



GUIDELINES ON SETTING UP A SPORT HORSE STUDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The WBFSH receives various requests for guidance and help in setting up sport horse studbooks. These requests mostly come from countries that have no existing studbooks but wish to formally organise sport horse breeding. The WBFSH has therefore prepared written Guidelines on setting up a Sport Horse Studbook and formally organising involvement of the studbook in sport horse competitions.

This document comprises of five sections:

- 1. HOW TO SET UP A SPORT HORSE STUDBOOK ORGANISATION
- 2. HOW TO ORGANISE A STUDBOOK AND ITS ACTIVITIES
- 3. HOW TO BE RECOGNISED BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY IN A COUNTRY
- 4. BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE WBFSH
- 5. WBFSH STUDBOOK HORSES IN COMPETITIONS & WBFSH RANKINGS

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1. HOW TO SET UP A SPORT HORSE STUDBOOK ORGANISATION

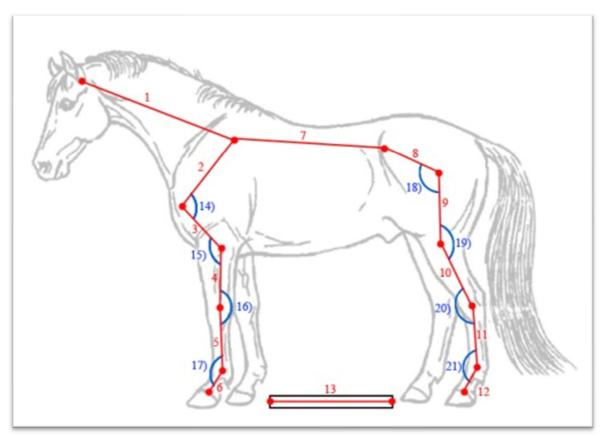
A sport horse studbook is usually set up as a democratic society of members. It may be set up as a Limited Company, a Non-Profit organisation, a Co-operative Society, an Association of members or in some other form. The studbook may be national in coverage, international or regional within a country.

The following steps should be followed:

- 1) A group of founding members should be formed.
- 2) The name and legal form of the Studbook should be decided.
- 3) The new studbook should be formally set up and registered as appropriate in the country in which it has its headquarters. This may include registration as a legal entity. Some countries require that Horse Studbooks be approved by a competent authority in the country such as its Ministry of Agriculture. (more information on this in Section 3 of this document)
- 4) The detailed rules of the studbook should include:
 - i) The name and address and formal contact details
 - ii) Who is entitled to become a member and an application procedure for membership
 - iii) Obligations and rights of membership
 - iv) Governance structures including Management Committees, frequency of meetings, requirement to hold an Annual General Meeting
 - v) Many sport horse studbooks incorporate the principle that the studbook is a society of members, controlled by the members in a democratic fashion. This is required for the studbook to be accepted as a member of the WBFSH (more information on this in section 4)
 - vi) Disciplinary and Appeals procedures.
 - vii) Procedures for the registration of horses in the studbook (additional information in Section 2).
 - viii)A breeding programme for the improvement of the breed (additional information in Section 2).

2) HOW TO ORGANISE A STUDBOOK AND ITS ACTIVITIES

The studbook must provide detailed breeding rules to guide members in carrying out a structured breeding program for breed improvement. These rules must include the studbook's breeding goals, selection system, recording and identification system.



Source: USPC Manual of Horsemanship

a) Breeding Goal:

The breeding goals should be described objectively and define traits such as description of the breed, function, soundness, rideability, reproduction etc. To be a WFBSH member one overall goal must be to breed horses for at least one of the Olympic disciplines: show jumping, dressage and eventing.

