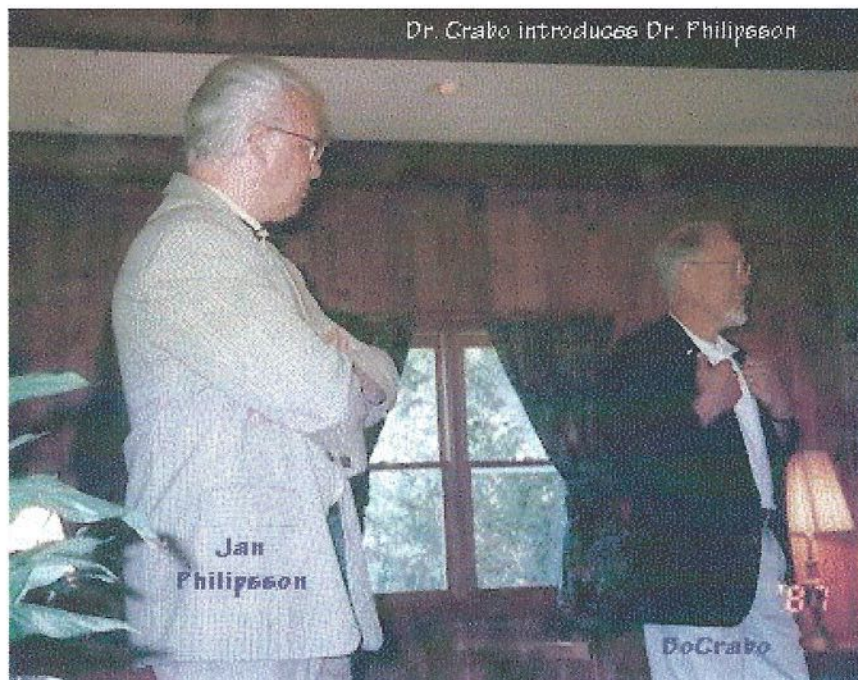




Jan Philipsson - Both for SWANA and the USDF Breeding Seminar



Since Dr. Philipsson was at Hilltop to do USDF Breeding Seminars (for both judges and the general breeding public), SWANA was able to take advantage of his presence for a fascinating afternoon. Jan was very warm and personal. He presented a condensed version of the breeding seminar, focusing a bit more on the Swedish horse and his own horses. His material was excellent, his message really hit home. Especially inspiring were Jan's personal videos of his horses and family, which illustrate that he practices what he preaches.

Dr. Philipsson talked a little about the history of the Swedish horse, but mainly he stressed breeding methodology and results. Philipsson talked a little about his own history and how he came into his career, including a university stint here in the United States. He is currently in Upsala at the University of Agricultural

Sciences. Indeed his methods of using statistics in the prediction of heritability of traits is a science.

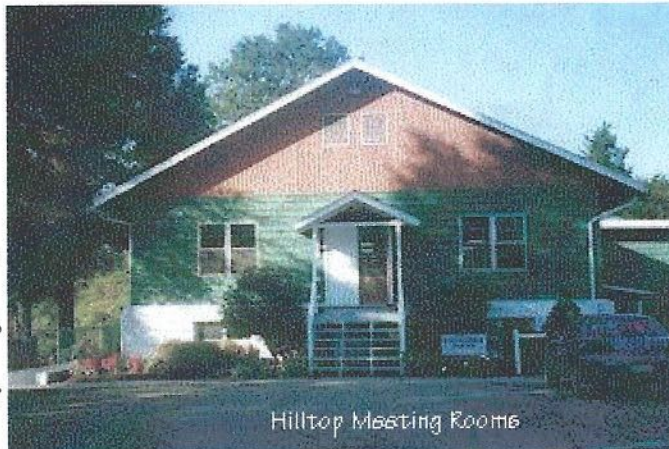
The Swedish horse of today, a modern sport horse, was developed from the light cavalry horse. Early influences in this development came from the Trakehner and Hannoverian bloodlines. Later influences include Holsteiner and Dutch stock. The Swedish horse has been traditionally known as an excellent dressage horse, with quite a few successes in the eventing world. Later introductions of outside bloodlines have been to improve the jumping ability of the breed. Choices for breeding should be carefully considered, and Philipsson continued with the rest of the presentation to give some of the tools available aid in making wise choices.

