



## **TRAKEHNER BREEDERS' FRATERNITY**

### **GUIDANCE NOTES ON THE GRADING PROCEDURES**

Please note that these are not *rules*; they are a guide as to what the Grading Commission will want to see, and how it usually goes about the grading, but the actual procedure is *entirely* at the Grading Commission's discretion.

#### **MARES**

Mares should be 3 y.o. or more, and be shown in a snaffle bridle. They should also be unshod, unless it can be shown that she is in competition. In these cases, the advice of the Registrar should be sought. The order of presentation will be sent to you prior to the date of the show, together with a full timetable, which will usually be as follows; (the notes are advisory only) Mare gradings are usually completed on the Saturday of the Show.

1. Measurement; present your mare in good time at the relevant box, or boxes. Measurement of ht and bone only nowadays. Note that a Veterinary Certificate must be presented to the Registrar; failure to do so will incur delay in issuing approval. Presentation on the hard; stand up your mare in front of the judges until asked to move her. Usually walked away and back, then trotted away and back, then stood up again.
2. Show on the triangle. Bring the mare into the arena, and stand her up in front of the judges until asked to move. Walk the mare around the triangle, then trot her around the triangle of flower boxes and poles on the ground.
3. Immediately after 3, loose show; the mare is let loose (and any foal at foot) and expected to show its trot and canter paces. When asked, catch the mare and re-present her in front of the judges.
4. Group show; the total number of mares may be broken up into groups usually six or seven at a time. They are led at walk around the arena, whilst the judges confer and finalise their marks. Do not forget that the mare is under judgement at all times! Many a half mark can be lost for the walk at this stage.
5. Announcement; The marks are announced, and there may be some further comments made publicly about the mares. The award of premium mare status is also announced for those mares that meet these criteria.

#### **MARKING SYSTEM**

Marks are awarded out of 10 for the following:

Type Conformation (body) Conformation (legs) Walk Trot Canter Overall Impression

The marks out of 10 have the following general meaning:

- 10 exceptional
- 9 very good
- 8 good
- 7 fairly good
- 6 satisfactory
- 5 sufficient
- 4 insufficient
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## STALLIONS

6. Colts presented for grading should be 158 cm or taller., and are normally presented as 2 or 3 year olds. If 4 y.o. or over they must first have successfully completed the NASTA Performance Test with a Grade 2 or better result. A Veterinary Certificate must be lodged with the Registrar, otherwise this may be carried out by the TBF appointed Vet at the owner's expense.

The Grading (selection for breeding) of stallions is a most important matter to the Trakehner breed. You should be aware, therefore, that we employ standards that are precisely the same as everywhere else in Europe, and in particular, in Germany, the home of our breed. Approval by the TBF infers approval throughout Europe and many parts of the world, except for any local laws regarding performance testing criteria, which may entail further testing.

Often we are asked for precise definitions of breed characteristics etc. that are accepted , but these are difficult, or impossible to provide. How would you approach a treatise on 'how to recreate the quality of the Mona Lisa painting'? The best we can advise is that you study the breed as much as possible, attend the Neumünster grading and the UK one, and ask to have a chat with a judge if possible.

The actual process of a stallion grading is similar to the mare grading, but covers two days. See the mare grading notes for additional information:

1. Presentation on hard ground
2. Presentation on the triangle
3. Presentation loose
4. Free jumping; the stallion is judged on his ability in free jumping a lane of jumps. This will be a lane, probably with a wall on one side, and a line of wings and poles on the other. There will usually be three jumps, two uprights and a double to finish, set at suitable distances apart. The handler is advised to lead the stallion slowly into the lane before release, rather than charging him towards it, and should catch the stallion at the other end. Stewards will be present to assist both handler and the judges. The Commission will determine the raising of jump heights etc, according to what they see, and their aim is the uncover the ability of the horse, not to catch him out.
5. On Sunday morning, the stallion is shown again, and the decision of the Commission is revealed.

The marking system is very similar to that used for the mares, but in this case, the marks are confidential to the stallion owner, except for graded stallions, when the notes given by the judges are entered in the Main Stud Book. The reason for this is that the stallion candidate may have been the result of years of careful breeding with horse that are still in the owner's possession, and negative public comments on a matter of 'value judgement' would be inappropriate and damaging.

We refer to a stallion candidate as being 'not selected' –NEVER 'failed'. Only the best colts of this supreme breed should come forward to this procedure, and 'failure' is not the correct concept.

All selected stallions must later complete a recognised Performance test (except 4 y.o. as above) in order to confirm their stallion licence. 'Recognised' normally means NASTA or an Approved German Test.

A final note; the Grading Commission takes its duties extremely seriously, with a sense of responsibility. If you approach individuals before or after the grading with questions that respect this, you will find that they will usually give you confidential and helpful comment.