



From the SWB Mailing List

A Discussion on the "New Type" SWB Horse By Karl-Henrik Heimdahl

Hello everyone,

Coming back from the evaluations of this years 3 and 4 year old stallion prospects, I found myself part of this discussion list. Having a lot to catch up with after spending three weeks in North America, and now another almost week at Swedish evaluations I have so far not had any time to contribute to this discussion group.

But now I would like to share some of our thoughts about the matter of new type and other questions raised by people in the group.

Let me start by trying to define the "old type". These are horses that have one or several conformational details that are different from what we are looking for today. Being short-legged, with very deep chests, many times a bit on the heavy side, short and broad cannon bones (23-24 cm around), often with a low set neck. (Someone thought that the neck of SWB was better than many other breeds in the US - this is probably true, especially if you compare to some of the domestic North American horses that many times have terrible neck sets - but even in the SWB we have a problem with too many low set necks, and we are working hard to improve it further)

Then what is the "new type". Well it is not necessarily so very new. If you look at pictures of Swedish WB horses from the 30's and 40's you can once in a while come across horses that look very modern. Being modern does not mean that the horse needs to be a TB-cross or a horse that looks like a TB. A modern Swedish Warmblood would be a little bit on the lighter side compared to some of the old ones, but above all elegant and well proportioned.

Swedish Warmblood Stallions of the Older Type Premiere Elite Stallions



Dragon 465

foaled 1967 162 cm



Lansiar 377

Gaspari 340 u Lansy e Lansiar 377
u Gulli e Largo 144 - Humanist

The horse should not be short legged. The length of the horses legs should exceed the depth of the chest - a coarse and not always perfectly true description, but it tells you that it is not the size of the horse but the proportions of the body that is important.

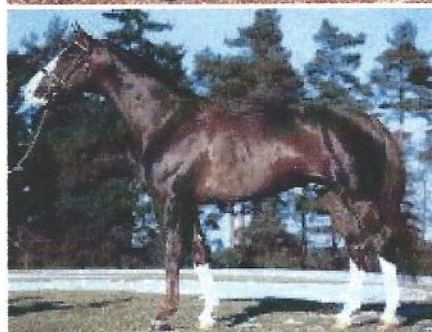
The horse MUST have a well set neck. The set of the neck is much more important than the length of the neck. We

usually prefer a long neck to a short one, but too long is not good either. You would feel like riding a camel, with a swaying hard to control head way in front of you. The set of the neck is so important for the overall balance of the horses body. A low set neck tips the balance of the horse on to the forehand, and increases the load on the forelegs. It will make it much harder, and demand more skill from the rider, to restore the balance, and take the load off from the horses forehand.

During the last 10 or so years the following young Swedish stallions have scored 10 for type:



BELLINI 817, by Ganesco - Sweet Mahrhu xx - Herzog - Fokker. Gait scores 8 (walk) 9 (trot) in hand, 8(walk) 9(trot) 9(canter) and 8 8 9 under rider at two occasions at the performance tests. Died this autumn. Was supposed to make his GP debut during late 1997.



BRIAR 899, by Magini - Krocket - Illum - Gaspari. Gaitscores 7 8 in hand, 6 8 8 under rider. Promising young dressage stallion. Placed 2nd at the Breeders Trophy final for 5 year olds, won the semifinal and was 2nd in the final as 6 year old.



ELOGE 738, by Eminent - Iran - Stratosxx - Idealist. Gait scores 8 9 in hand, 9 8 8 under rider.



LASANDOS 922 - by Landlord (by Landgraf) - Caletto II - Sacramento Song xx. (Holsteiner) Gait scores 7 7 in hand, 6 5 9 under rider. Pure jumping pedigree.



SACK 907 - by Kaliber - Ceylon - Unesco -Niarchos. Gait scores 8 10 in hand, 8 9 8 and 8 10 8 under rider at two occasions. Winner of our Breeders Trophy for 5 and for 6 year old dressage horses.



SZCOPUL 929, by Arianin - Karkas - Priz xx - Hiram. Polish bred. Much if not all Trakhener. Gait scores 7 8 in hand, not evaluated for gaits under rider. Approved on his merits as a young horse successful in show jumping 1.50 level, even internationally.