Dr. Philipsson put up a very interesting time line, with the introduction of different methodology and tools to the Swedish breeding program. Since Jan was President of the ASVH until he retired in 1994, he saw many of these innovations:

- 1973 Riding Horse Quality Tests
- 1976 AI - imported frozen semen - 15 mare trial, 14 inseminated
- 1977 New Performance testing of stallions - trial, developed rapidly (with excellent evaluators like Erik Lette)
Early years 18/20 approved, now 20/120 approved
- 1978 National Championships for 4-Year Old Horses (based on Riding Horse Quality Test)
- 1980 Registry of Foals (mandatory)
- 1982 More open stud-book (open eyes to more of what's going on in the world, i.e., Dutch horses accepted)
- 1983
 - SWEDE Horse (Started as a big "show" combining breeding and performance, now a company)
 - National Stud at Flying privatized (A number of federations took over)
- 1984 BLUP Indexes for stallions introduced
- 1986
 - Swedish horse board - computerized horse evaluation.
 - AI - transported semen
- 1992 Breeder's Trophy
- 1998 BLUP Changes - Indexes for mares. Sub-traits introduced on BLUP for stallions (i.e., individual gaits)
- 1999 New testing of 3-year-old horses modeled on the Riding Horse Quality Test

Jan expounded on many of these events in the time line, but you can get a good idea of these advances from the outline. From this time line, Jan leaped into the principals for developing a modern breeding program.

The first thing that one needs to do is establish the objective of your breeding program. Philipsson suggests, "A versatile, noble, easily ridden and sound sport horse with good movements and temperament and that it is suitable for different riding disciplines, also at the international level," with a priority for either jumping or dressage. You won't always produce the international caliber horse, but it is essential to aim high.



Once the objective is set, there needs to be a methodology of getting there and of judging the results. Important parts of this include recording of each horse and their traits. One must judge and evaluate horses included in the breeding program. Then these records need to be analyzed, so that genetic versus non-genetic traits can be weeded out and the result can be analyzed. Of course, adjustments then need to be made and the method refined. In this process, statistics can be an essential tool.

Stallions have a large effect on the horse population, so stallion testing is essential. Fifty or so stallions in Sweden are performance tested twice a year. Their ages range from 3.5 years to 5.5 years. This age range is important, since some stallions are quite large and slower to mature. Free jumping is a very important part of the stallion testing.

Free jumping not only evaluates a stallion's talent, but also his temperament. Free jumping tests a horse's problem solving ability. A horse that blows up during free jumping will not be a good stallion candidate. Philipsson gave the example of Brabant and his sons. Ten sons of Brabant were approved before this method of stallion testing was instituted, they were very athletic individuals. Ten sons failed after subjected to free jumping for reasons of temperament.

Philipsson also advocated importing a couple of good stallions every year to add to the breeding program as well, specially selected for bloodlines and traits.

One of the best tools for evaluation of breeding results is the Riding Horse Quality Test (RHQT) that is administered in Sweden. This test was developed for all 4-year-olds, and 5-year-olds mares that are shown late because of foaling. The RHQT has now been expanded to 3-year-olds. With horse breeding, the sooner you can evaluate your results, the better, since production of a quality riding horse takes a lot of time and expense. Good mares can and should be introduced into the breeding population at an early age to keep that population at the right numbers.

Philipsson was quite adamant about competition coming too late in a horse's life to be a proper tool for evaluating a horse, and an inconsistent measure as well. Jan felt that the best mares should be evaluated and bred as 3-year-olds and then returned to training and perhaps competition. If all good mares are left to be bred after their competition career, you will not have enough mares going back into the gene pool to replace the population. So, the RHQT becomes a very important tool for evaluating young mares to go back into the breeding population.

