



THE 2014 WORLD ARABIAN HORSE ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE WAHO IN QATAR

Text and Photos by MONIKA SAVIER

English Revisions by BETTINA BORST - Layout by MARIO BRUNETTI



For the second time in a row, it was the Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club who hosted the WAHO 2014 Conference in Doha, State of Qatar. After the successful WAHO Qatar Conference of 2011, and following the cancellation of the planned 2013 Conference in Brazil, Qatar very kindly stepped in to fill the gap, so once again the WAHO delegates and members gathered together on the Persian Gulf coast for almost three weeks of farm visits, tours, meetings and the main WAHO Conference itself, held under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Special Adviser to H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar. WAHO itself plans the agenda for the WAHO World Registrars Meeting and for their own General Assembly, and selects the topics and speakers for the guest lectures, but it is the host country which plans all the social, equestrian and cultural events that make these WAHO Conferences so special. During the event, not only the WAHO General Assembly was held, but there was also a comprehensive supporting program both before and after, which held the visitors well captivated. Everything was planned and organized by the Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club's experienced team, led by their Chairman, HE Sheikh Mohammed Bin Faleh Al Thani. Thanks must also go to the Mr. Sami Jassim Al Boenain, General Manager of QREC, and to Conference Co-Ordinator Mrs. Hannie Maasdijk and her large team for all their hard work in ensuring the success of this complex event. The standard was set high from the start, with the lavish Welcome Reception and dinner in the impressive grounds of the Museum of Islamic Art, with a parade of Arabian horses in traditional saddlery.



HE Sheikh Mohammed Bin Faleh Al Thani



WAHO World Registrars Meeting 2014

During the meetings of the registrars, these people entrusted with keeping the studbooks of the Arabian Horses of all the member states discussed matters of the international proceedings for studbook administration, of technical and organizational topics regarding the legal foundations – and how to harmonize them – for maintaining studbooks in different countries, continents, and cultural spheres.

For a better understanding: it is because of the existence of WAHO, the umbrella organization for all Purebred Arabians, that Horse Passports, pedigrees, and regulations for this internationally cross-linked horse breed are accepted and acknowledged in all of the member states. It is only because in every member state, studbooks are maintained according to the same set of rules (such as DNA analyses, microchipping, foal registration, and other means of control) that Arabian horses can be imported and exported without their buyers and sellers being required to carry out complex validation processes for their horses and their offspring, which would pose problems that can hardly be solved by individuals. However, in our global world of the Horse Industry, WAHO as an umbrella organization is required to deal with ever fresh challenges. For the registrars conference,

which usually takes place every two years, WAHO needs to present a to do list as a basis for the discussions to be held and the ensuing decisions to be approved by the representatives of the national studbooks. A final document titled "WAHO requirements for establishing and keeping a stud book, rule changes" is then passed on to every country maintaining a studbook and serves as the basis for further cooperation, effectively synchronizing proceedings. High Tech in reproductive technologies as well as the continually enlarging international market make it essential for WAHO – and, in their turn, for the breeding associations in the different countries – to develop complex safety systems for the registration of foals as well as of imported horses. After all, the Arabian studbook has been closed since 2003, which is a good thing. However, this gene pool needs protecting. Maintaining the breed within the frame of a closed studbook is not only done to keep up the Bedouin tradition of pure breeding, but also to ensure the control necessary for preventing malpractice, which is necessary because the value of a purebred Arabian is on a high plane in our materially oriented world.

During the registrars' meeting as well as during the General Assembly, these and other topics – specials this time: regulations for embryo transfer and for exporting



embryos into another country in utero of a surrogate dam – were discussed and positions were decided. Another point of discussion was regulations for importing deep-frozen embryos into other countries.

