

Inclusivity is the focus for young breeders from Bavaria

BY VERONIKA AIGNER

PHOTOGRAPHY: VERONIKA AIGNER

The Landesverband Bayerischer Pferdezüchter e.V. is based in Munich, but our members are from all over Bavaria. Our focus is on training youth from the ages of eight to 25 in handling horses and give them a wide range of knowledge about horses and their behavior, needs, and of course about breeding.

We offer training days for all our members and to anyone who is interested in the Young Breeders association. There is no such thing as a written membership, we love to welcome anybody who is interested in horses. We manage ourselves directly via the breeding association, although there are also a few small groups who organize training sessions for themselves. Additionally we work together with the sport sector and organize every year a day for the youth with different types of workshops to increase their knowledge and provide support. Our main tasks are to help at foal auctions, stallion licensings, and other types of breeding shows. The range of our tasks is from working and assisting at the event overall, to handling the horses and directly supporting our breeders.

We asked our group about their memories as well as thoughts from our newest members. An often-heard answer was the high potential behind all the tasks. Only a few of our members are breeders themselves, so the majority simply love horses and/or have a riding background. Through young breeders they acquire a great deal of knowledge and expertise. Another bonus is the opportunity to group-travel to events. It's not only about sightseeing, but also working behind the scenes and meeting new people, building wonderful new friendships that are so worthwhile in life.

Every year we organize a Bavarian championship and smaller competitions and, of course, also attend at the German championships. This year, the Bavarian championships will be interesting because a few things have

changed and been expanded. This is a major step because Covid had a negative impact on our work which was almost completely put on pause. Our Bavarian championships will be a great event to not only include the people from the sport horse section, but also the South German Coldblood and the Haflinger. This year, the Bavarian championships will be very interesting, because we changed a few things and it will be much bigger than the last years. This is a big step, because Corona had a strong impact on our work and we had to pause it almost completely. Our Bavarian championships will be a great event to not only include the people from the sport horse section, but will also include the South German Coldblood and the Haflinger.

A special event is the International Young Breeders world championship every two years which brings friends together and creates a network of young breeders from all around the world. Our competition group consists on the one hand of older participants who have belonged to the group for a long time, have attended every competition, and who started at a young age. Naturally, their personal and professional improvement has been seen over time, and they explain about the value of friendships they've built. On the other hand, there are our younger members who have just started their breeding careers who are introduced into the community and whose self-esteem can be seen growing.

So, how do they become a young breeder? A few come breeding families and have grown up in the industry. Their parents perhaps weren't young breeders themselves, but had heard of the organization and enrolled their children. For these youngsters it's a great opportunity to evolve and try their own breeding choices at home.

For those from no breeding family background they came to our group through riding trainers or stable owners as there are a few who are interested in the young breeder group and encouraged their participation in order to learn with their horses. This is the most important group for us and we are lucky to have such people who always support our work by their own commitment.

Over the last few years we have constantly improved our team of young breeders who collaborate well in both work and friendship. Currently, we have a strong focus on our youngest members and it's good to see their growing interest. We are really looking forward to the future. ■



l-r: Franziska Schwarz, Philipp Schwarz, Vanessa Zeller, Jule Gerl, Nina Grom, Laura Kießlinger, Milena Knott, Veronika Aigner