A review process must be included. As the demand of the market and the sport may change over time, it is important to review the breeding plan and breeding goal on regular basis, e.g. every 10 years which is equal to one horse-generation. Changes or anticipated changes to the breeding plan should be communicated to the studbook members promptly. For example, studbooks that previously did not breed selectively for a discipline, but bred for all-round horses, must inform their breeders if their future breeding plan is to breed and select specifically for dressage or jumping. These changes will need to be reflected in the studbook rules and policy procedures. These

updates must be communicated to the WBFSH Development Department in the annual report, under the section on significant new developments.

b) Description of the Breed:

Horses in sport horse studbooks are often, but not exclusively, warmbloods. Each breed to be entered in the studbook must be identified and described with respect to acceptable conformation, temperament, gaits, technique and intended use. Colouring may need to be defined, for example if only solid colours are permitted.



© Ridehesten

Example of Description of the Breed – DWB (Dansk Varmblod)

Overall breeding goal for the Danish Warmblood society:

"A noble, leggy, and supple riding horse with high rideability and a strong health. It has capacity in either jumping or dressage to compete on international level".

In detail the breeding goal is described as "A large-framed, harmonic riding horse standing at approx. 165-170 cm. who has a suitable amount of noble blood in his lines (being Thoroughbred, purebred Arab, Shagya Arab, or Anglo Arab), in order to achieve a brave and energetic sport horse, eager to perform. He has a nice and cooperative temper and a good learning ability. The head is expressive with big eyes that enables a wide field of vision. He has an average length of neck which is well-set-on with a nice arch and topline, being clean through the gullet thus assuring a good connection between head and neck. The shoulders are long and sloping and the withers are well defined and pronounced thus assuring an optimum position of the saddle. Good freedom of elbows. A suitable length of back. Oval costal convexity that enables an optimum placing of the rider's leg. Good costal length enabling suitable space for lungs and inner organs. Muscular and supple loins. Long, muscular, and well-shaped hindquarters. A well-set-on tail with a correct tail carriage. Muscular forearm, and wide and strong thighs and second thighs. Strong, clean, and well-defined limbs with suitable angles at hocks and pasterns. Well defined joints. Short and flat cannon bones. Pasterns of suitable length and well-shaped hooves with a quality crust. Great importance is attached to a good durability, and that the breeding stock has an obvious expression of gender and is without hereditary defects.

Description of function:

The dressage horse: A horse with large and well-balanced movement, showing good, active knees and hocks in all three gaits. The walk is elastic and ground-covering with a clear rhythm. The trot is elastic, with a clear rhythm and good cadence. The canter is uphill, ground-covering with a clear rhythm and good balance. Furthermore, good rideability with courage and willingness to perform is very much desired.

The show jumper: A powerful and elastic jump with great capacity and good technique. Importance is attached to a supple, balanced and ground-covering canter along with a natural carefulness, great courage, breadth of view, and a good rideability"

c) Breeding Program:

The studbook may be closed in that only horses of the identified breed may be entered in the studbook. Trakehner registries have adopted this approach. Other sport horse studbooks are open, in that they accept horses from other designated warmblood studbooks and progeny of horses with one parent in the studbook and one parent in another "approved" studbook. Usually, the outside studbooks that are accepted within the breeding program of an open studbook have breeding goals that are similar to the studbook's own breeding goals, and therefore outside studbooks are permitted as part of a breed improvement and diversification program. Often WBFSH members that operate with an open studbook recognise other WBFSH studbooks in their breeding program, but this should be specified in the studbook rules.

d) Selection of Breeding Stock:



Source www.sbsnet.be

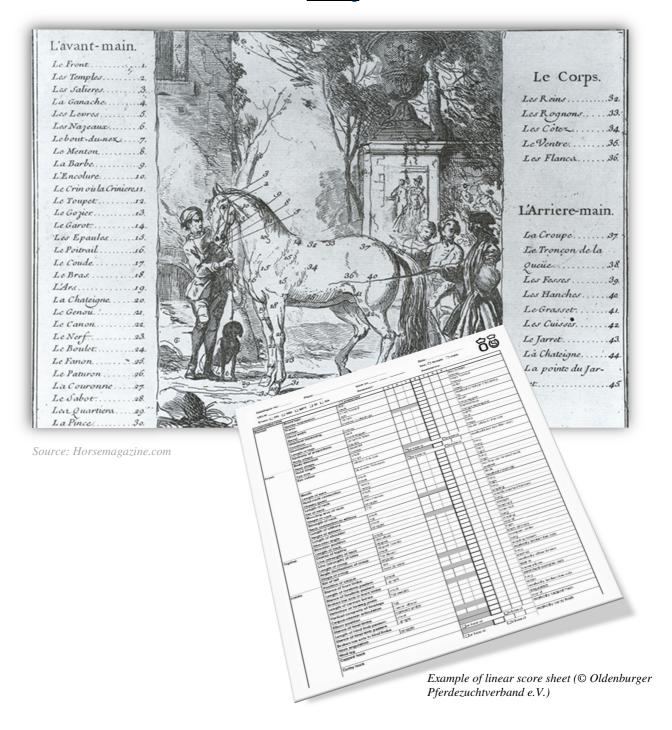
The procedures for selecting and grading mares and stallions must be laid down in the rules.

The selection of breeding stock is an important aspect of ensuring that the breeding goals can be achieved. Especially horses of outside studbooks should be evaluated and selected before being accepted into the breeding program. To ensure an early selection most of sport horse studbooks require that both the dam and the sire are graded according to the specific breeding goal before a foal can be entered into the studbook. Normally stallions and mares can be graded from the age of three. Some studbooks may require stallions/mares to have competed at a certain level of competition. However, this requirement can result in a long generation interval and subsequently slow breeding progress. Selection of breeding stock is carried out by judges or inspectors that have been educated and trained by the studbook or are invited judges from other recognised sport horse studbooks.

i. Scoring systems for Selection of Conformation and Performance Traits

The scoring system used to evaluate horses must be described in the studbook rules. Many studbooks select for conformation and performance traits (jumping or dressage) by using a 10-point scale. In recent years an increasing number of studbooks have implemented linear scoring, which is a more objective method of evaluating horses.

Information on linear scoring can be found here: https://www.wbfsh.com/linear-scoring



ii. Selection of Stallions:

The procedures for a stallion to receive life-time full licensing status must be set out in the rules. Selection of stallions in most studbooks starts from the age of two and half (not under saddle) and three years (under saddle).

A pre-selection at the age of two and a half, when the stallions are not yet under saddle, can give a breeder a good indication if the horse has stallion-potential for the future, and whether to further invest in developing and producing him as a breeding stallion. A selection committee evaluates the stallions on conformation, movement in-hand (walk and trot) as well as free movement (trot and canter). Studbooks have varying policies as to the selection procedures of dressage and jumping-bred stallions. For example, some studbooks still require dressage stallions to perform a loose jump as a tool to evaluate the horse's attitude, elasticity, temperament and intelligence. When loose jumping is required of dressage stallions, they generally jump to a lower height than is required of the jumping stallions. It has become custom in some studbooks for stallions to also be presented on the lunge. Some colts are not mature enough yet at the age of two and a half to be presented, and therefore alternative options to get a stallion fully licensed are provided in most studbooks.



Source: WBFSH

After the pre-licensing a stallion may be presented for a ridden performance test for further evaluation (for more information on performance testing refer to Section 2.d.v. below).

Stallions that were not presented at a performance test may receive licensing status as a result of successful performance in the high-level sport. This means that they only get licensed at a later age, which increases the generation gap. There are arguments for and against licensing stallions based on a performance test at a younger age, or older stallions based on performance in high level sport. Performance at the highest level is no definite indicator that the stallion will be a successful sire. Licensing younger stallions allows them to start producing offspring earlier, and they may prove to be very successful sires even if they do not reach the high-level sport, which may occur in cases of injury or death.

