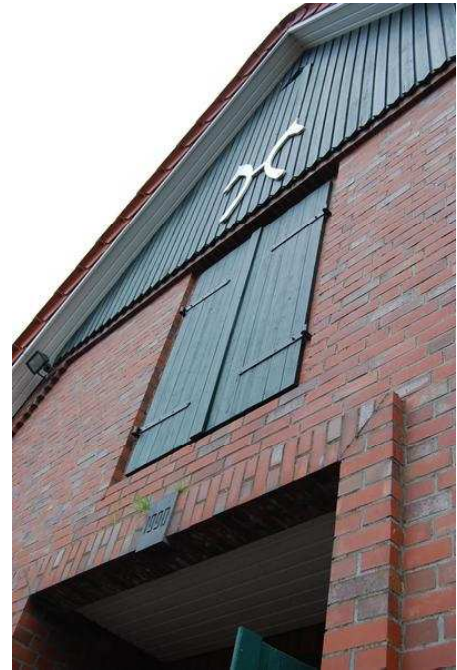


ELYSIUM FARM FUND GRANT REPORT

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Through the generosity of the Elysium Farm Fund Grant I was able to attend the summer session of the Hannoveraner Verband Breeders Course in Verden, Germany. This course is offered every other year, rotating between a fall course focusing on stallions and a summer course focusing on mares.

The summer session of the Hannoveraner Verband Breeders Course is an intensive 6-day course consisting of lectures on the history of the Hanoverian horse, conformation and blood line analysis, visits to both small and large breeding farms, stallion stations, Celle & Adelheidsdorf, and attending many mare and foal shows. Our days started between 7:30-8am and we didn't get home some nights until 11pm!



There was one repeatable theme throughout the course and Ingo Pape summarized it best, “you don’t breed a mare, you breed a dam line. And it is what this dam line has produced in the last 10 years that matters.” We have a good mare base here in the U.S., but it is small and still developing. I feel we need to encourage breeders to seek out these highly productive mare lines - the ones that have produced successful sport horses, stallion sons and premium mares.

The first day started with a lecture by Dr. Christmann on the history of the Hanoverian breed, some breeding statistics in Germany, and the breeding goals for the different sport horse disciplines of dressage, jumping, eventing and pleasure riding. He also discussed the criteria needed for mares to be placed in the studbook as well as stallion inspection, licensing and testing.

After the lecture we were presented a few of the stand out stallions including Londontime, Lissaro van de Helle, Furst Nymphenburg and Floratio. Sadly I forgot my camera that day but will update once I get some pictures sent to me by some of the other attendees.

I was most impressed with Lissaro and Furst Nymphenburg. Lissaro had such elasticity and self carriage as well a great demeanor. He was on the smaller side so might be a great stallion choice to downsize a larger mare. Furst Nymphenburg has huge presence with a large uphill frame and beautiful head/neck/shoulder (and the absolutely most beautiful liver chestnut color).

We attended four mare shows: Elmlohe, Dobrock, Bargstedt and Sandbostel. These shows are like nothing else I have seen before; it is hours of mare after mare entering the show triangle, one right after the other, in quick succession. The classes are broken down into two-year-old dressage mares, two-year-old jumping mares, three-year-old dressage mares with and without performance testing, three-year-old jumping mares with and without performance testing, four-

year-old dressage mares, four-year-old jumping mares and finally mare families. First the mares enter the ring individually and are trotted in hand around the entire triangle, next they are walked in a straight line towards the judges and finally stood up for conformation analysis. At the end of each class the mares are presented as a group in a “walk ring” where they can be evaluated for comparison. Throughout the entire show we wore headsets so all the judges comments were translated for us into English.

There is no better way to develop your eye for conformation, gait evaluation and movement like seeing 50 mares presented in rapid succession. It is through this that you can start to see subtle differences in the way a mare uses her entire body (neck, shoulder, back and hind leg) at the walk and trot and if she naturally holds herself in self carriage.

You can begin to see a strong versus weak loin, neck position, good versus straight shoulder, leg conformation and a nice topline with good saddle position. As a group I think we mostly struggled with evaluation of the hind leg. It is amazing how different hind leg conformation can look depending on how the mare is stood up. After a while it was dizzying and all the legs started to look either too straight, sickle hocked or cow hocked!

For the Hanoverian breed all the shows and inspections are judged by a panel of three judges. They confer, debate and discuss any discrepancies they may have between them before settling on a score or placement. It is not up to the sole opinion of one judge. I find this more fair and less swayed by either politics or personal taste. Due to the large size of the grounds at the mare show in Elmlohe, we were able to stand in the middle of the arena with the judges for each walk ring and Dr. Christmann gave us his opinion and comments. This was a fantastic experience as the vantage point is much different when you are watching the mares as a group from the center of the arena with the judges versus the sidelines. It was also interesting to see that even if a mare had a fabulous trot and nice conformation, but had a less than swinging walk it was quite possible that she would be placed second or third in a group. These judges definitely were not impressed by front legs flying high at the trot! The mares also had to use their bodies, their hind leg, be free of tension and have a natural tendency for self carriage.

