president believes that this policy is one of the key points behind the Danish Warmblood's great success.

