

Portrait of a DWB young breeder: What are they about?

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PHOTOGRAPHY: SOPHIE ASP LAURSEN AND RIDEHESTEN/ASTRID ØSTERGAARD SØRENSEN

As a young teenager, or even as a child, it can be very intimidating to join your first training with a local young breeder's association. You may have watched them perform at big events and auctions, where you've wondered how they can run so fast, show the horses so elegantly, and be in control of not only their own body but also a 600 kg animal only by the help of a pair of reins.

They may be a bit older than you, and they look to be having fun with each other while making the show go on. You might have questioned, how it would be possible for you to become part of that team. Luckily, the answer is quite straight forward; just show up!

The overall purpose of the association is to bring together young people interested in horses with a desire to learn and improve their horsemanship. It is not breed- or equitation-specific, as the elements learned and trained with the association can be applied into the everyday life of everyone working or simply enjoying the company of horses. The more we learn about horses, the better we can take care of them, and thereby uphold a higher standard of equine welfare.

To point out the more specific benefits of joining the young breeders, I have asked one of our talented members, Linnea Kampgaard Jansa, who has been active since 2017, when she participated in her first World Championships in Canada. Here she received a medal for scoring 100% in answering every question correctly in the Theory discipline and continued to do so in Austria 2019 as well as in Holland 2022. At the latest World Championship, she even managed to get placed in three out of four disciplines, finishing with a bronze in her favourite discipline: Judging of Athleticism (free jumping). Linnea states that "One of the best things about participating in Young Breeder events has got to be the large network of like-minded young people from different backgrounds. I

really like how people here have a nerdier approach to the equestrian world, and that their knowledge and input to discussions about welfare, riding, breeding, and conformation actually has deeper roots than just 'something they've heard at the barn'."

The knowledge gained from multiple training sessions with the Danish Warmblood Young Breeders has provided her with useful and practical tools in terms of both professional- and hobby-level breeding: "I have learned a lot about how the conformation of a horse is directly connected to its function, which I was able to apply when I wanted to breed my own mare and had to choose the right stallion to match her. The whole process of breeding became more fascinating now that I actually knew what was happening throughout the period," Linnea explains.

Her interest in working with horses, especially foals and youngsters, derives from way before Linnea joined the young breeders. In 2015 she started working in the stable at the biggest showjumping stud in Denmark, Stutteri Ask. Here she was inspired to join the association by her colleague, Lasse Bendixen, who has been a very active member and multiple medallist at several World Championships, and is now in charge of the stud's stallion station. The experience from her work has given her great insight to the world of breeding, but the knowledge gained from training sessions and championships with the young breeders has also positively affected her working life: "The farrier is very pleased with my ability to judge leg conformation and correctness. It is very helpful, especially with the young foals, that I can keep an eye with any changes they might need and evaluate if they are improving or not," she says with a humble pride to her voice.

Unfortunately, Linnea has now passed the maximum age-limit for Young Breeder competitions, but luckily for us she is still quite active, taking a major role part in preparing for next year's International Young Breeders World Championship, which is to be held at her workplace, Stutteri Ask in July 2024.

It is a great pleasure to follow these young people creating a career based on their experiences with our association, and we want to invite anyone interested in exploring the world of young breeders to join us at any future event. Even though it might seem intimidating, just take the plunge, and give it a chance, we would love to welcome you in our friendly community and share the love of horses. ■



Linnea Kampgaard Jansa