

# Swedish YB embracing community and education

BY MICHAELA SWÄRD / IYB  
PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAELA SWÄRD

*Swedish Young Breeders was founded in 2007 and is aimed towards everyone under the age of 26 who is interested in breeding. Swedish Young Breeders has developed enormously over the years and now provides regular training sessions and meetings interspersed with competition opportunities.*

The most important thing about Swedish Young Breeders is to have fun, feel community, and share knowledge and experiences. No previous knowledge or experience is required to be part of Swedish Young Breeders, the most important thing is a burning interest in horses and a willingness to learn. Together, we strive to make all young people feel welcome into the world of breeding. Swedish Young Breeders is financed by funds from the Swedish Horse Industry Foundation (HNS). HNS is a co-ordinating organisation that works with, and for, the Swedish equine sector.

The HNS is financed by funds from the Swedish Trotting Association and the Swedish Horseracing Authority through an agreement with the Swedish government. This provides opportunities for the Swedish Young Breeders to carry out larger and broader activities and training sessions. The Swedish Young Breeders has a board of ten members, where the chairman is also a member of the board of the Swedish Warmblood Association. The board's tasks are to plan and organise Swedish Young Breeders' activities and events together with SWB's youth manager, Michaela Swärd. Michaela is employed by SWB and works 50% of her time with youth activities. She supports the work and is involved in all planning and implementation of all the various activities and trainings.

## *Swedish Young Breeders Cup*

A project that started in 2014 and has grown bigger over the years is the Swedish Young Breeders Cup. The project consists of a training day at secondary schools all around Sweden, where the students get to try judging in free jumping and conformation as well as showing horses in hand, all supervised by some of SWB's most experienced judges. The purpose of the cup is to create an interest and increase the understanding of breeding for the young students as well as give them an insight to SWB's activities. It is also a great opportunity to attract more members to join Swedish Young Breeders regular activities during the year. The schools participating in the training days also have the opportunity to participate in a final which takes place in springtime, where the schools compete against each other. The students then compete in a theory test, grooming, conformation, and free jumping judging and showing horses in hand. The finals allow the students to get together, and the days usually contribute to a lot of laughter, new acquaintances, and lots of new and valuable horse knowledge.

## *IYB World Championships*

The highlight for Swedish Young Breeders is most definitely every second year when the Young Breeders World Championships take place at different venues around the globe. The Swedish Young Breeders never miss a championship, and preparations start well ahead of the competition, with participants selected through the finals of the Swedish Young Breeders Cup and other selections during the year. At the 2022 Championships, which took place in the Netherlands at the National Equestrian Center in Ermelo, 12 Swedes together defended the Swedish titles from previous years. The group included a junior and senior team, each with four participants, two substitutes, and two team leaders. Both teams performed very well, winning several prizes. Another fun event in 2022 was winning the competition to create a new logotype for the International Young Breeders as



*The Swedish team with their mascots*



*(l-r) Swedish YB team leaders 2022, Anna-Lena Johansson and Michaela Swärd and the prize check from the logotype competition*

well as the logo for the World Championships in Ermelo, where we proudly received a prize cheque of €250. After four days at the championships, a group of proud Swedes travelled home with many new experiences, friendships made and memories for life!

### *Chicken bingo and stripped tail*

We got the chance to post a few questions to one of our members, Thea Karlsson, who has participated in various young breeders' activities over the years.

#### ◆ Who is Thea and what is your horse background?

My name is Thea Karlsson, I am 22 years old and live in southern Sweden. In high school, I studied a special program called 'The development of the young horse'. I have two Swedish Warmbloods, a nine-year-old gelding by Dalwhinne - National Zenith xx, and a four-year-old gelding by Cabachon, Manhattan x Voltaire, that I bought as a foal at SWB's Elite foal auction in 2019. I previously worked as a rider and groom in Sweden but now I'm back to school studying at the university. I have competed in both dressage and jumping.

#### ◆ How did you hear about/become interested in joining Young Breeders?

I got in touch with Young Breeders because they held a training day at the high school I attended, Swedish Young Breeders Cup. We got to practice the elements that are a part of the Young Breeders World Championships together with SWB judges. Those who did well and also passed the theory test at the end of the day had the opportunity to be selected for the Young Breeders World Championships in Canada 2017. I was one of two selected through the Young SWB Cup and that's how I got into the Young Breeders community and was selected to represent Sweden in Canada.