During the General Assembly, the results of the Registrars Meeting were presented and brought to the vote. Also during the General Assembly, the WAHO vice president newly elected by the Executive Committee, Mr Sami Al Nohait from Saudi Arabia, was introduced and welcomed with applause. In this context and like every time during General Assembly so far, WAHO's constitutional approach of having the members of the Executive Committee confirmed by the General Assembly of the WAHO Conference was questioned, and discussed after inquiries by several members. They suggested that with the increased number of WAHO members, and despite the high respect of members for their Executive Committee and their President, procedures that are more democratic should be introduced – in particular, the members of the Executive Committee should be appointed by secret individual voting. The WAHO President assured the assembly that their comments and requests on this topic will be seriously looked into by the Executive Committee within the next two years.

At the heart of the WAHO General Assembly are the traditional and always interesting reports given by each of the voting Delegates present, about the Arabian horse affairs in their own countries. In particular, statistics were presented, such as the number of foals born per year, the number of horses imported and exported, and events of national importance such as horse races, shows, or endurance races. It was interesting to note which are the main fields for sports horses in different countries, and how the breeders accommodate to these different challenges. The statistics were quite surprising in some instances! The highest number of foals overall registered in 2013 was reported for the **USA**, even though 15 years



ago, the number was much higher. With 3282 foals registered, Arabian breeding might be thought to suffer a severe crisis in the US nowadays, but on the other hand, the US exported 500 horses during that year. Of the Arabian countries, the highest number of offspring was listed for **Turkey**, where 1450 foals were born. The second highest number of foals was reported from **Egypt**: even though breeding suffers from the difficult conditions in the country, 1162 foals were registered. An additional 147 horses were imported, and with 119 horses exported during the same time, breeding in Egypt is obviously considered successful abroad. For the **UAE**, 668 foals and 260 races were reported. **Tunisia** gave their number of foals born as 433 in 2013. Quite obviously, the country puts a lot of emphasis on racing: no less than 365 races have been run. And for **Qatar**, 289 foal births are recorded, with the country also being one of the Arabian countries with a focus on horse racing, as for their national sports events, the desert state reported 190 races and another 14 endurance races, but just 4 shows. As for races, however, Turkey is clearly far in the lead with a staggering 2172 racing competitions for Arabian horses reported by the Turkish registrar. Turkey exported no more than 14 horses, however, so their breeding looks to be mainly for their national racecourses. In the overall birth ranking, **France** can claim second place with 1225 foals registered per year. And where Turkey organizes an unbelievable number of course races, France is unbelievably strongly engaged in the endurance sector: 2650 races were run. Presumably, the major part of French-bred Arabians is intended for the endurance scene. From **Italy**, 803 foal births were reported, with a high number of exports at 241 horses. **Germany** seems to be a strong exporter, too, with 294 horses exported while in the same year, 700 foals were born. And last not least, **Australia** sports a very high number of endurance races, listing about 500 of them for 2013.

Dr. Nagel Retired as WAHO President

This year, WAHO's General Assembly was dominated by an extraordinary event: long-term WAHO president Dr. Hans J. Nagel, aged 84, took his leave on grounds of his age. He is entitled to look back on a successful time as a WAHO president. His vice president, Mr. Peter Pond from Australia, took over as the new WAHO president, while Mr. Sami Al Nohait from Saudi Arabia was elected vice president. To standing ovations, Dr. Nagel was awarded the honorary title of President Emeritus of WAHO.

As a farewell gift, he was presented a watercolor painting of his famous mare HANAN, done by Peter Upton. As a review of his life with Arabian horses and his meetings with breeders in the countries of origin and the world, a video titled "Tribute to his Past" was presented, produced by Massimo Menghini/Monika Savier.

(The link to this video on Youtube: <http://youtu.be/xJSkYoFZVsg>)



Dr. Hans Nagel and Mr. Peter Pond,
the New President of WAHO

Welfare, History & Culture, Genetic Research - the Main Topics of the 2014 Conference in Doha

While during the 2011 WAHO Conference, reproductive technologies with their advantages, risks, and collateral effects were much in the foreground of many discussions, the program of the 2014 conference put some emphasis on equine welfare. Three lady scientists in particular, Dr. Hausberger and Dr. Lesimple of the University of Rennes, France, and Mrs. Launder of the Equine Veterinary Therapy Centre at the University of the West of England, brought home urgent messages with their research reports. They pointed out that the human-horse relationship urgently requires changes in order to reduce and improve physical harm to horses from riding, and problem behavior from faulty training and housing. Hopefully, the WAHO delegates will take the interesting results of the research into the behavior of horses back home into the member countries.

