



Chris Hector, editor of Australia's Horse Magazine looks at the 'scientific' rankings...

Flushed with the success of mathematical models in the breeding of chickens, pigs and cows, the next step for the bean counters of the scientific community was to apply the same scientific calculations to the breeding of horses.

This approach was made the cornerstone of the French horse breeding industry – so much so, that if a horse had a high enough BLUP rating, he could pass as a stallion even if the experts evaluating the stallion in person thought he was not good enough!

Now the Best Linear Unbiased Prediction method may be very good when it comes to predicting volcanic activity or ease of calving for Highland cattle, but it has not been a huge success when it comes to providing breeding guidelines for the French breeders. So much so that many French breeders are now calling for the BLUP rankings not to be published.

According to French breeder and journalist, Bernard le Courtois: 'It took 20 years for Blupomania to wreak its havoc, and it is going to take that much time again to repair the damage.' (Monneron 2007-2008)

In Germany, the BLUP model has not taken hold, nor been made official policy, the way it was in France. The German FN each year publishes lists of the top stallions in dressage and showjumping. The FN calculations take into account not only the competition results of progeny, but also the stallion's own performance results, the number of licensed sons and a number of other factors that can produce a rather whacko result. For example, some stallions own competition results give them prominence as a breeding stallion, while I guess intelligent breeders are more likely to be impressed by results of the stallion's progeny. Tempting though it may be to believe, it is simple minded to suggest that there will be an absolute correspondence between the stallion's own competition results and the ability of his progeny!

The Hanoverian Verband publishes in book form its own annual stallion evaluation, based on the results of mare tests and auction evaluations. This seems to me to give a better picture because if you only use competition results, then if the horse is competing as a jumper, you get no idea of dressage ability, and vice versa. The mare test evaluates type, dressage and jumping abilities providing a more complete picture. For all that, the FN and the Hanoverian results are usually pretty similar.

The World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses used to produce a stallion top ten, but so far as I can tell, the last one appeared in the CD version of the Breeding Guide for 2003/4 – then when BCM and the WBFSH went their separate ways the Sires Top Ten disappeared.

However, the German equestrian journalist, Jörg Savelsberg has kept the rankings going, taking the results of the 300 best competitors in each of the three Olympic disciplines to make his own sires' rankings that appear in the equestrian magazine [HORSE INTERNATIONAL](#).

Alas the eventing tables are pretty well meaningless because of the failure of riders / federations / whoever to supply breeding details. If you look at the current top 32 horses

on the Eventing list – exactly half, 16, are listed as breeding unknown!!

For the record, Jorg's top ten eventing sires are Heraldik xx, Cavalier Royale, Jumbo, Lemon xx, Ceredigion xx, Peacock xx, Aachen (as he was called in Australia, Azarro in Germany), Condrieu xx, Amerigo Vespucci xx and Casino. I guess you would be pretty dumb to base your breeding program on that lineup...

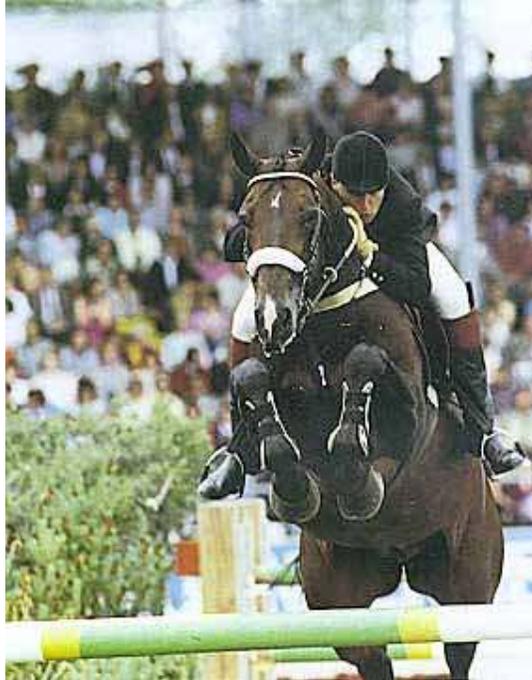
The earlier WBFSH sires rankings were full of anomalies, where stallions with only one freak foal – like [Rebus](#), sire of Ulla Salzgeber's Rusty – could be held up as the number one sire in the world!!! Jorg's much simpler formula seems to have eliminated the one-hit wonders from his showjumping and dressage lists.



His top ten dressage sires are: [Donnerhall](#), [Warkant](#), [Weltmeyer](#), [Lauries Crusador xx](#), [Florestan](#), Flemmingh, [Rubinstein](#), Ehrentusch, Wanderer and Master. I guess if you take an interest in dressage you'd probably come up with a list much like this one without using a calculator...

You might however, look to breeding to second or third generation products of these top stallions – ie Fidermark rather than Florestan, or Don Schufro rather than Donnerhall, perhaps combine Lauries Crusador and Warkant and use Londonderry – but try as I might, I can't think of a Weltmeyer descendant that I would rather use than the old guy himself.

The top ten in showjumping are: [Darco](#), [Contender](#), [Quidam de Revel](#), Cassini I, [Burggraaf](#), Papillon Rouge, Indorado, Cavalier Royale, Libero H and Guidam. Again, most fans of the sport would come up with a similar list.



It is interesting that another journalist, this time the Frenchman, [Bernard le Courtois](#) (who is also a major stallion keeper, and breeder of jumping horses) also set out to come up with his ranking of the world's top 75 jumping stallions in 2006. Taking the FEI recorded results of the world's top 2515 jumping horses at international competitions, Bernard comes up with a remarkably similar list: [Quidam de Revel](#), [Carthago](#), [Darco](#), Cassini I, [Contender](#), Burggraaf, Papillon Rouge, [Concorde](#), Libero H and Indoctro. On Bernard's list Indorado comes in 43rd, Cavalier Royale is 17th and Guidam is 20th. (You can find the stallion rankings and the accompanying article in the 2007-2008 Monneron. This French breeding guide is written in French and English, and is a great read. I get my copies from the Dutch company, Mediaboek Service – info@mediaboek.nl).