Stallions may be awarded with a special status such as *premium* or *elite*. This title can be given in recognition of outstanding performance either at licensing or in the high-level sport, or due to a stallion's progeny excelling in sport.

iii. Mare Selections



studbooks Many provide a grading for procedure mares. either inhand or under saddle. The grading process of mares is generally not as involved as for stallions. Some studbooks will only consider the mare in-hand for conformation and

movement (walk and trot), but some may also require the mare to perform loose movement (for trot and canter), and in some cases they are even required to show a loose jump.

For more information of ridden performance tests of mares refer to section 2.d.v. below)

iv. Foal Inspections

Some sport horse studbooks organise foal shows at which foals are graded. Foals are evaluated based on type, conformation and movement. The foal shows may also be used as a selection procedure for foal auctions.



Source: flandersfoalauction.be

v. Selection on Rideability and Temperament:

Generally, there is no hard and fast rule about performance testing, but each studbook must outline its standards for selection and remain consistent.

Many sport horse studbooks carry out ridden performance tests for young stallions and mares to evaluate their suitability, rideability and temperament under saddle.

Generally, stallions are required to complete their ridden performance test before the age of five years, although in Germany the sport test has been introduced, which can be performed by five and six-year-old stallions. Stallions may be evaluated at a central station over a number of days, which can vary between studbooks from 8-100 days. Smaller studbooks may also carry out a ridden performance test in a day, as costs of



Source www.st-georg.de

running a centrally located performance test over several days may not be justifiable for a very small group of horses.

Mares are normally evaluated during a one-day field test, but some studbooks also have a station test that lasts several days.

vi. Selection on Health:

The studbook should specify its health requirements, even if there are none. X-ray evaluation of stallions and sometimes also of mares is a requirement of many studbooks to establish the status of spavin, navicular syndrome and hereditary diseases such as osteochondrosis (OCD) etc.

Many studbooks also check for laryngeal hemiplegia. Gene tests for hereditary diseases such as cerebellar abiotrophy (CA), which is also referred to as cerebellar cortical abiotrophy (CCA) and Warmblood Fragile Foal syndrome (WFFS) are available, and studbooks have varying policies regarding testing requirements for such diseases.



vii. Selection on Fertility:

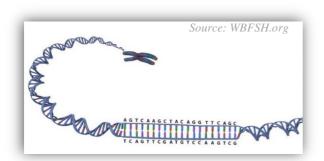
The studbook should indicate if sperm tests are required. To ensure the fertility of a stallion, many studbooks require stallions to pass a sperm test before they can be used in breeding. It is also possible to carry out a "Sperm Chromatin Structure Assay" (SCSA), which measures the susceptibility of sperm-DNA to acid-induced DNA denaturation *in situ*. This is a gene test to diagnose a specific DNA-defect in the spermatozoa.

For more information on fertility of stallions refer to the WBFSH website under this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mwlTC-5bUP-5tB32Xn5EyJnDMi50xiuD/view?usp=sharing

Breeding Tools:

The studbook may include a description of its breed development tools. Using the results from gradings and inspections on traits such as conformation, jumping ability, dressage ability, movement and OCD many studbooks make statistical calculations to produce breeding values. These breeding values are valuable tools for breeders when making breeding choices for their mares. In order for studbooks to publish breeding values that have a high degree of accuracy, a very large population of horses is needed. This makes the calculation of breeding values more difficult for smaller studbooks.

Advances in genomic research mean that in the future it will be possible to make breeding choices based on the genetic make-up of a horse. This genomic selection



means that the quality of breeding stock can be evaluated much earlier than is conventionally possible. Currently the only measure of quality as a brood mare or stallion is from the evaluation of their offspring, which first need to be old enough to show how they perform.

For more information about breeding

values and genomic selection refer to this link on the WBFSH website:

Linear Scoring www.wbfsh.com/linear-scoring

Genomic selection <u>www.wbfsh.com/genomic-selection</u>

International Breeding Values www.wbfsh.com/ibv

e) Recording of Registered Horses

Horses must be recorded in a database including, as appropriate, their studbook of origin. Horses that are recorded without having been inspected should be distinguished from horses that have had a studbook inspection. Horses may be eligible for studbook-entry based on pedigree only. However, to ensure that a breeding program allows for breed improvement, a selection system should be used to approve mares and stallions for the breeding program (suitability to breed with).