Another impressing and well-fitting talk was the report that Dr. Leclerc from France presented on the currently dramatic situation in endurance sports.

These four scientists are just some of the internationally renowned experts, with specialist knowledge in a wide range of subjects including behavioral studies, genetics and cultural heritage, that had been invited as speakers from different countries all over the world.

Their contributions started with **Mrs. Cynthia Culbertson** from the USA giving a slide presentation on "*Bedouin Traditions and Their Relevance Today*". For the Bedouins, horses meant quality of life, and they paid

Goodbye Dr. Hans J. Nagel - Excerpt from the Laudatio



Photo Sharon Meyers

"... Is there some kind of summary or legacy for the era of Dr. Hans Nagel as WAHO president to underline? Well yes, definitely. There is mainly one thing that he is strongly convinced of and therefore never tired of stressing: there will only be enough people who are interested in the Ara-

bian breed if a variety of types remains available. For many years, Hans Nagel stressed that there used to be geographic variety which made sure that there was genetic variety. Today, standards such as the show standard effectively equalize the differences between various populations of Arabians, reducing the gene pool for the breed. There are three characteristics he wants to save, for which the Arabian horse is unique. The first is its attractive beauty, the other its exceptional athletic ability, and the third its pleasant human-related behavior. The fascination with Arabian horses doesn't stop here, however. Arabian horses are found all over the world today, connecting people in a kind of universal global language that speaks to all of us who love the Arabian horse. Hans Nagel is somebody who speaks that language perfectly and always used it to support, and to encourage people to make their own choices and follow their own goals in breeding. And it is just this WAHO era of curiosity, of open-mindedness, of room for personal choices and a sense of adventures in the horse world, that you will be remembered for, Hans. Thank you for it."

Monika Savier



great attention to the details that made their horses great performers. The three most desirable traits of an Arabian horse most often mentioned in pre-Islamic and some early Islamic poetry are purity of blood and heritage, hard hooves, and a long-strided gallop. The trot, so highly valued today, was not even used by the Bedouins of old. The next important traits to them were agility and stamina, both of which were important virtues of a war horse, and then some bodily characteristics such as an arched neck, a high tail carriage, and distinct Arabian type – in which context, no Bedouin ever mentioned the dished face. Much of the ancient poetry described the horse in the context of being ridden, and gives clear evidence that the horse-human relationship was highly valued. The fact that Arabians are so often labeled „crazy“ today might be a reminder that we are not paying

enough attention to what made the Arabian such a prized horse for centuries.

Dr. Doug Antczak, USA

Overview of the new research project on the genetics of the Arabian Horse, sponsored by the Qatar National Research Fund.

The international Horse Genome Project, finished in 2009, listed all 20,000 horse genes. As the laboratory techniques for genome sequencing have become incredibly efficient and low-priced, in-depth study is possible now. So in 2014, the entire 3 billion units of instruction in the DNA sequence of the horse were known. Professor Douglas Antczak's project on horse genetics, supported by the Qatar National Research Fund, studies comparative animal genomics with 3 signature species: the oryx antelope, the camel, and the horse. With the latter, in-depth genetic analysis is

intended to address the questions of: 1 - how distinct is the genome of the Arabian horse, 2 - how variable are Arabians within the breed, 3 - which genes control desert adaptation? 750,000 year old horse DNA proves that the common ancestor of the horse and the donkey lived further back in time than was assumed, and when comparing the DNA sequences of the Zebra, Quagga, Onager, Kiang, Somali Wild Ass, and donkey to equus caballus, there was evidence for introgression (influx of genes from these populations). Small differences in DNA sequence of different horse breeds were examined using Principal Component Analysis. One results was that Arabians and Thoroughbreds are distinctly different in their genomes. Arabians seem very closely related to the Akhal Teke and perhaps the Caspian pony from Iran. And while the analysis indicates a high level of inbreeding for Thoroughbreds, the genome for Arabians suggests there is more variation in them. In order to find out how much the different populations of Arabians differ from one another, breeders are asked for their cooperation in providing samples that will help to find out how the Arabian breed originated from ancient horse lineages, how it has become adapted to desert conditions, and how the various lineages of Arabians relate to one another.

