



## WBSFH GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SEMINAR

Apeldoorn, Holland, November 5 - 8, 2007

This year's General Assembly of the WBSFH took place in the Dutch city of Apeldoorn, famous to Canadians for our role there during World War II. The site of the Dutch Royal Palace – "Paleis het Loo", Apeldoorn is central in Holland and proved to be the ideal starting point for a number of tours which took participants to all corners of the country.

Chris Gould and Jennette Coote, representing CWHBA, attended all the tours and seminars, which took place over four days. They will be reporting these in some detail in future issues of Breeder's Digest.

The focus of the event was Selection Tools. The

important, but little understood area of "Horse Personality" was addressed in a seminar where three research papers were presented. Dr. Vissar, Holland, Dr. Henry, France and Dr. Sondergaard, Denmark are all doing independent research around different aspects of horse behavior and character or temperament. What was fascinating is that all three women were attempting to find objective measures, which differentiated character or temperament from behaviour. Temperament being the predisposition of a horse to react to challenges in its environment in a certain way as opposed to that reaction, which is behaviour. As Professor Visser put it "the use of feasible character tests in horse breeding will create a win-win situation for both horse and man.

A trip to Roelofs Stables in Dem Ham, involved a practical demonstration of a method for systematically judging foals for conformation, free movement and free jumping. A system which allowed breeders to make accurate selections at an early age would certainly be an advantage. This demonstration attempted to meld scientific observations with a practical methodology.

Moving away from early predictions, participants were then given an excellent presentation of the

Dutch Stallion Performance Test at Ermelo. Two outstanding young stallions, currently participating in the 70 day test, were put through their paces, while senior judges explained the process and what they are looking for in a jumping stallion and a dressage stallion. Holland is in its second year of a new system which tests jumping stallions and dressage stallions using separate tests. This formal separation of breeding into two lines is controversial. It has sparked a lot of discussion & will be watched very closely by Dutch breeders and Warmblood societies world wide.

Discussions at the General Assembly covered WBSFH long term strategic plans, the UELN and data exchange as well as Interstallion. It was disappointing to many that Interstallion will no longer be funded by the WBSFH, however the relatively small contribution which came from the WBSFH should not be sufficient to end the project. The major obstacle was that agreement could not be reached concerning use & access to data between the project team and some of the major registries.

The KWPN made excellent hosts to this year's event. Next General Assembly will take place in France in 2008.