



An Interview with ...

Mohamed M. Al Sulaiti

The Manager & Head of the Breeding & Show Department of the famous Al Shaqab stud, in the Gulf emirate and State of Qatar

*Interview by Tutto Arabi redazione
Photos by Irina Filsinger, Andre Shiwa, Stuart Vesty,
Suzanne Sturgill, Luiz Rocco*



Photo: Andre Shiwa

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Q: *Mr. Al Sulaiti, you are the Manager and Head of the Al Shaqab Breeding & Show Department. When did you start this responsibility and head position, and what was your challenge to accept this leading role of such a famous, worldwide known stud?*

MS: I started at Al Shaqab in August of 2009, and was named the Breeding & Show manager later that year. There are obviously many challenges for such a prominent role at such a prestigious farm, but I rather saw it more as an abundance of opportunities. I feel very fortunate being part of such an elite establishment

and am willing to explore all the new opportunities presented to me in such a role. This year has only been a small beginning with the ideas and growth I have planned for Al Shaqab.

Q: *We meanwhile read regularly 'Al Shaqab – Member of Qatar Foundation'. What does this mean, can you explain this to us?*

MS: When Al Shaqab was established in 1992 by His Highness the Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, to preserve the passion of the Arabian horse, it was his own private stud. Al Shaqab rapidly grew as the flagship farm for the country and lead to a renaissance for the Arabian horse in the Gulf region. In 1995, under his decree, Qatar Foundation was founded to enhance the people of Qatar with quality education, science & research and community development.

In 2004, His Highness gifted Al Shaqab to the Qatar Foundation. In the following years, Qatar Foundation built an area called Education City to house all of its various educational centers and universities around the stables of Al Shaqab, so the farm is actually located within a college-campus setting in present day.

Being a part of Qatar Foundation, Al Shaqab is now available for the people of Qatar to take part and experience this important link in their heritage.

Mohamed M. Al Sulaiti during a TV interview





By educating our children how to continually improve this native Arabian breed to the region, Al Shaqab is truly serving the community and passing on the passion of the Arabian horse to future generations. We also fulfill our community development role in Qatar Foundation through our Riding Academy, which allows the community to embrace the total horse experience and develop proper riding and horsemanship skills. Qatar Foundation's mission is to prepare the people of Qatar and the region to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world and to make Qatar a leader in innovative education and research. Inside Education City, numerous elite institutions have branch campuses such as Texas A&M, Carnegie Mellon University, Northwestern University, Georgetown University, Cornell

Medical College and Virginia Commonwealth University. All of Qatar Foundation is dedicated to the principle that a nation's greatest natural resource is its people. Al Shaqab is honored to be a member of such a prestigious foundation that is truly changing the face of the region and providing so many quality educational opportunities for the people of Qatar.

Q: What is your own history and life with the Arab horse?

MS: My family and I have always had great passion and interest in the Arabian horse and we owned many throughout my childhood. I have been fascinated with the beauty, intelligence, grace, pride, and agility of Arabian horses ever since. I can sit and watch them for hours. I have owned and operated my own breeding farm for the last 15 years in Qatar. Coming from an equine family and living in region that is so vastly populated with great Arabians, I naturally have always studied the breed and followed its progression. Many people in my life have influenced and helped me develop my knowledge, which I hope to pass on to other breeders around the world.

Q: What do you feel more important, the breeding or the showing activity? Can you give us some input to your ideas and your most important intentions for the Al Shaqab breeding and showing programme in 2010?

MS: I feel that the breeding is more important than the showing. The breeding is actually what is improving



Mobamed M. Al Sulaiti with his first Qatar International show trophies

and continuing the breed as we carry on and develop quality bloodlines. The showing is important, but only because it gives you that outlet to share with the rest of the world the progress and success you have had with your breeding program. Basically, showing gives us validation that our breeding decisions are going in the right direction. This season I have paid more attention to our stallions, concentrating on Gazal Al Shaqab, Marwan Al Shaqab and Al Adeed Al Shaqab. With my stallion focus, we have also had the opportunity to try some of our emerging young stallions to introduce them to the Arabian breeding world, such as Farhoud Al Shaqab, Fadi Al Shaqab, Kahil Al Shaqab and Amir Al Shaqab. Seeing the first crop from a stallion is always exciting and is how this breed will continue to evolve with greatness. We have also been able to return to using some of our older valuable stallions, such as the straight Egyptian Alidaar, full brother to Ruminaja Ali, and the young straight Egyptian Dinary Al Shaqab (Anaza El Nizr x Imperial Sharah).



Photo: Andre Shiva

The young straight Egyptian stallion Dinary Al Shaqab

As for our showing program, I have tried to concentrate on the most important shows around the world such as Qatar International, Al Khalediah Festival, All Nations Cup Aachen, U.S. Egyptian Event, U.S. Nationals and Paris. In Lexington at the U. S. Egyptian Event this year, I really focused on showing off Al Adeed offspring to the world which we were very successful in achieving great success.