Dr. Martine Hausberger, France

How our perception of horse behavior affects their welfare.

Dr. Martine Hausberger, titling her speech „On the human – horse relationship: horse welfare and human

beliefs“, put the emphasis on how humans can use their knowledge to improve the welfare of horses. One reason for Dr. Hausberger and her team to do scientific research on this topic is sad statistics, as 43% of



riding horses are slaughtered at an age of not even 10 years, and a quarter of them because they were aggressive towards humans. What is it that goes wrong with the communication between people and their horses here?

In French experiments involving hundreds of riding school horses and big groups of breeding horses, it was found that the main factor for aggressiveness in horses was the stabling system: horses kept in box stalls were about 4 times more aggressive than horses living outdoors. When going into the details of why horses in certain stables behaved more aggressively, the researchers

found that the main effect was from the main handlers. Horses in contact with certain grooms or trainers were 5 to 10 times more likely to bite, kick or threaten humans – so this was learned behavior that was then generalized towards other people. There was also a distinct effect from physical problems, as horses without any vertebral disorders were 50% less likely to be aggressive than horses suffering from severe vertebral disorders. At the same time, many horse handlers believed their horses to be in good health when they were not, or failed to notice the signs that a horse was uncomfortable. Hausberger strongly recommends proper training procedures for people, and for horses using positive rewards.



Mrs. Elizabeth J. Launder, UK

The rider or trainer's influence, negative and positive, on horse performance.

Elizabeth Launder's speech titled "The rider's or trainer's influence on horse performance" makes amply clear that all training programs for horses (and riders) need to be progressive, with

time built in for joints, muscles, and tendons to be conditioned and cardio-vascular fitness to be built. The trainer needs to identify the horses individual anatomical and conformational qualities, as well as their emotional strengths and weaknesses. For a good training regime, the demands of the different equestrian disciplines need to be understood, as poor training - as traditional or cultural it may be - not only wastes the potential talents of the horse but predisposes it to injury. As main impairments in sports horses, veterinarians report dressage horses with suspensory desmitis, racehorses with carpal injuries, show jumpers with both suspensory desmitis and P3 foot problems; and all sports horses with collateral ligament issues and back problems, all of which mostly are the result of strain, over-use and over-load. Excessive sustained postures, such as the standing pose of some show horses, are not training, but torture. Poor performance in the sport horse is potentially due to pain. Early warning signs of pain are ears back, tail swishing, grumpiness, reluctance to move forward, unwillingness to jump or race, difficulty getting a horse out of the starting stalls. Back pain is often associated with lameness, and postural dysfunction of this kind is often the first indication of physical problems. Additionally, if horses are expected to carry more than 20% of their body weight, significant gait abnormalities resulted, as well as miss-steps and increased heart and respiratory rates.

Saddles may well need to be adjusted three or four times a year, as horses change shape considerably during training. It was found that in more than half of all cases of a saddle slipping, lameness was the cause, while 37% of the riders examined sit crookedly. The most comfortable rider position for the horse in trot and canter gaits is the rider out of the saddle, and balanced in a two-point position. The welfare and longevity of horses is the goal of training, not the result.

Dr. Jean-Louis Leclerc, France

Improving the welfare of the endurance horses in training and competition.

