

Swedish news, April 2009

The pony performance ranking for 2008 makes interested reading for the friend of the Connemara pony. Here the results over the past year of ponies of all breeds are summarised and the ponies are ranked relative to each other. For the performance interested breeder the ranking lists make interesting reading.

Dressage

Beginning with dressage the overall winner of 2008 was a Connemara pony, Lotus II (by Rolls Royce out of Lorette V). Rolls Royce is one of the Swedish stallions with an Elite premium and he has long had a reputation of siring good performance ponies. Lotus' dam Lorette V is imported to Sweden from France and has also been competing successfully, although in show jumping. Lotus himself has been one of the top dressage ponies in Sweden competing successfully for more than a decade. He has twice participated in the European Championships, both times qualifying to the individual final.

No less than nine Connemaras appear among the top 100 of the dressage ponies. The stallion Värnbergs Orion has sired the second highest ranking Connemara, Hagens Qumulus (out of Hagens Fondora), another old European Championship participant. Qumulus half sister Hagens Rosmara (out of Hagens Andora) also made top 100. This mare won the Swedish Championships for Connemara ponies a few years back and has also done well at the in-hand classes of the national show proving that conformation and performance go hand in hand. Also Rolls Royce have two of his offspring on the top 100 dressage list. Backens Lotus (out of Princess Jasmin) is another winner of the Swedish Championships for Connemara ponies and his rider was awarded the Folksam stipend from the Swedish Connemara society for 2008 for advertising the Connemara so well with her successful competing.



Figure 1: Backens Lotus (by Rolls Royce out of Princess Jasmin)

Eventing

Eventing has a history of being a strong Connemara discipline in Sweden. Lately, however, there has been a lack of Connemaras among the absolute top performers. In 2008 seven Connemaras made top 100 with the highest ranking being Sunday Bell (by Countach Campbell x Sun Light), incidentally yet another winner at the Swedish Championships for Connemara ponies. Finney Master, another of the Elite premium stallions in Sweden, during his lifetime, made a name for himself as a sire of performance ponies and among



Figure 2: Grange Flynn Sparrow (by Ashfield Festy out of Grange Agnes Sparrow)

the top 100 eventers two of his offspring were found: Brolötens Azzaro (out of Dame Grainne) and Amielle (out of Brantshammar Beckymoss). The international crowd may be interested to hear that two imported ponies were also among the top 100: the Danish Sösthalm Kidman (by Pilgaard's Killroy out of Sösthalm Kimberley) and the Irish Grange Flynn Sparrow (by Ashfield Festy out of Grange Agnes Sparrow).

If the purebred Connemaras are somewhat absent among the top eventers this is made up for in no small amount by two highly successful partbreds. Lillefot (by Frederiksminde Hazy Chance) was the number one eventer in 2008. Among his successes last year are a gold at the Swedish Championships and at the Nordic - Baltic Championships. Runner up to Lillefot in the ranking is another partbred Connemara: Casper (by Cannon) who was the best Swede at last year's European eventing Championships.

Show Jumping

Show jumping is by far the most popular discipline in Sweden with fierce competition, and Irish ponies have a reputation of jumping well. Sadly many Irish ponies, sometimes a picture of Connemara breed type, still come to Sweden with an unknown pedigree. Fortunately many Connemaras also bring their true identity to Sweden and market the Connemara as a high class performer.

The most successful show jumper in 2008 was the Connemara Westside Padraig (by Westside Fred out of Aran Suzy). Among his many wins were two bronzes in the Swedish show jumping championships indoors and outdoors respectively. Another of Westside Fred's gets Lexus Justice (out of Dunamoney Lass) ranked number 15 in 2008, and the third highest ranking Connemara was a grandchild of Westside Fred: Williams Town Wonder (by Monaghanstown Fred out of Charlotte's Pride). Show jumping genes anyone?



Figure 3: Westside Padraig (by Westside Fred out of Aran Suzy)

Another pony known for his performance genes is Poetic Justice (by Ballydonagh Casanova out of Gloves Misty). His purebred daughter Poetic Annie (out of Myrens Anitra) is one of the seven Connemaras on the show jumping top 100. Another of his get, the partbred Golden Star was the third most successful show jumper in 2008 beaten only by the purebred Westside Padraig and an Irish import with unknown breeding. In the indoor show jumping championships of 2008 Golden Star took a silver medal.

The competition season so far

The competition season of 2009 has started for show jumping and dressage and a handful of indoor competitions on a national level has been held. It is still too early to single out which ponies will be the "big" ones this year, but it is pleasing to see that several Connemaras are already in the ribbons. In show jumping the Swedish bred Desdemona (by Brolötens Joop out of Ti-Ti-Oo) and Poetic Gilbert (by Poetic Justice out of Poetic Annie) has won and been placed respectively, while Irish bred ponies like Clew Bay Thunder (by Thunderball out of Racecourse View), Hearnbrook Mairtin (by Connemara Playboy out of Atlantic Rose), Finisglen Flora (by Coosheen Finnegan out of Finisglen Star) and Harnells Tricky Dicky (by Rynn Richard out of Fermoye Heather) all have been placed. The Danish Connemara Skousboe Morning Gift (by Skousboe Morning Rock out of Frederiksminde Mary Lou) have already visited Sweden and travelled back home with a rosette.

In dressage the old veteran Hagens Qumulus (by Värnbergs Orion out of Hagens Fondora), at 19 years of age, has started off very well with two rosettes in his first competition. Backens Lotus is also showing promise with a 6th place at his first national competition of the year. The mare Köhls Fidinola (by Shirley's Thunderbell out of Hagens Ellina) had a promising start to competing at a national level when she took a third place and qualified to the Swedish Championships at her very first start at this level.



Figure 4: Poetic Kelly (by Poetic Justice out of Lofty Dusty Rambler)

Stallion Inspections

Poetic Justice has been in the news quite a bit lately. Already well known, also among non-Connemara people and riders with not interest in breeding, for his ability to sire outstanding jumpers first made the headlines by travelling down to France for the 2009 covering season. At the stallion inspections in late March he was the man of the day in all ways. Firstly Poetic Justice was awarded his Elite premium, in particular for the jumping ability of his offspring, and is now among the select group of Swedish Elite stallions.

But the success of Poetic Justice did not end here. Later during the day his son Poetic Kelly was approved. Kelly is out of Lofty Dusty Rambler (by Kimble) and certainly lived up to what his pedigree promised with his impressive loose jumping. Other news from the inspections was that Långarnö Cedric completed his performance test and is now fully approved and Calvin Klein was awarded an A premium for the good conformation of his offspring.

/Jenny Hagenblad

Photo: Figure 1 -3: Jenny Hagenblad, figure 4 Annsi Jacobsson