In the Quality Test, horses are judged on general health and conformation. They are then judged in hand, much as the Inspections are conducted in North America. The horses are then shown free to judge their gaits, and they are free jumped. Free jumping is used to not only judge talent, but temperament. Horses are then shown under saddle. Philipsson made the point that 3-year-olds horses are judged more kindly and asked for less when shown under saddle than the 4-year-olds classes. 3-year-old horses are also given a score as a dressage and a jumping prospect to help breeders and prospective buyers in marketing and channeling horses.

Of course Philipsson believes that experienced breeders should know what they have and be confident enough to breed the good young mares that they've produced. He also believes that training continues for mares with only short interruptions for foaling. Once a mare has foaled, she can go back to work rapidly. It is common practice for Swedes to leave the foal in a stall for the time that the mare is being worked. Good for both mare and foal. Jan personally believes in weaning foals later than many of us do, leaving mare and foal together for as much as eight months. He believes that is very beneficial to the foal.

A large percentage of Sweden's horse population undergoes the Riding Horse Quality Test, and these scores are entered into the computer for analysis. The scores go into computing BLUP indices for stallions. These scores can also be used for computation of the new BLUP indices being developed for mares.

A new tool, BLUP for mares can help the breeder judge a mare's production on a more individual basis. A mare can be assigned an initial BLUP from either her own performance in the RHQT or the performance of at least one offspring. This use of statistical modeling on such a small scale might give the North American hope for the use of these tools in our own breeding program.

These statistical tools are used to evaluate and predict the heritability of traits in horse breeding. Mikael Holmström's work is also important and compliments this statistical work in that Holmström's work allows a horse's conformation to be recorded and evaluated in a numeric and objective manner. Using these tools, heritability of different traits can be better evaluated.

An interesting observation by Philipsson is that the German's use of BLUP is different and tries to correct for too

many factors, perhaps limiting its usefulness. It also depends quite a bit on competition results. Jan talked a bit about a more global breeding program for sport horses, which I'll talk about later in the article when I discuss the USDF Breeding Seminar. Much of the material covered for SWANA members was repeated and expanded on over the rest of the weekend.

The BLUP used in Sweden allows the distinction between heritable traits and environmental ones. The highest heritability is conformation, then gaits. Jumping ability is much lower, but it is climbing as breeding programs are selecting intensely for jumping in Sweden.

Some interesting changes and improvements over the years were mentioned by Jan. For instance a score of 100 used to be average in the BLUP. With the betterment of sport horses, the average has climbed to 107. The modern BLUP computed for stallions includes height of offspring. This trait is 30% predictable, which is high. Important for the breeder producing a product for the general public. Pelvic inclination has decreased in the general population, and this is good for producing better moving dressage horses. What these factors indicate is that use of modern breeding techniques, including BLUP really does work to produce better horses. Of course, the eye tells us that as well, but BLUP and RHQT can be early indicators before the horse is competing at the top of its ability.

Later we had some real fun. Philipsson showed us videos of his own breeding stock with his family mainly riding. He also gave us the poop and hot gossip on some of Sweden's most famous breeding stallions.

For me, the video was especially interesting. Jan showed us several horses. When you first saw them as 3-year-olds, they looked like nice horses, but there was nothing spectacular that called out to you that this would be a superb horse. All of them worked very willing under saddle, they were enjoying being ridden, which is a great start. All of them were balanced and forward and very pleasant. In a time lapse effect, Jan showed us video of them at different points in their lives, and in every case, the horse was improved by training and became an excellent performer. The one mare I liked the least on her initial shot was just stunning at the FEI level, so much so that she was traded away to a professional trainer. Just food for thought when we look at young horses and evaluate their potential. I admit that my eye needs a better education.

Then Jan spent time talking about famous stallions, past, present and future stars. This was a very entertaining and enlightening talk, as Jan was very candid on his opinions of these horses:



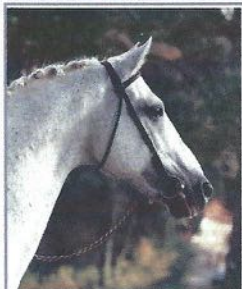
Jovial famous for producing eventing horses, his best son is [Ceylon](#). Ceylon produced a lot of international horses.