For Dr. Jean-Louis Leclerc, the emphasis was on "Improving the Welfare of Endurance Horses in Competition and Training". He identified three major factors: the riders, for whom there is no minimum qualification requirement; the rules of the sport, which do consider horse welfare, but are often unknown; and the officials during endurance events, who enforce the



rules. So the „human factor“ plays an important role in this sport: riders want high performance because of money and fame, officials often are not well trained and tend to act in favour of the riders instead of the

horses. The rules seem appropriate, but are not well enforced and penalties are not well established. Possible solutions as named by Leclerc are education and regulations. Riders, trainers, and officials need to better educated, and the regulations need to ask for minimum competence on the part of the riders, review officials' performance, and establish a concept for penalties.

Dr. Clémence Lesimple, France

Improving horses' health and welfare through adapted management practices.



When Dr. Clémence Lesimple talked about „Improving Horses' Health and Welfare Through Adapted Management Practices“, her message was clear:

horses are healthier and less aggressive by far when they can live naturally. Which means: when they can move around, feed frequently on a high fiber diet, and have close contact with other horses. With horses kept in box stalls, windows to the outside may be a source of frustration, as they displayed emotional and stereotypic behavior more often, while horses in closed boxes lay down more often and were also more emotional. The researchers concluded that box stalls are not appropriate for keeping horses.

Social contacts greatly reduced aggressive behavior in horses; with horses kept in groups, they were aggressive towards each other during the first three days, after that they were much less aggressive than box-housed horses. At the same time, horses were clearly more sociable and relaxed, and mares were more fertile, when they received several meals of different roughages throughout the day as compared to just one type of roughage, just one big meal, or a high percentage of concentrates in the diet. For different types of work that horses did, different abnormal behaviors were observed and horses working with beginner riders had more back problems – the type of work definitely influences the horses' well-being.

Prof. Tadeusz Majda, Poland

The Count Rzewuski Manuscript and its translation into English and Arabic.

Professor Tadeusz Majda from Poland is a distinguished orientalist and specialist in Islamic Art. He is a professor at the University of Warsaw and the Scientific Coordinator of the project of editing and translating the manuscript of Count Wacław Rzewuski. This is a joint project being realized by the National Library in Warsaw and the Qatar

Museums Authority, sponsored by the Qatar Foundation. In 1817, Rzewuski travelled to Istanbul and on into the Middle East, scouting for Koheylan pure-breds for his own stud farm as well as for the stables of Tsar Alexander I and his sister Catherine, the Queen of Württemberg. During his travels he produced a large volume of diary papers. Originally scripted in old French, the volumes detail the count's travels in Arabia. It is this project about the famous “Rzewuski Manuscript” that formed the basis of Professor Majda’s interesting talk at the WAHO Conference.

Dr. Roland Owers, UK

World Horse Welfare: A Global View



Roland Owers gave an overview on “World Horse Welfare“, the pre-eminent international horse charity. Main fields of activity are information on and activity towards horse-human partnership, pioneering legislation to

improve welfare, and education for public, governments and regulators.

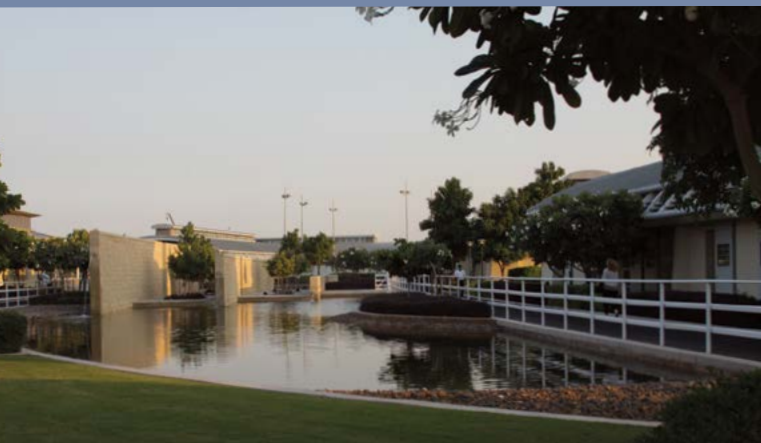


Pride of Qatar Visits Before and After the Conference

The invitation issued to the international guests promised a fascinating framework program. As Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club Chairman, H.E. Sheikh Mohamed bin Faleh Al Thani, said: “We are delighted to be hosting some of the world’s leading authorities in their respective fields and look forward to some very informative and enlightening presentations. To complement the conference we will be inviting delegates to visit some of Qatar’s major stud farms and training centres, providing a rare opportunity to see such a high concentration of

quality Arabian breeding stock, race and show horses anywhere in the world.”