With 75 stallions to play with, obviously le Courtois produces a more nuanced picture of where jumping breeding is at. He identifies four dominant male lines, [Almé](#), [Cor de la Bryère](#), Capitol and Landgraf - the most important of which is the great French stallion Almé (and yes, M. le Courtois was responsible for rescuing Almé from the clutches of Leon Melchior and bringing him back to France, where he died on Bernard's farm, Brullemail – check out www.brullemail.com).



Almé is represented by 17 of the 75 stallions on the leader board, including the No 1 stallion, Quidam de Revel – who is himself represented by two stallions, Nabab de Reve and Guidam. Quidam is by the Almé son, Jalisco B who, even though he died at the age of 19, twelve years ago, still comes in at 30th place on the list. His son, Papillon Rouge is ranked sixth, while two other sons feature: Olisco (19th) and Quito de Baussy (37th). The other influential branch of the Almé tree features Galoubet A, himself ranked 34th, but sire of Quick Star (13th), Baloubet de Rouet and Skippy (both 43rd) and Qredo de Paulstra (65th).

The German based Almé grandson, Acord II ranks 13th, while the Dutch son, Animo is 19th – with his son, Andiamo Z in 64th.

The founder of another dynasty, Cor de la Bryère ranks 51st in his own right but his sons are well represented. In 2006, his most influential son was Corrado I who is himself in 23rd place with 11 international winners. Corrado is represented by four sons: Corofino (30th), Coriano (43rd), Indorado (43rd) and Clinton (64th).

Another 'Corde' product is Caletto II, sire of Caretino (24th) and Calvaro Z (65th). His brother, Caletto I is sire of Cantus, who ranks 30th, and Cantus is in turn sire of Calido I, who comes in at 19th with 12 winners.

Calypso II does not feature on the rankings but his son, Contender is right up with the best of them in 5th place.

The Cor de la Bryère son Cavalier Royale is often wrongly described as Irish – he is out of a mare who is as Holstein as the marshes: Ladykiller – Roman – Cottage Son – Aldato. Cavalier Royale is the only stallion to feature on two of Jörg Saveslberg's lists, showjumping and eventing. His two most notable eventers are Aachen WEG silver individual medalist, Ben Along Time, and Call Again Cavalier, a member of the British silver team. His showjumping son, Chippison competed for Ireland at the 2006 WEG.

The Cor de la Bryère line is often described as the clever careful C line, while the other C line – Capitol I – is pure power and scope. Once ranked number one sire of performers on the WBFSH list, Capitol is now 37th, with his best current performer the mare, Gitania. However he is represented by three of the world's top ten stallions in 2006: Carthago is World Number 2 on Bernard's rankings with 36 international winners in 2006. Cassini is close behind him, in 4th with 29 CSI winners, Indoctro is 10th with 20 winners, followed by Cento at 34th with nine. Cassini, Indoctro and Cento are all out of Caletto II mares.

Landgraf died 11 years ago, but his influence is still strong, with five main stallions in the top 75 – including two in the top ten. His Dutch based son, Burggraaf is 6th with 26 winners. Libero H – himself a World Cup winner – is 9th with 22 representatives,

including two of the world top ten performers – Libertina (4th) and No Mercy (10th). Landadel died at the age of 13 in 1995, but still retains 30th place with 10 progeny. His sons Landfriese is 52nd on the stallion list.

Aside from the big four, there are other influential progenitors. Another Selle Français export to Germany, Furioso II lives on through his sons Voltaire (11th in the world with 19 winners) and For Pleasure whose breeding career often took second place to a competition career, but he still manages 13th with 11 winners. He had the very rare distinction of competing in a Grand Prix class against his own son.

The Voltaire son, Concorde is successful, taking 8th place with 23 winners.

Nimmerdor, imported to Holland from Holstein, is represented by his son, Heartbreaker, 11th with 19 winners, and Goodtimes, 65th with five.

Then there are a number of father / son combinations. Le Tot de Semilly, 11th with Diamant de Semilly, in 65th. Laudanum, dead 12 years, still manages 43rd, with his son, Oberon de Moulin, 65th. Ramiro is 23rd with 11 winners, while his son, Robin Z is 43rd with 7.

The Belgian stallion, Darco was something of a law to himself as a jumper, and he continues to run his own race – 12th with 35 winners.

Grannus is 13th with 16, while from the same stud, Argentinus is 16th with 15 winners.

The most successful of the Irish is Cruising, 23rd with 11, while Clover Hill is 65th with 5.

Grandeur's stud career seems to have been late flourishing after huge initial promotion, but he is making his mark – 23rd with 11 winners – equal with another great competitor, Jus de Pomme.

We should be grateful to both Jörg and Bernard for the time they have spent slaving over a hot computer keyboard, to establish these rankings. It's a pity, as Jörg remarked to me, that someone at the KWPN – the Dutch Studbook that takes care of the competitor rankings for the WBFSH – doesn't spend half an hour to set up the rankings on a program like Excel, which would allow two extremely pleasant journalists to find something better to do with their time. It is interesting that both of them, using relatively uncluttered and simple formulas have come up with more interesting and plausible results than the official WBFSH rankings which were based on very complex tabulations and loadings and always produced a list dominated by 'sires' whose only claim to breeding fame was one hugely successful foal....