



LIBYA

**PUREBRED ARABIAN HORSES AT THE 6TH
INTERNATIONAL ARABIAN HORSE SHOW**

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

ON AUGUST 14th 2009 BREEDERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD WERE IN LIBYA TO TAKE PART IN THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL ARABIAN HORSE SHOW. HOSTED AT THE CORINTHIA HOTEL, BREEDERS AND OWNERS OF PUREBRED ARABIAN HORSE STUDS FROM LIBYA, EGYPT, MOROCCO, GERMANY, FRANCE AND BELGIUM COMPETED IN THE FESTIVAL, WHICH WAS SPONSORED BY THE LIBYAN ARABIAN HORSE BREEDERS SOCIETY AND ORGANISED BY ENG. ANWAR EL MEZOUGHY DIRECTOR OF WAHA EXPO FOR FAIR AND CONFERENCE ORGANISATION.

More than 24 studs participated in the international event, including 10 from Libya. Judges from Germany, Poland, Morocco, Spain and France assessed the horses according to their various features, awarding points to the horses with the most beautiful head & neck, body & top line, legs, and movement.

The summer season in Libya is famous for horse racing and so naturally horses are part of their heritage and culture. Libyan horses are one of the few natural breeds of the world that were descendants of horses from central Asia. Historically, Libya's interest in horses stems from years going back to 462 BC and Arcesilaus of Cyrene, (of Greek and Libyan origin), the last King to serve under Persian rule; Arcesilaus actually bred horses which were the native horses of Libya. Libyan horses are mentioned by the Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon in their writings and various cultures throughout history have breed and used the Libyan horse.

The Libyan Arabian Horse Breeders Society was established in Libya to give help and support to all Arabian horse breeders and to protect purebred Arabian horses. The two-day festival in Tripoli, which was held at the School of Equestrian Arts, ended on Saturday August 15th.

MAJOR GENERAL AL KHUWAYLIDI AL HUMAIDI

President of the Libyan Arabian Horse Breeders Society:

How do you feel about the Arabian horse and what role do you think it plays in the Arab world?

The Arabian horse is a fascinating creature blessed with beauty and stamina, a creature that has remained unchanged and pure with originality. The Arabian horse is a firmly established



▲ Major General Al Khuwaylidi Al Humaidi

unmixed breed; a breed that is actually crossbred into other lines. We as Arabs have lost our true essence and culture through indulging in artificial riches of life and have moved away from what is part of our true heritage; our pure Arabian horse that exemplifies the true core of Arab knights and cultural values that derive from our Arabian desert.

When did your passion for Arabian horses start?

I think we as Arabs are naturally inclined to have a passion for horses and horse riding. As for Arabian horses in specific, I was brought up hearing and learning plenty about them from my father and grandfathers; an interest that is rooted deeply in me. With this rooted legacy, I learned and have passed on my passion to my children. I first started my breeding programme in 1993 by establishing 'Al-Kheir Stables' in Surman, Libya. The base of my programme was a beautiful mare 'Farida', a product of the Royal Hareesa Stud in Bouznika, Morocco.

Where does the Arabian horse stand in the history and culture of Libya?

Libya is considered to be one of the oldest civilisations to have housed pure Arabians. It has been archeologically proven that horses have been part of the Libyan culture for years; evidentially shown in ancient drawings in the region of Tadarat Acacus, South of Libya, and in pre-historic rock drawings of horses with Arabian horse features carved by Phoenicians 500 years B.C. And so naturally, a love for this marvellous creature is spread throughout the country.

Can you please give us an idea about how and when the Libyan Arabian Horse Breeders Society started and what was the aim behind establishing such a society?

The Libyan Arabian Horse Breeders Society started in 2004 and our aim was, and still is to develop and maintain our local pure Arabian breed

and furthermore raise familiarity to the horse. Moreover, we aim at having this event become more international in the years to come. This event really embodies communication with our history and those with whom we share values and ethics of true horsemanship.

What can you tell us about the development of the event?

As I have mentioned above, we intend on maintaining the purity of the local Arabian breed and improving it and that will be through utilising breeding lines from a high-quality genetic pool. Our aspiring plan is to also use and breed Arabians for shows and for racing provided that our plans are following technically correct routes that will lead us to success and further achievement. And in cooperation with international specialised corporations, we also plan on utilising modern breeding techniques such as artificial insemination. We also hope that through hosting several events on annual basis, we will have the ability to broaden the local base as well as attract as many viewers, researchers, and professional breeders.

International breeders with pure Arabians from around the world – breeders with a lot of mileage - are competing strongly with your local pure breeds; what are the future plans in regards to developing Libyan breeders as to have them strongly compete at individual levels?

With the increase of Arabian horse breeders, both locally and internationally, the Society has put forward a plan to produce pure Arabians from pure lines. That will certainly assist or make it easier for Libyan breeders to compete at all levels – in addition be able to also produce a good group of horse handlers and trainers that qualify to play a part in national and international events. We also plan on guiding and assisting local breeders in acquiring the knowledge on transporting their horses locally and internationally. With the cooperation of the West, we aspire to appoint good Vets that will help our breeders with the awareness process. With all this put together, Libyan breeders will soon be very much ready for development.