Daily, the conferences buses carrying delegates and guests rolled through the traffic jams of Doha to reach the studs that have – with the one exception of the Al Shaqab Foundation located within the urban area – „set up their tents“ well apart from the city, out in the sandy and presently, due to the great number of construction sites, dusty back country of Doha, creating green oases for their horses there. Just like in Qatar in 2011, individual studs had gone to enormous effort to enthusiastically prepare their presentations for the WAHO guests.



Al Shaqab Farm was founded by HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the former Emir of Qatar. Later on, the farm was incorporated into the Qatar Foundation, re-settling in newly built barns within the buildings and premises of Al Shaqab, certainly one of the biggest and modern studs in the world, located in the city area of Doha. Up to a hundred foals are born there every year. For 20 years now, the Al Shaqab Foundation has been present in racing as well as in endurance sports, as well as internationally on shows, with unparalleled success.

Mr. Mohammed Al Sulaiti, the Breeding and Show Manager of Al Shaqab, received the WAHO guests and invited them to look around the enormously vast barns, paddocks and training facilities on the premises. Subsequently, 22 horses selected from the Show Breeding Program were presented to the guests. In the arena, offspring of the most famous Al Shaqab horses could be seen, such as Al Adeed Al Shaqab, Farhoud Al Shaqab, Marwan Al Shaqab, Kahil Al Shaqab, Fadi Al Shaqab, and Wadee Al Shaqab. The 2014 foal crop impressed with their extreme type featuring a long neck and good movements. Is it possible to top that? Probably not. And





then, there was 20-year-old Al Adeed himself, presented in the ring to standing ovations and displaying himself just as lively as he used to do as a colt. Doubtlessly, this straight Egyptian was the highlight of the evening for most of the audience. At any rate, he prompted a lively discussion among the guests, debating the breeding goals of our Arabian show horses until far into the excellent and delicious evening buffet the guests were invited to following the horse presentation.

Al Nasser Farm on Salwa Road is a green oasis of date palms and tamarisk trees, located in Qatar's central region. It was founded, 20 years ago, by Sheikh Nawaf bin Nasser Al Thani, and for ten years now has been managed successfully by Belgian native Mr. Hendrik Mens. Originally, only Straight Egyptian Arabians were bred there. They are horses that are famous all over the world, such as Monther Al Nasser (Ansata Hejazi x Aliah Al Nasser), the eye catcher Shagran Al Nasser (Ansata Selman x Dana Al Nasser), and their successful offspring. For a few years now, there has also been a breeding group that is small in numbers, but extremely successful in their special area of show Arabians such as the Junior Multi Champion Kanz Al Nasser (WH Justice x Ftoon Al Shaqab) and the Champion Mare Masrata Al Nasser (Marwan Al Shaqab x Remal Al Nasser) as well as other horses. Despite the enormously successful breeding program and a presentation featuring extremely typey and elegant Arabian horses, manager Hendrik Mens maintains a very humble attitude: „From season to season, we keep trying to improve our breeding. For certain elements that we think we are lacking, we choose the stallions to complement our mares, sometimes with results, sometimes not. There is no such thing as a perfect horse. But if you think of Al Nasser horses, they are certainly horses featuring beautiful refined faces and gentle characters, but nice show attitudes". Anybody who has the opportunity to visit the stud will be able to affirm these statements, just as the enthusiastic WAHO conference participants could.