Maren Schlender from the Hannoveraner Verband gave us tips on how to present horses on the triangle. It cannot be stressed enough how important and difficult it is to present your horse properly. You only have one chance to show off your horse so one should be skilled and have practiced, practiced, practiced! First, while trotting or walking a horse in-hand there should never be tension on the reins. The handler's arm should be held out and very steady to help guide the horse in the direction of travel. The arm should be held in a way to encourage the horse to move in self carriage versus holding the head too high or bracing against the reins. One must be steady on their feet, a fast runner with long stride and agile. There were many runners that were pushed out of the triangle and the horse's presentation suffered greatly. When walking the horse in-hand it is again important to have no tension on the reins. The handler must allow the horse to walk freely forward with head and neck stretched, good tempo and good swing through the body. To stand a horse properly for conformation evaluation the horse must be presented in an “open” position so all four legs can be evaluated. The handler, at this phase, should hold the reins open, one rein in each hand. The head and neck should be encouraged to stretch forward but not so far as to allow the horse to fall forward over their shoulder. The hind legs should be held under the horse, not parked out like a Saddlebred.

We also had robust discussions on the bloodlines of each mare presented. Discussing whether we would have chosen the same stallion and what we felt each stallion might have passed on to that individual mare. In one of Dr. Christmann's lectures he talked about how adding jumping blood into a dressage breeding program can be beneficial, but not the other way around, and you can see how some breeders have incorporated this philosophy. The popularity of some stallions was obvious such as Dancier, Contendro I, Scolari, Quaterback and Furst Nymphenburg. There were some standout mares from lesser used stallions such as Herzensdieb, Damsey, Furst Rousseau, Monti Bellini, and Silberschmied. Seeing so many mares you can really start to get a feeling of what a particular stallion may pass on, both the good and bad traits. I must admit that I thought my stallion choices for 2013 were already decided, but after this trip my mind has been changed...to stallions I would not have considered in the past!

At the end of the week we attended one foal show at the farm/ stallion station of the Bockmann's. Here we were also presented some stallions in hand including the highly popular and impressive Floriscount and Fidertanz. It was great to have Dr. Christmann talk us through how to evaluate foals as I think this is a very difficult skill to develop. Being able to see so many foals at a time really helped us see foals that were free in the shoulder, good use of their hind end, and good use of their entire bodies.



The Summer 2012 Hannoveraner Verband Breeders Course group enjoying the lovely German summer weather at the Mare Show in Dobrock! Sadly, I did not get any great photos at the mare shows as I was focused on watching, learning and listening to our translated comments. I did get some decent photos of the stallions we saw so enjoy those photos below.

We were an international group: FEI rider Alix Szepesi and Olga from the USA; Emma and Jill (a mother daughter duo), Kerstin, Nici, Hilary, and Sue from the UK, Hillamari and Anna from Finland, Silvia from France, and Paula from Spain. Again, it was great to see old friends and make new ones at the same time.

CELLE TOUR



This is a candid shot of the young, hot new jumper stallion Grey Top (Graf Top-Singular Joter I-Calypso II). He is currently the most used jumper stallion at Celle and had a wonderful personality, beautiful front end and great limb conformation.



This second picture is that of the wonderful young stallion Don Darius (Don Frederico-Markus Deak xx-Falkenstern I). We were very lucky to see him go under saddle as they are preparing him for the Bundeschampionat. He was amazingly light in the bridle, his frame was quite flexible between compression and extension as well as a super willing attitude. Definitely a stallion to watch and add to the potential breeding list. His pedigree is quite interesting with the thoroughbred Markus Deak xx up front so might be a great choice for a refining stallion.

STALLION STATIONS DORUM AND OBERNDORF



Bonifatius (Belissimo M-Lauries Crusador xx-Lemon Tree). This is a young stallion with impressive performance testing scores of 133.43/1/48; 136.87/3; 111.05/13 showing that he excelled in both the dressage and jumping portions of his testing. Very interesting pedigree with again thoroughbred upfront in his breeding.



Above is the fabulous stallion Hochadel (Hohenstein-Donnerhall-Lanthan). Anyone who knows me is well aware of my love for the stallion Hohenstein so it is no surprise that I was impressed with Hochadel. He possesses his fathers gorgeous type, that lovely head/neck/shoulder that the Trakhener passes on. His demeanor was also impressive as he was quite docile and could be handled by anyone. I am excited in that they are test freezing his semen this summer and he may be available frozen next year. It would be a great opportunity for those of us in the U.S. that are leary of using Hohenstein frozen semen but are eager for his pedigree.