UTTINI 733, by Labrador - Kew Gardens xx - Gaspari - Drabant. Gait scores 8 8 in hand, 7 9 9 and 9 8 8 under rider at two occasions.



NAVARINO 924, by Bellini - Nepal - Immer - Afghan. Gait scores 8 8 in hand, 7 8 9 under rider. Exported.



WARSTEINER 946, by Weltmeyer - Romadour II - Flamingo - Gaspari. Gait scores 8 8 in hand, 8 8 8 under rider. Scored 9 and 10 for rideability by test riders at the performance test in February 97.

Several of these horses have TB in 2nd or 3rd generation, but Sack (maybe the most elegant of all of the younger Swedish stallions), Briar and Warsteiner do not have any TB in the nearest three generations.

Two or three of these stallions would be considered as very light in type, while the rest would be considered as average. None of them are heavy.

You can also see that these 10 for type stallions, mostly have very good scores for gaits, in hand and under rider.

Now what about TB in the Warmblood breeding. There is an old Swedish saying that everybody wants horses with a TB in 2nd or 3rd generation - the problem is how to get it there.

In the Swedish breeding TB's have traditionally been used to lighten up breeding stock that is getting too heavy, i.e. to get a lighter type of horse, and not for improvement of gaits or jumping ability.

All Warmblood breeds are always looking for TB stallions that can improve both type (lightness) and riding traits. Unfortunately they are very rare. Those that are good are in very high demand by all the Warmblood breeding associations. Some examples are Ladykiller xx and Sacramento Song xx - much sought for TB blood for breeding jumpers. Marlon xx for dressage. Hand in Glove xx now stationed in France, very promising, but not yet quite evaluated from his offspring.

In Sweden Ujiji xx and Prince Fair xx for jumping, and Presto xx for dressage. Presto being the only TB elite stallion in Swedish history. (It will be very interesting to see what Presto's son Prego will do in the US, now when he gets into some more breeding. We only saw one foal by him this year - a very good type.)

Predicting the outcome of using a stallion in a breeding program can many times be hard, but to predict the outcome of using a TB stallion is even harder. If you are lucky you will get a very nice Warmblood horse, if not you may end up with something you wish was not yours.

I agree with Celia Wathen that racing success may not be the best way to evaluate TB stallions for WB breeding. In Sweden we now want all TB stallions to do a performance test, to check out the stallions qualities when it comes to gaits and jumping ability. The demand on these stallions is mostly the same as for WB stallions to be approved.

In Sweden we encourage using TB mares in Warmblood breeding, but you need to be aware that the outcome again is very hard to predict.

If you find that the offspring you get is not good enough - don't keep breeding to that mare. Get yourself another broodmare. Compared to a stallion, that mare would not have made much of harm to the entire SWB.

Now how do you put this into your own breeding program. How important is this type discussion?

Well of course every breeder has to decide on the goals for their breeding. I suppose that most breeders in North America going into SWB's, do so to produce dressage horses.

GOOD GAITS, WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO PERFORM is the first and most important goal for any dressage horse breeder. This needs to be the main emphasis of your breeding program.

So good gaits need to be consolidated in your breeding program. Then if you need to, you may look to other bloodlines to improve other traits that are important, for instance the type of the horse, the size, the correctness or whatever - but WITHOUT losing your good gaits.

For the last decade all European breeds, including SWB's have with great purpose moved into the direction of breeding lighter and typier horses WITH good gaits and WITH good performance potential for the highest levels of dressage and/or jumping.

Whether or not to include the TB's in this program would be up to your own preference. If you want to get the TB into the 2nd or 3rd generation, you first need to have it in the 1st generation - long term project.

I do hope that this has made things just a bit more clear to you. And again: horses with "good gaits, willingness and ability to perform is the first and most important goal for any dressage horse breeder". Combine with good type, and you have added the final touch to the final product!! It might take even a few generations to find the formula that suits your breeding stock - but then again breeding is a long term endeavor.

Yours,
Karl-Henrik H.



[Back to SWANA HomePage](#)