

Young breeders making memories as a team

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PHOTOGRAPHY: LISA HOHMAN/PZVST

The horse breeding association Saxony-Thuringia emerged in 2005 from the amalgamation of the 'Horse breeding association Saxony' and the 'Association of Thuringian horse breeders', which had been working independently since their establishment in the 1920s.

The aim of the merger was to facilitate breeding of the in terms of quality, organisation, sales, and events such as stallion licensing. The breed registry includes the Saxony-Thuringian Heavy Warmblood, the German Sport Horse (DSP) as a part of the 'Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutsches Sportpferd', as well as various pony and special breeds. There are a total of 29 breeding clubs that are a part of the association.

Young Breeders in Saxony-Thuringia

The origin of the young breeders in Saxony-Thuringia lies in these breeding clubs, where members who cared about the future of horse breeding started training local young breeders and established the first local competitions. These started in Saxony in 1995, which was an inspiration for Thuringia two years later.

Following the fusion of the two breeding associations in 2005 one main competition was held both in Saxony and then Thuringia. In order to participate in national competitions a joint team was necessary, which at first comprised 12 young breeders from every district. Since 2016 a joint competition now takes place annually as part of the 'Reiten Jagen Fischen&Forst' fair in Erfurt, the capital of Thuringia.

The participants range from ages six to 25 and are classified in four age groups. The best 12 competitors of age



Presenter Carolin Rudloff

groups three (14-18 years old) and four (19-25 years old) form the junior and senior young breeders' teams of the association. Normally around 150 young breeders from 11 breeding clubs participate in this annual event. Apart from competitions, the team members also work to support breeders who are not able to present their horses themselves, and assist in various other activities concerning breeding events.

Collecting memories in Ermelo and Münster:

In 2022 our team was very happy to get back into competing [post Covid] in the German national championships and, of course, the WBFSH International Young Breeders (IYB) world championships in Ermelo. For that, our team leaders organized a nice and very helpful preparation course at a stud farm. In July we had a great time competing in Ermelo, achieving very pleasing results, and learning a lot about Dutch horse breeding and, most importantly, making connections with many other young breeders from all around the world to form new friendships. We were able to see some of our new German friends again just a month later for the German championships in Münster, achieving good results and our junior team even took the second place in the team ranking.



Team spirit and motivation are important to young breeders



Participants hair is also important

Our team members

The young breeders team of the Saxony-Thuringia horse breeding association is open to everyone, regardless of whether they are in school, work with horses on a daily basis, or study something completely different. While it's not all our team members who own or even breed horses, everyone is linked to equestrian sports in one way or another, with some competing in dressage, showjumping, or driving.

Being a young breeder constantly improves our knowledge and understanding of horses, and provides another way of spending time with horses other than riding. It also allows us to see beautiful places in Germany and all over the world which are true paradises for horses and equestrians alike. Moreover, handling different horses gives us more experience, a better awareness of our body language, and helps us build confidence. Most importantly, spending time together and helping each other in the presentation ring and all the other situations that might occur makes us stronger as a team, so we can make beautiful memories together that last forever. We've made a lot of them in 2022 and we can't wait for all the moments 2023 will have in store for us.

The main competition

On March 25, 2023, the 6th Saxon-Thuringian Young Breeders Competition was held on the occasion of the Riding-Hunting-Fishing & Forestry fair, which saw 157 children and young people from 30 regional horse breeding clubs compete in the four age groups. The largest proportion was among the young people aged 10 to 18 years, with over 100 participants.

The day began with the conformation evaluation of 4 mares, which were brought to the fair by the breeders especially for this program item. For a part of the children it went afterwards to the theory. Questions were asked about horse breeding, horse keeping, feeding and sport. The heads smoked. During the evaluation, however, one could see the great preparation work and all young breeders achieved good to very good results. For the remaining young breeders went to the in-hand presentation on the triangle track. The in-hand presentation took place in the main arena. In Germany, the helmet requirement for the presentation of horses has been implemented more intensively only since last year, and we have made it our business to recommend this helmet obligation to our young breeders. Next year it will then become mandatory. We want to follow the international example and increase the safety standard.

Many spectators used the possibility and cheered on our young breeders energetically. After 157 rounds, the judges had also found their favorites. The award ceremony was embedded in the big stallion presentation of all Saxon and Thuringian stallion owners and enjoyed a large number of spectators. Lena-Theresa Opitz was the winner of all age classes. She already participated very successfully in the German Championships and the World Championships in Ermelo. We are pleased about the active interest in the young breeders work and the great results. We are looking forward to the further course of the young breeders' season. ■

