

How TO B an Arabi a

by ECAHO ■ photos by Irina Filsinger
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For over 25 years, ECAHO is the governing body for Arabian horse shows in Europe and the Middle East. With a set of rules, ECAHO ensures a fair playground for all participants and the welfare of the horses. But among other things, it is the quality of the judges that makes a successful show; therefore the training of Arabian horse judges is also an important duty of ECAHO.

In the beginning of ECAHO, it was the sole responsibility of the members of ECAHO, the National Arab Horse Breeding Organisations in the various countries, to propose respected breeders as "ECAHO Judges". But then it was felt that proper training must be ensured and the list was divided into A and B list; from 1997 on, new judges were accepted as "B judges" and only after some years of experience and passing an ECAHO Judges Course II (B to A), they were considered for promotion to the A list. Since 2004, also the acceptance for the B list had become stricter and an ECAHO Judges Course I (National to B) had to be passed prior to acceptance as B judge.

In 2009 the system has been overhauled. The responsibility for the initial training of judges lies with the National Organisations, where judges courses are conducted in the local language. Countries that don't have a proper training scheme for judges may use ECAHO instructors. Other countries, like Great Britain, have established training schemes for many years; their national schemes are accepted by ECAHO.

So, if you are interested to become an ECAHO Judge, the first step would be to contact the Arab Horse Breeders Organisation in your country. You will have to become a "National Judge" with them first, before you may consider to become an "international" judge with ECAHO. But even as a "National Judge", you are entitled to judge any ECAHO C shows, as well as the regional D shows or any non-ECAHO show, of course. This is important because you should use the time to gain experience. "Experience in the show ring is very important", says Sylvie Eberhardt, head of the Judges Instructors Team. "We often had to re-



WELCOME to Horse JUDGE





alize that people have a sound knowledge of how a correct horse should look like, but then, in the show ring, under the pressure from the public, they are too slow or too insecure due to a lack of experience. They become nervous and then either "sit in the middle" or – worse – they don't follow their knowledge but screw up their marking."

Due to the different judges training schemes in the various countries – and ECAHO has presently 33 member countries – ECAHO requires an entry test, called ECAHO Judges Course Level I. Once passed, you have to do some "mock judging" (called probationings) with an experienced A list judge who gives a report to ECAHO. The last of these "test runs" need to be with open marks, meaning the marks are shown to the public to make it a "reality test". After three probationings, you may undertake the ECAHO Judges Course Level II as a next step on your way onto the B list. "It is important to know that each of these steps must be taken with the approval of the National Arab Horse Breeding Association", says Sylvie Eberhardt. "Only if the

National Organisation recommends an applicant judge, ECAHO will be able to consider his promotion to B list. It is the National Organisation that knows the breeders of their country best." However, in the end it is the Show Commission (EAHSC), who promotes you to B list. In some rare cases this may be denied, even if the course result is positive; it is the right of ECAHO to select their judges based on their knowledge, but also on the character, reputation and profession.

Once you managed to get onto the B list, it is again important to gain experience before you consider the next – and last – step: To become an A list judge. The preconditions are to be on the B list for a minimum of three years during which you have to have judged ten or more ECAHO shows. Passing the next step, the ECAHO Course Level III, is a precondition to become eligible for the A list; other requirements are to have the recommendation of your National Organisation and then – again – it is the EAHSC to decide upon your promotion.

Although the course scheme seems to be very similar as before, the content of the courses has changed. While in the old days, ECAHO courses included several lectures on different subjects, more emphasis is given today on assessing the knowledge of the applicants. Therefore, the main part is the actual judging practice, where four classes of 5–6 horses are judged just like in a show. The scores are being discussed with your instructor and you need to be able to justify the marks you have given. A second part is the multiple choice test, feared most by the applicants. The third part is an individual interview with all three instructors present to give them an impression on your personality and to dig deeper into those areas, where the instructors discovered some weaknesses. The whole course is strictly conducted in En-



glish and the English language is mandatory for anybody who wishes to become an international judge. It is planned that all the judges courses will be organised in the Polish State Stud Janow Podlaski, where the conditions for such courses are ideal as the most important "ingredients" are there in abundance: Plenty of horses to chose from.

All three parts of the course will give a combined picture of your knowledge, your experience and your personality. Based on these results the instructors will give their recommendation to the EAHSC for your promotion.

To become an acknowledged international judge is a long and arduous way; it is costly, because all the travelling while doing your probationings and courses have to be done on your own costs, and a fee is applicable for the judges courses, too. But for those who are really interested in the Arabian horse, who want to be part in the development of the breed, being a judge can be a very rewarding goal.

For all details of how to become a judge, please refer to "Addendum II – Training and promotion of judges" available from the Download Office at:



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