Photo: Irena Filsinger

The Gold Champion Colt Fadi Al Shaqab, winning his first Gold medal at the 2010 Al Khalediah International Show, in Saudi Arabia

Furthermore, I was really proud of our Gold Championship with our young stallion, Fadi Al Shaqab, in Menton after he had already captured Gold in the Al Khalediah International Championship. Our current aim is to let the world see our new emerging stallions, such as Fadi Al Shaqab, along with Farhoud Al Shaqab, Amir Al Shaqab and Kahil Al Shaqab, all which I am delighted have captured championships around the world in 2010.

The straight Egyptian senior stallion of Al Shaqab, Alidaar



Photo: Irena Filsinger



Pictured this page:

The Al Shaqabstud team in Qatar



The two-year-old

Kabil Al Shaqab,

*a Marwan Al Shaqab son
out of a Gazal Al Shaqab daughter.*

*A most successful young Al Shaqab colt,
winning already several times, among,
Bronze Champion 2009 Elran Cup International,
Bronze Champion 2009 All Nations Cup Aachen,
Gold Champion 2010 Qatar International Show*



The three-year-old

Amir Al Shaqab,

*a Gazal Al Shaqab son,
shown successfully and until, recording in 2010 as
Winner at the Al Khalediah International A-Show,
Gold Champion at the Wels International A-Show*

All Photos: Inna Filsinger

Q: *What are the most important values for you in an Arabian horse breeding programme and in regard to the international Arab horse industry?*

MS: I believe the most important values in an Arabian horse breeding program is to preserve value and perpetuate the best qualities in each generation. I also think a strong value in a good breeding programme is helping other breeders around the world. We are all part of the same team of wanting to continually improve this breed, so sharing ideas and resources is of the utmost importance. In Al Shaqab's breeding and showing program, I put a lot of value on concentrating on homebred Al Shaqab horses. The mares and stallions we acquire outside our program are purely to strengthen and bring in new features, which continue the improvements of our homebred traits.

Q: *Did you change anything in the Al Shaqab breeding and/or showing programme since taking over the management?*

MS: Any good progressive breeding and showing programme should always be changing if you want to continue improvement, so yes; I have made changes since becoming Al Shaqab's Breeding and Show Manager. The changes were to concentrate back on our old champion stallions and introduce their young progeny stallions for the first time to the breeding world. We have also tried to acquire some new mares to incorporate new bloodlines in both our straight Egyptian programme and our International programme.

Q: *Al Shaqab was founded in 1992 by HH Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar – and progressed through some important and major steps since. We heard that there are more big plans, can you tell us about those changes?*

MS: Al Shaqab is being built and when completed will serve as the region's first state-of-the-art equestrian facilities and a center for equine excellence.

Mohamed M. Al Sulaiti at the 2010 Menton International Show when winning with the two-year-old Fadi Al Shaqab the Championship Colts, Fadi's second Gold medal in 2010



Mohamed M. Al Sulaiti (2nd from right) and Abdulla Al Kurwari (left) at the 2010 International Championship in Wels when Amir Al Shaqab won Gold Champion Colt

The complex will be spread over an area of nine hundred and eighty thousand square meters, and is being created to connect the Qatari people to their tradition of the Arabian horse and equestrian heritage. This will be a wonderful facility to further develop and showcase our cultural treasure — the Arabian horse. The gigantic elliptical covered arena is unique in the world and is the signature statement of the entire facility that is also comprised of HH the Emir's stables, a breeding and show centre, veterinarian clinic, riding academy, endurance facilities, equestrian club, administration centre, visitors centre, atelier for artists, and equine library. We will be moving into the facility in phases; each of the Al Shaqab equine and equestrian units will eventually be located in the new complex.



Photo: Irina Filsinger

Q: We all know the three famous Al Shaqab stallions who achieved a huge impact on Arab horse breeding worldwide – Gazal Al Shaqab, his son Marwan Al Shaqab, and the straight Egyptian Al Adeed Al Shaqab – all three homebred, all three national, international and World Champions, all three sires of international champions. How do you use their influence and importance in your own Al Shaqab breeding programme?

MS: This year especially, we are promoting their influence very seriously in our programme. This is one of the main changes I have implemented. We have emphasized their importance and traits more than ever and have bred most of the mares this season to one of these three stallions. We are hoping their amazing bloodlines will continue to perpetuate and grow, and their legacies will continue on in such high esteem with their new progeny.

Q: These stallions are based outside Qatar for the last few years, in the U.S. and in Europe. Are you using them intensely also for the Al Shaqab broodmares? Are you planning to bring them back to Qatar? Are they available also for outside mares?

MS: Yes, we are using them for Al Shaqab this year more than ever. All three stallions are planned to return to Al Shaqab when the new facility is complete



Photo: Suzanne Struggill

The 2010 U.S. Egyptian Event Junior Champion Stallion & Supreme Champion Male, Farhoud Al Shaqab. He is a 3-year-old straight Egyptian Al Adeed Al Shaqab son, bred and owned by Al Shaqab, and one of the young future stallions in attention.



Photo: Stuart Vesty

The multiple national and international Champion, and World Champion Stallion, Sire of many national and international champions worldwide, the straight Egyptian Al Adeed Al Shaqab, homebred in Qatar

and open. These three stallions are available to breed to, but always on limited quality booking to select mares.