Many studbooks have separate sections or registers for mares that are graded, and stallions that are pre-licensed or fully licensed. There may be a separate section for horses accepted from outside studbooks, such that foals bred from these horses to the studbook's own horses can be eligible for full entry into the studbook.

Correct recording of horses, their pedigrees and results either in breed shows, inspections or competitions are vital for collection of valuable data that can be used to calculate breeding indices and other measures of breed progress, as well as assessing the breeding value of registered breeding stock. There is an increased interest in genomic applications to allow for more focussed breeding. The use of a suitable database for collecting and storing this information is recommended.

f) Identification of Horses and Identification Documents

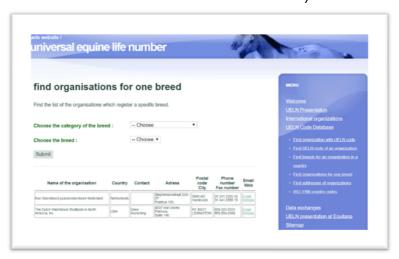
The WBFSH supports the use of the UELN (Unique Equine Life Number) as the official identifier for horses. Under EU legislation there are strict regulations pertaining to the identification of horses and the issuing of identification papers/equine passports. In the rest of the world there are large variations in terms of the governmental regulations for horse identification and identification papers.

UELN

The UELN (Unique Equine Life Number) is an internationally accepted registration number that is issued to every horse by its studbook. It is a 15-digit alpha numeric code. The first three numeric digits pertain to the country in which the horse is registered (e.g. Germany 276, USA 840). The next three numeric digits pertain to the studbook of origin of the horse. The nine remaining characters are made up of the studbooks internal registration number and may contain numbers and letters (e.g. a BWP – Belgian Warmblood horse – will have a UELN 056002W00184083).

Once a horse is issued with a UELN by the studbook of origin, this number should stay with the horse throughout its life.

For more information on the UELN, to find the country code for your country and for your breed, visit the UELN website at http://www.ueln.net



If your breed is not yet recorded in the UELN database, you may apply for a studbook code at http://www.ueln.net/ueln-presentation/how-to-get-an-ueln-code/

Microchips and Brands

In the European Union, branding is no longer permitted. In many non-European countries branding with the studbook logo is still permitted. This physical form of identification has been largely replaced by microchipping, which is now a legal requirement in the EU. Many other countries are following suit. In the USA microchipping is mandatory for all horses registered in the Jockey Club, as well as for horses competing in USHJA competitions, and microchipping is sanctioned by USEF although it is not mandatory yet.



Source: horseandhound.co.uk

The microchip should be linked to the UELN so that a horse can still be positively identified if its papers are lost. In many countries the first three digits of the microchip correspond to the particular country. And in some cases, the first three digits are even the same as the UELN that would be given in that country.

Identification papers/Equine passports

In the EU, the requirements for equine identifications documents (passports) are laid down in the legislation. The identification papers should be issued within a given time after the animal is born, for the lifetime of the equine animal. In cases of death or loss of the animal, the keeper shall return the identification document to the appropriate issuing body within 30 days of the death or loss of the animal.

For more information on equine identification and identification documents, refer to https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/identification/equine_en

These are European standards, but the principle can be applied by new, non-European studbooks wanting to produce comprehensive identification papers.

Equine identification papers should include information such as name, date of birth, name and address of breeder and owner, UELN and microchip number, pedigree and breed/studbook, as well as a record of physical identification (colour, markings, whirls, scars, etc). There should be pages to record vaccinations, health certificates for movement, change of ownership. This list is a non-exhaustive list of examples.