There is no mistaking the great stallion Rotspon (Rubinstein-Argentan-Pik Bube I). He is the sire of my lovely mare EM Roseblume (Rotspon-Davignon-Matcho) and I can see where she gets her head, neck and shoulder from! He is still quite impressive and in great shape for a stallion at the age of 17 years. Again, he impressed with his super demeanor, which he is generally regarding as passing on to his offspring.



Quaterhall is a young stallion by the sensational stallion Quaterback-Donerahall-Walt Disney I. Quaterhall's dam is the full sister to Donata K, the dam to stallion Deveraux (stationed at Jens Meyer). A fantastic pedigree and a dam line that has been highly prolific.



Comte is generally regarded as a jumper stallion with the pedigree of Contendro I-Granulit-Landadel. However, it is worth noting that he scored quite well in both the dressage and jumping portions of his testing. He is a stallion that might be worth considering if one wanted to add a little jumper pedigree into their dressage breeding program. Contendro I is known for stamping his offspring with a modern type, uphill frame, and quite good canter. Those qualities clearly came through with the stallion Comte.



Drombusch is quite an impressive young stallion that has a demeanor that is very amateur friendly. He is by Don Vino-Likoto xx-Weltmeyer so again a stallion with thoroughbred up close in his pedigree. Don Vino's dam sire is Consul and I think you can see that Trakehner influence coming through in his lovely type. He is definitely one to watch and might be a great choice for a refining stallion with a super amateur friendly personality.

HENGST-STATION PAPE

There are a few places we had the pleasure of visiting that make you feel like you are stepping onto historic warmblood breeding ground: Celle, Adelheidsdorf, Klosterhof Medigen, Hengstation Meyer and absolutely Hengstation Pape. I can guarantee without an experienced guide you would drive right past their place 100 times! It feels like their farm is smack dab in the middle of town. However, once you drive through the gate you see that their facility is quite large with pastures extended far behind. Ingo and Susan Pape were the most gracious of hosts. We got to see their fabulous stallion line up including the majestic Davignon, young hot stallion Lemony's Nicket, the most popular Scolari and Fiorano and Desiderio. Ingo Pape said the most basic, yet profound thing during our visit..."you don't breed a dam, you breed a dam line." I think this is so important for us breeders to remember when bringing a dam into our program.





We had the absolute pleasure of seeing Lemony's Nicket presented under saddle by Susan Pape. I am normally not one that jumps on the band wagon of the hot young stallion de jour but I think I need to make an exception for Lemony's Nicket. Wow, is all I have to say! He is so free in his movement, changes easily between collection and extension and so highly rideable. He has such a strong dam line that it greatly reduces the "risk" associated with a new young stallion. Also, as Hassler Dressage will be the ones handling his frozen semen importation to the U.S. we can at least expect nothing less than their stellar customer service.



This is Fiorano (Rousseau-Rotspon-Laurie's Crusador xx). He is much "stockier" than I have seen from most Rousseau offspring but I think that is the Rotspon coming through! He is a super mover with exceptional pedigree (what can I say, I have a Rotspon mare and I have bred to Rousseau). Ingo Pape even admitted he can be a little hot in an exciteable atmosphere but they are hoping as he matures that will improve. I hope so because the videos I have seen of him are fabulous, as are most Rousseau offspring. I think Rousseau can throw a bit of a more sensitive horse, but for the competitive dressage rider sometimes this is needed.



Scolari is a wildly popular stallion with a fantastic pedigree (Sandro Hit-De Niro-Weltmeyer). He is built so uphill, long legs and quite modern. His dam line is very strong as well making him a great option for breeders wanting to add an "S" line blood. Of course, De Niro is probably Donnerhall's best son for producing GP level dressage horses so great to have in a pedigree.



Desiderio is a great looking son of Dimaggio with a dash of Holsteiner jumping blood via his dam line (Dimaggio-Donnerhall-Classiker). A very interesting pedigree, especially for someone wanting to add a bit of jumper blood. His sire Dimaggio stood in England for a very long time so his breeding has been quite limited in Germany. He has been producing some fantastic dressage horses. Desiderio is also half brother to Furstenball and closely related to Seiger Hit via his very strong dam line. A very interesting stallion to keep an eye on!

BOCKMANN



The very impressive stallion Floriscount (Florencio-Donnerhall-Walldorf). Again, a stallion that is built so uphill and modern you can picture riding him would be a dream. He was quite large, with good frame and beautiful front end. He is known to be a little hot so maybe a good choice for an old style mare that needs an engine! One of our attendee's bought a fabulous foal by him during this visit! Can't wait to see how he matures. As he is an impressive young stallion I am excited to watch what he is producing in the years to come.



Last but not least the highly successful stallion Fidertanz (Fidermark I-Ravallo-Fruhlings). I absolutely love the breeding on this stallion bringing together Florestan I, some Holsteiner blood via Ravallo and a bit of jumper blood via Fruhlings. Fidertanz has been a super producer thus far and is a great choice for a mare line that is chock full of the "D", "R", "W" and "S" lines and in need of some out crossing. He has super conformation and has been quite successful up to PSG.