▲ Khaled Al Humaidi, Vice President of the Libyan Arabian Horse Breeder's Society

▼ Major General Al Khuwaylidi Al Humaidi with General Abu Bakr Younis



During the show we witnessed a variety of breeds from the Polish Arabians to the Russian and Egyptian Arabians, do you as a breeder and the President of the Society prefer a specific line? For example, a lot of breeders are very avid about the Egyptian line?

Through 100 years of development, the Egyptian Arabian line is sought to be one of the oldest and purest of lines, however as a breeder and as the President of the Society, I would prefer to breed all lines in order to ensure an excellent yet various produce. Putting into consideration that we breed methodologically and intelligently as to ensure we have kept the purity of each line distinctive from the other.

Would you like to add anything else to our readers?

Yes, firstly thank you very much for keeping a strong interest in presenting a beautiful product such as Horse Times for this industry and our region. Secondly, Arabian horses in Libya are not thought of as a source of entertainment, but they represent what is part of our culture and ethics as well as our sense of belonging to this land. Breeding Arabian horses is not just exclusive to the niche, but to whoever is part of the Libyan culture and to whoever shares a love for this creature.

IDRIS HASSAN
PSI Middle East Representative, Germany:





On the show: "The quality of horses were impressive and the show was very nice as well. Organisation was very good! The young group hired to organise matters for us were very diligent. The show itself was also very well organised and I hope it develops further as to have presence that is more international."

Potential for Arabians in Libya: "The Libyan organisers of the show might need to get support from international experts on basic guidelines on promoting the show further. With more exposure, the show will certainly demonstrate more of a bright future."

DR. MOHAMED MACHMOUM
Breeder & International Judge,
Morocco:

On the show: "The show was a spectacular leap of development for the Libyan Arabian Horse Breeders Society in regards to organisation, judging and horse quality. Moreover, this year's event witnessed good international participation from Europe, Morocco, Egypt and other countries. On several classes we witnessed the mixture of the Libyan Arabian horse inbred with pure Arabians from Europe and so the horse quality was excellent."

On judging: "The selected international judges were picked very well and they did a good job. International regulations and conditions were met and respected therefore their credibility as judges proved to be a success. On the same note, Libyan breeders still require mileage and experience on being familiar with the knowledge of presenting a beautiful Arabian horse, as such there were some missing aspects such as properly preparing the breeders and horse handlers. More plans should be undertaken in order to provide them with the basics of promoting a Class (A) beauty show."

Having said so, in order to develop the quality of the show and in order to have more international participation, Libyan breeders must participate at international events, preparing horse handlers accurately through providing them with training seminars; afterwards comes exposure, experience, and the know-how which will help them largely develop."



▲ Eng. Anwar El Mezoughi Director of WAHA Expo

▼ Sami Jasim Al Buainain, QREC General Manager, Qatar



▼ Major General Al Khuwaylidi Al Humaidi greeting Ahmed Hamza, Director of Al Zahraa (EAO)



On their breeding programmes, preferred lines and the gene pools of their current Arabians: "We cannot direct Libyan breeders to breed a certain line or inbreed certain lines, however I think each breeder should individually start his programme based on a solid plan that will allow him to follow the breeding path he desires. The programme should not just be there for the sake of breeding, it should be directed correctly. What is promising is that aspiring Libyan breeders have the desire to learn more and do more with their Arabians and breeding programmes."

On their progress rate to reach international levels: "Nowadays science has certainly made the distance shorter for breeders to have the mileage in breeding programmes. Artificial insemination for horses for example would cut down on the growth rate of quality-produced horses. On the other hand, the current international presence at their shows may unquestionably broaden their horizons. The basics would be to construct a solid

breeding programme, work hard on that, and eventually look forward for results."

JOHN OOSTERVINK
Breeder, Belgium:

On the organisation of the show: "This is the 5th time to attend this show and we were happily surprised to see again a big improvement this year compared with previous ones. I would like to mention a few points which have improved a lot: the organising staff acted much more professionally towards the invited guests and visitors, the show itself was much better organised, the number and the quality of horses have improved a lot, the horse handlers were much better prepared and the judges were well-selected and were of international standard."

On the development of the show: "The number of horses are increasing year by year however the number of breeders/contenders should also increase accordingly. Additionally, Libyan horse

breeders have to be very critical in selecting the correct stallions to match their mares and not just breed! Also, they should consult professional individuals to assist them and to advise them on buying new horses. In this industry there are a lot of breeders that are too commercial simply trying to sell; taking less into consideration about quality."

JAMAL BOUHARRI
Breeder, Morocco:

"This event is very important for our region and it brings all the breeders together at the national level first but also at the international level. We come from Morocco with 9 horses and it is the first time for us to compete here. We had a good opportunity to meet and network with other breeders which would contribute to further good relations in the future. In all, I would say that it is an achievement for Libyans to have organised such an impressive event; well done." **HT**