There are countries with little or no regulations regarding equine identification documents and issuing of horse passports is not mandatory. Horses may only receive papers once they are registered with a national equestrian federation in order to be able to compete at national level.

Other considerations pertaining to competing at national and international level

Competitions for sport horses are under the control of the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) at international level, and its various National Federations (NFs) at national level.

Since 2013, horses that are registered with the FEI must be microchipped. Horses need to possess either an FEI-approved passport or an FEI-passport. FEI-passports are issued if the studbook or national passport of the horse does not meet FEI-passport criteria.



For more information about the FEI Approval Criteria of National Passports refer to this link and select "Passport Guidelines for Approval":

https://inside.fei.org/fei/veterinarians/passports/key-documents

If the identification documents of a horse meet the FEI criteria, it may compete with its original passport and upon registration with the FEI receives an FEI-recognition card that covers the original passport.

For more information on which national identification documents are approved by the FEI, refer to this link and select about the FEI "List of identification documents approved by the FEI":

https://inside.fei.org/fei/veterinarians/passports/key-documents

However, most horses compete at national level before they reach international level. It is vital for a new studbook to collaborate with the national federation in its country, so that the studbook passport will be recognised by the national federation for competition. Many national federations automatically accept studbook passports that are listed on the FEI website as FEI-approved.

Covering Certificates

Many stallion stations and studbooks still work with covering certificates, but they are no longer as enforceable in the European Union as they were in the past. Historically studbooks issued covering certificates at the time of the mare being covered by a stallion registered in their studbook, to ensure that the foal would be registered with them once born. The covering certificate therefore served as a proof of covering and pedigree verification.

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A system with covering cards exists in France, where the central authority IFCE (Institute Français du Cheval at Equitation) issues blank covering cards (these days issued online) to stallion owners or keepers for approved stallions. The system is such that mare owners will only receive a birth notification for their foal (or be able to register it), if they have produced a covering certificate that they received from the stallion owner/keeper. The system works well and helps to maintain a structured breeding program.

Studbooks are not able to issue covering certificates for stallions that are not licensed by or entered in their register. Although one would want to discourage breeding with an unlicensed stallion, mare owners more

commonly make their own breeding decisions these days, for example by using an unlicensed stallion that excels in sport. These foals must still be eligible for registration in a studbook. EU legislation requires that foals have a verified pedigree at the time they are registered, but the form of pedigree verification is not stipulated. Since the onset of DNA-testing, covering certificates are no longer the only form of pedigree verification.

DNA Testing

Incorrect pedigrees can be picked up in any studbook. These need not necessarily have arisen due to bad intent, for example if the wrong straw of semen was accidentally used at insemination. Pedigree mistakes are likely to be more common in older horses, from the time before DNA testing was introduced.

Pedigree verification by DNA-testing is quickly becoming the norm in many WBFSH studbooks and the WBFSH strongly supports this method of identification. Many studbooks routinely DNA-test all horses entered into their register, while some studbooks carry out random sampling to verify parentage. The test can be carried out with a hair sample (roots must be present) or a blood sample.

DNA-testing is becoming increasingly important in breeding also due to the identification of genetic diseases that can be prevented or managed, if breeders can make informed decisions when pairing their mares with stallion. As mentioned in section 2.d.vi gene tests for hereditary diseases such as cerebellar abiotrophy (CA), which is also referred to as cerebellar cortical abiotrophy (CCA) and Warmblood Fragile Foal syndrome (WFFS) are available, and studbooks have varying policies regarding testing requirements for such diseases.



Source: Hannoveraner Verband e.V.

3) HOW TO BE RECOGNISED BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY IN THE COUNTRY.

In the European Union the studbook must be recognised under the relevant EU legislation by the relevant competent authority in the member state (required to meet Zootechnical and Genealogical Conditions).