Ceylon is sire of Master



[Master](#) is the best young horse to produce dressage horses. He's in England with Kyra. He was injured in his last year in Sweden.

Sire of Mia, Maestro, and Mistress



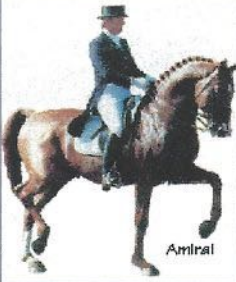
Urbino is another of the most important sires. [Tolstoy](#) is one of his most successful offspring in the dressage arena. His offspring doing well in BLUP. [Bobby](#) is also by Urbino. Ulla Hakanson successful with three Urbinos, [Flamingo](#), Tolstoy and Bobby. Urbino was also used for pony breeding.

Sire of Uarda's dam; grandsire of Mia's dam



Utrillo was a Hanoverian. He might have been useless in Germany, but did well on Swedish mares, especially with TB in the first generation. Son [Chagall](#) had a very large walk, so was not liked by dressage riders. On top of the dressage competition. His son [Chirac](#) has produced good horses.

[Sire of Maraton](#) (Inga's sire) and Bayron's dam; grandsire of Maestro's dam; Chagall is grandsire of Kalle's dam



[Amiral](#). 10s in all gaits. Not great in type, so you have to be careful with mares, but he's given much to the mechanics of gaits.



[Bombay](#). Sold to Switzerland. Not immediately approved for breeding, but was later on performance. Willingness and ability are his strong points, with a junior rider. Full brother that was gelded (Cambay) and doing very well as a junior horse. Other full brother is Amiral.



[Bernstein](#). Another son of [Napoleon](#), as are Amiral and Bombay. Producing many good dressage horses.

Sire of Bayron



[Maraton](#). Jumping during his performance test was phenomenal. Cheerful horse. Chosen as a show jumper.

Sire of Inga



[Magini](#), excelled in jumping and dressage. Small horse, but do not throw smaller than average. With [Maraton](#) and Utrillo in pedigree.



Briar, son of [Magini](#). Extremely good at passage and piaffe, not as forward reaching, a little jumpy in his movement. Maternal grandsire Krocket by Utrillo, so Briar is a little line bred.

Sire of Rose



Maistic, placed 3rd young horse. A Magritte, a [Magini](#) son. Conformation means certain things, but not all, for instance Maistic has a sloped croup.



Sack, son of [Kaliber](#). Klaus Balkenhol, got Sack when each rider was provided with a young horse, and Klaus wanted the horse. Hasn't developed as quickly as some of Jan Brink's others.



[Strauss](#). A very good horse that did a good performance test in both dressage and jumping and has produced both among his offspring as well.

Fontana, will be Jan Brinks next Olympic horse. His sire [Martini](#) never showed a top piaffe, a reserve horse, so never made it to the real top. Fontana seems to do well.



Stanford. By a trakehner. Leased to Finland for two years, has high BLUP and sired a horse that is second in eventing.

Following horses are not Swedish, but add proof to the viability of the open studbook concept.



[Robin Z](#). Adds a lot of Swedish breeding, both dressage horses and jumpers. While he's a jumper, he does not produce any horses with poor gaits.



[Irco Mena](#). Fantastic jumping career. Dead, but still being used. Indexes high in jumping and his offspring are high in competition results. Not impressive, but very talented.



[Beach Boy](#). By Zeus, are not easy to ride. But on Swedish mares he's very good. In quality horse tests, his offspring do well with average riders.



Aerline by [Cortez](#) out of a mare by a TB stallion, imported.

Quite Easy. Quidam de Revel (Jalisco) with Holsteiner mother line. Good mover, nice type. First foal crop this year.

De la Gardie - Davignon by Donnerhall. Didn't do well as a 3-year-old. Spectacular canter. He is so large that he grew enough to do very well as a 4-year-old in Sweden.