#### ◆ How often do you participate in Young Breeders activities?

I have been on the Young Breeders board since 2018 and at the moment my role is vice chairman. We plan and organise various activities every year that are highly appreciated by our members, such as lectures, grandstand guidance, study visits and training days.

#### ◆ What experiences have you had during your time with Young Breeders?

I have had the opportunity to participate in three Young Breeders World Championships: Canada 2017, Austria 2019, and most recently the Netherlands 2022, which have all been fantastic experiences!

#### ◆ What is your best memory with Young Breeders?

The Young Breeders World Championships in [Calgary] Canada 2017. Absolutely incredible to be able to compete at a facility like Spruce Meadows. When we arrived at the Championship we had been awake for 24 hours and arrived straight to the welcome dinner. We were very tired and after a few hours of sleep it was time for the first day of competition. We stayed a short distance from the competition arena and went to the competition site every day in yellow school buses and played a lot of music, sang, and danced, the whole bus was rocking. We had a great team and incredible fun throughout the trip. I also became World Champion in conformation judging for juniors and took sixth place individually overall. The award ceremony was held on a farm where a barbecue was served, and we competed in chicken bingo where the chicken would 'poop' on one's number to win.

#### ◆ What is your funniest memory with Young Breeders?

A fun memory from a Young Breeders World Championship was last summer in the Netherlands when we groomed our horse during the grooming phase. We got a really nice, big, brown horse with a lot of charisma and a good mane for nice plaits [braids]. However, the tail was a



*Thea Karlsson*

disaster. The entire upper part of the dock of the tail was stripped of hair and there was almost nothing to make a braid out of. After several mental breakdowns, we managed to make a braid. We pulled up the tail from the bottom and sewed roses in the tail that covered the stripped part of the tail root, along with a ribbon in the Swedish colours. It was lucky that the judges saw what the tail looked like before we started because otherwise, we probably would have never won the grooming par.

◆ **What opportunities has Young Breeders created for you?**

Young Breeders has given me many new contacts and opportunities to develop in the horse business. It has contributed a lot of knowledge and given me the opportunity to be part of a fantastic community. During my time in Young Breeders, I have also had the opportunity to show mares with foals at SWB's Elite foal auctions, which are held in the fall every year. It has been very fun and educational.

◆ **What are the most important lessons you have learned from your involvement with Young Breeders?**

You get very far with an interest, curiosity, and willingness to learn more.

◆ **What advice would you like to give to others who consider joining Young Breeders?**

If you have an interest in horses, I absolutely think you should join Young Breeders, whatever country you're in. We have a very good community here in Sweden and have a lot of fun together while learning more about breeding, pedigrees and showing horses. There are similar opportunities elsewhere around the globe. ■

**IYB MEMBER SOCIETIES**

Country	WBFSH listed Studbook
USA	American Warmblood Registry American Hanoverian Society
Canada	Canadian Warmblood Horse Breeders Association
Austria	Zentrale Arbeitsgemeinschaft Österreichischer Pferdezüchter
Belgium	Belgian Warmblood
Denmark	Dansk Varmblod/Danish Warmblood
France	Selle Francais
Germany	Verband der Züchter des Holsteiner Pferdes Landesverband Bayrischer Pferdezüchter Hannoveraner Verband Westfälisches Pferdestammbuch. Verband der Züchter des Oldenburger Pferdes Pferdezuchtverband Baden-Württemberg Pferdezuchtverband Brandenburg-Anhalt Pferdezuchtverband Rheinland-Pfalz-Saar Rheinisches Pferdestammbuch Pferdezuchtverband Sachsen-Thüringen Trakehner Association Verband der Züchter Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Great Britain	Anglo European Studbook Warmblood Breeders Studbook UK British Hanovarian Horse Society
Ireland	Irish Sport Horse
Latvia	Latvian Warmblood Horse Studbook
Netherlands	KWPN
Sweden	Swedish Warmblood Association

<https://www.wbfs.com/iyb>



*The Swedish team after the prize giving ceremony in Ermelo 2022*