

WBFSH REPORT

by Eve Mainwaring

Honorary National Director, Eve Mainwaring attended the Annual General Assembly of the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses (WBFSH) with Chris Gould, as delegates for the CWHBA. The event was hosted this year by the Hanoverian Verband in Verden, Germany. The following is her report:

During our trip to Verden, we were able to re-establish contact with Dr. Fredericksen, Past-President of the Swedish Warmblood. During talks, he expressed interest in exploring Canadian prospects for the 1.4 meter and higher jumper divisions. We were also able to spend some time with Cord Wassman (Past-President of the Licensing Committee of the Hanoverian Verband and member of our 2006 SPT judging panel). We visited his farm in order to track down availability of semen for the top pony line he and his wife produce for the European market. We also met with Haken Wahlmann, President of the Finnish Warmblood and Fritz Von Blottnitz, both of whom have served as past SPT judges for the CWHBA. We discussed the judging standards in Canada and how that will impact the quality of our young breeding stock.

During my discussions with the various delegates from Germany, it became clear to me that shipping semen from Germany is a complicated process involving quarantine conditions for collections. It is only viable financially where the semen is in high demand. Sometimes, when seeking certain bloodlines, it is possible to find them in North America.

My main objective while in Verden, was to observe how the well established breed registries (in this case the Hanoverians) evaluate young horses and make their selections. I observed the licensing of approximately 70 young stallions from a group of 111. This was an awesome performance. I was particularly impressed with the attention that is paid to turn-out and appearance.

The Hanoverian breed society has always paid much attention to good movement and conformation which has made

them producers of high quality dressage horses. Lately they have been stressing jumping as well and developed a program to promote jumping in young brood mares. Several top dressage horses have come from known jumping lines. Inspectors are now making some concessions to movement and conformation provided the young stallions show a lot of scope and technique.

We briefly visited 2 small breeding operations and one very large scale breeding and sales operation. The conclusion I came to was that the smaller breeders carry on horse breeding as a sideline business together with one or two other businesses. In the case of both small operations I visited, the breeders also raised pigs, sold agricultural products, accepted boarders with full mare care, or sold semen from their stallions. They had the whole family involved, with children doing chores, riding, training, showing, etc. In the case of the large scale operation, it was simply mind boggling. The broodmare herd was approximately 400. The young stock received preliminary training on the breeding farm before being moved to the training stables. The training stables are separate for the jumping and dressage disciplines, each having their own indoor arenas and outdoor rings. There was also a sales arena with large seating capacity, a chandelier and a spotlight system that was guided by infrared rays following the rider. This marketing and sales facility created an atmosphere for selling that is to dream about. In all cases, large or small, care and turn-out were very important to the breeders and was always evident.

For my personal enhancement of knowledge, I found the seminar on chute jumping very worthwhile, something I will carry to my judging trips. The workshop on cloning was also very informative. It is still very controversial as to its success. Our Canadian group of delegates did discuss the possibility of Canada hosting the WBFSH National Assembly possibly in 2008, with the logical choice being the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto.

In summary, the event was beautifully hosted, the reception was very warm and arrangements were very efficient. The City of Verden is a very worthy site.

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