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An overview of breeding objectives for warmblood sport horses

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to review the current breeding objectives of organisations that run a selection programme for warmblood riding horses in the light of an increasing trend in trade of semen across countries. In a questionnaire, 19 horse breeding organisations provided information on breeding objective traits. Variation both in length and amount of details used to define individual breeding objectives was large, reflecting that many traits in sport horse breeding are not easy to measure, and therefore, have to be defined in a subjective way. The majority of the breeding objectives included conformation, gaits and performance in show jumping and dressage. Some breeding objectives also included behaviour, soundness, health and fertility. However, several organisations did not specify the sport discipline and the level of competition (amateur, national or international level) in the breeding objective. In general, relative weightings of the traits within the verbally presented breeding objectives were not given, but were assessed by the organisations in response to this study. The relevance of more information on expected future production circumstances and on the genetic

information on expected future production circumstances and on the genetic parameters of the traits of interest are discussed. A further review of the consistency, completeness and the number of traits of the present breeding objectives for sport horses is recommended to optimise the efficiency of selection decisions.



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Keywords

Breeding objective; Sport horse; Sport performance; Conformation; Specialisation

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