Mr. Hendrik Mens and Shagran Al Nasser



Al Shahania Stud, created as an oasis for race horses and located east of Doha, is a place uniquely designed to obtain breeding successes and performance from the Arabian horses living there. The premises with their 50 hectares of race track, vast paddocks with run-in sheds, a swimming pool for horses, barns of generous dimensions and everything else in training facilities that can contribute towards

success generate the impression that money was not an issue when the facilities were designed. Owner HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani succeeded in selecting, from all over the world, the breeding horses appropriate to the premises. His 2nd and 3rd generation of race horses compete for the trophies on the major racetracks of the world today. Ten times now, his horses have won the "Emir's Sword Trophy",



and five times of that, they were home-bred horses, which is the most important thing for him. By now, there is also a group of show horses from champion lines which is successfully developed on. Even in 2011, the stud had surprised everybody with a fascinating program, from live music up to an excellent dinner, while the world stars of the racetrack were filed past the guests. This year, there

was special emphasis on including the visitors within Arabic traditions. In addition to the guided tour of the stable complex and the presentation of the champion horses during the gala dinner, a varied program included camel riding, henna tattooing, a presentation of Saluki hounds, and demonstrations of ancient craftsmanship and healing methods centered about Arabian horses and Arabic culture.



Al Samariyah is not just a stud, but seen overall it's the replica of an ancient Qatari fortress featuring a vast stable complex built from natural stone, an artificial lake, and the private museum of the owner, HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani. All parts of the premises were open to the visitors. The museum features a substantial collection of a wide range of objects of interest, from articles of

daily use to oldtimer cars, from gold and silver work to antiques and also some antiques and various odds and ends, from the last century. Arabian horses are a top priority for Al Samariyah, but there are also Arabian Oryx antelopes and gazelles living there, offering additional in-depth looks into Qatari traditions to museum visitors. For several years now, a successful center



Photo Simona Orvieto



for equestrian sports has also been included, a riding school for Qatari citizens and other inhabitants of Qatar of all age brackets. In addition, Arabian horses are trained here in various ridden disciplines. After an opulent traditional lunch, the WAHO guests were treated to a presentation of the stud's horses, led in hand as well as ridden.



Photo Simona Orvieto

The buses were waiting to take visitors on to a demonstration of **Camel Racing**, hosted by Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani. The WAHO guests also got the opportunity to make a tour of the modern **Camel Hospital** there.





The stud and training center of Umm Qarn is located in a natural oasis, north of Doha, not far from the Gulf. The center is world-famous for its extraordinarily successful racing operations, not least owing to their much discussed racing stallion *Amer* (Wafi x Bushra), sire of almost 200 offspring with a total of 763 race wins under their belts up to today. There is also the stallion *Tabarak* (Nizam x Altesse d'Aroco), title holder as the highest-rated Arabian racehorse in the world, contributing to the enormous success of this stud. The founder and owner of this five-star complex is another member of the ruling house of Qatar, HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani. To the WAHO visitors, he disclosed that since the beginning of the 1980ies, Arabian horses are a part of his life. His focus, admittedly, is on race horses, which let him celebrate tremendous successes all over the world. The daughters and sons of *Amer* alone won 86 Group 1 races all over the world, including Turkey's Malazgirt Trophy, the Qatar Arabian World Cup at Longchamp, Paris, and the President of UAE Cup Series



races in the UK, Ireland, the UAE, Germany, and the Netherlands. After being treated to the presentation of some of the best racehorses in the world, the guests were invited to a traditional dinner of exquisite standards.

There would be much more to tell of numerous other highlights, such as the tour offered of Al Wabra Wildlife Sanctuary, the Al Zubarah Fort and archaeological site, the National Stud Farm of Al Zobara which is just under construction, or the excellent receptions and gala dinners offered at the invitation of the Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club. The touristic program alone would have been worth the journey to Qatar, but the reports on this part of the conference are to be written elsewhere. Tank you very much to the hospitable people of Qatar, to the organizers, to WAHO and to everybody who made this experience possible. We will hopefully meet again in two years, when the **WAHO World Conference takes its next stop in Bahrain.** ■