Non-European countries may not have the same zootechnical and genealogical regulations, but still often fall under the governance of the agricultural ministry. At the time that a studbook wishes to become a WBFSH member, it is up to the applicant to verify that it is officially recognised in its country, if not through the agricultural authorities, then through an association with other official authorities. In some countries, sport horse studbooks are affiliated to the organisations governing equestrian sport. The WBFSH assesses applicants with respect to this on a case-bycase basis.



4) BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE WBFSH



The WBFSH is the international representative federation for sport horse studbooks breeding horses for the Olympic disciplines.

A studbook that is considering becoming a WBFSH member must meet certain membership criteria. Information on membership and how to apply can be found here:

https://www.wbfsh.com/become-a-member

To be accepted into Membership horse studbooks must meet the following criteria:

- i. Have a major objective to breed horses for at least one of the Olympic disciplines of show jumping, dressage and/or eventing.
- ii. Be a horse studbook of members and controlled by these members in a democratic fashion.
- iii. Register and record horses using the UELN system
- iv. Have clear, broad membership criteria.
- v. Be a legal entity that operates ethically according to the general standards expected of reputable horse studbooks.
- vi. Be recognised as a horse studbook by the relevant authority in the country in which it is based. As mentioned in section 3, in the European Union the horse studbook must be recognised under the relevant European Union legislation by the relevant Competent Authority in the Member State and proof of such recognition must be provided.
- vii. Have an established record of operation as a horse studbook for at least five years.

- viii. Be of sufficient size to be viable and operate an effective horse identification, registration and breed improvement program. Factors that will be considered in assessing compliance with this criterion will include the number of mares and stallions and foals born annually, and any relationship with the breeding program of other studbooks and the stage of development of the horse studbook.
- ix. In the case where the studbook name refers to another original studbook, the relationship between the studbooks must be clearly stated and agreed upon.

The application must be submitted to the WBFSH Secretariat with all necessary and supporting documentation. The application will be evaluated, and a recommendation made to the WBFSH Board. If membership is granted, this will be announced at the General Assembly. Membership is granted provisionally for one year, until the next General Assembly, where ratification may remove the provisional membership status and full membership status is given.

5) WBFSH STUDBOOK HORSES IN COMPETITIONS & WBFSH RANKINGS

Studbook members of the WBFSH are entitled to nominate and enter horses in the WBFSH-FEI World Breeding Championships for young dressage, showjumping and eventing horses. A close cooperation with the national equestrian federation is necessary, as the national federations make the entries via the FEI Online-Entry System. Criteria and country quotas for WBFSH horses vary between the disciplines.

For information on the selections for the World Breeding Championships, refer to these links:

Dressage: https://inside.fei.org/fei/disc/dressage/rules (select "FEI WBFSH Dressage World Breeding Championship for Young Horses")

Jumping:

https://data.fei.org/Calendar/EventDetail.aspx?p=4CB3D0E80A444F59843F2923BE8880A9 (select "CH-M-YH-S Schedule" for the 2022 schedule which includes the entry criteria)

Eventing: https://inside.fei.org/fei/disc/eventing/main-events/le-lion-2018 (select "Qualification Criteria" of the 2018 championship)

WBFSH member studbooks are also included in the WBFSH rankings for studbooks and breeders, in the disciplines of dressage, showjumping and eventing.

These rankings are published on the WBFSH website once a month and are based on FEI-sports results. The ranking cycle runs from 1st October to 30th September the following year. At the end of the year the winning breeder in each discipline is honoured during the WBFSH Breeder Awards. Breeders are only eligible to win the award if their horse is registered

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FOR STUDBOOKS - JUMPING

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The winning studbook in each of the disciplines of dressage, showjumping and eventing is also announced at the end of the rankings cycle. The studbook rankings are based on the points of the six top-ranked horses of each studbook.

For more information on the WBFSH rankings, refer to:

https://wbfsh.com/rankings



HRH Princess Benedikte of Denmark congratulating WBFSH Eventing Breeder of the Year 2016 William Kells – Mighty Nice ISH

 $© \ Ridehesten$

6) **CONTACTS**

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