Q: Al Shaqab has two major breeding programmes, one with different bloodlines, and one for the straight Egyptians. Can you tell us more about, and what your breeding ideas are for the future?

MS: Al Shaqab has two distinct breeding groups - the straight Egyptian programme, and the International Arabian programme, which incorporates many Arabian bloodlines. Our straight Egyptian program is comprised of choice Egyptian female lines and is headed by Al Adeed Al Shaqab (Ansata Halim Shah x Sundar Alisayyah), the 2003 World Champion Stallion, whose get are proving him a splendid sire. We now look forward to breeding his promising son, Farhoud Al Shaqab, whose dam is Johara Al Shaqab (by Imperial Mahzeer), one of our premier broodmares. Abdulla Bin Khalifa Al Kuwari is in charge of our straight Egyptian programme. I look to him with complete confidence as I consider him the leading expert and specialist in Qatar on straight Egyptians. The father-and-son World Champion team, Gazal Al Shaqab (Anaza El Farid x Kajora) and Marwan Al Shaqab (Gazal Al Shaqab x Little Liza Fame) head up

our International programme. Their upcoming sons, Amir Al Shaqab (Gazal Al Shaqab x Amira Madrona) and Faraa Al Shaqab (Marwan Al Shaqab x GW Natorious Star) will have their first offspring born in 2011, which we are highly anticipating.

Q: Since you took over the management at the end of last year, Al Shaqab has recorded great success in all major shows you participated until – all with Al Shaqab home bred horses. In each show competing, Al Shaqab took one or more titles and medals. At the U.S. Egyptian Event in Lexington, you even achieved a unique success in history – four homebred horses entered, all four ending up as class winners, with two being champion, one reserve, and at the end, Al Shaqab had also bred and owned the two Supreme Champions, male and female. Did you expect this success when you started your 2010 show programme in January and with the Al Khalediah A-show?

For the U.S. Egyptian Event, I had planned earlier for these horses based in Qatar to be sent and showcased there to represent their sire Al Aadeed Al Shaqab. I had full intentions for them all to show at the Event along with our beloved mare Negma Al Shaqab. We wanted to show we had not only quality progeny from Al Adeed, but quality homebred stock in Qatar from him. With each of these young horses winning their individual classes, my goal was surpassed with great delight. We wanted to bring Negma Al Shaqab back to show the world that she is just as amazing and beautiful as ever, and we proudly achieved Supreme Champion with her.

Photo: Irina Filsinger



The Egyptian related mare Negma Al Shaqab, Champion Mare and Supreme Champion Female at the 2010 U.S. Egyptian Event in Lexington, a daughter of the famous matriarch Kajora, by so, a maternal half sister to Gazal Al Shaqab



Photo: Irina Filsinger

The story of the Polish mare Pilar and her purchase at the 2010 Pride of Poland auction:

The Al Shaqab team (left-to-right) with Abdulla Al Kurwari, Mohamed M. Al Sulaiti, and Ali Al Mismad, aquired the top seller of the 'Pride of Poland' auction 2010, in August. Pilar is a 14-year-old Farwor daughter out of the famous Banat daughter Pipi. Pilar is a Polish National Champion Filly, several times successfully shown in Mares, and proved as broodmare to be a Dam of Distinction. Until now, she has produced eight fillies and two colts, among them the two well known and most successful Gazal Al Shaqab daughters, Pieta and Pinga. „We really hoped that we can get her“, Mohamed Al Sulaiti said after the auction. „She is a magnificent mare and will contribute her qualities and Polish lines to our breeding programme. Eventually, we expected her to go much higher in price, so we are really lucky, but also grateful to the Polish studs that we can have now this prestigious mare back home in Qatar with us at Al Shaqab to breed her to our stallions.“



Photo: Stuart Vesey

Q: What does show success mean to you personally?

MS: Personally, show success gives me some indication of what we are doing right in the breeding programs, and how our breeding decisions compare to other successful renown breeders in the industry.

Q: Al Shaqab has achieved a lot of success, importance and influence in the Arab horse community and breeding worldwide. What do you personally think are the biggest achievements reached thus far, and what do you want to see stated about your work and Al Shaqab in 10 years?

MS: I believe my personal biggest achievement so far in this role is preserving the Arabian horse in the best way and having the outlet and opportunity to help other breeders worldwide to achieve this as a collaborative effort.

One of the things that we do to share the ability to improve the Arabian with the rest of the world is the leasing of select horses to other breeders. Currently, we have horses being in leasing to Europe, to America and to South America. We find it an honour that we can help perpetuate this great breed throughout different bloodlines in all parts of the world with this program. Some examples of horses currently are Hadban Al Shaqab, a maternal half brother to our Al Adeed Al Shaqab, in America and Faraa Al Shaqab, a three-year-old Marwan Al Shaqab son, in South America along with many others in the works.



Photo: Irina Filisanger

Mohamed M. Al Sulaiti, the Al Shaqab Breeding & Show Manager since end of 2009

We look forward to seeing what the Al Shaqab bloodlines produce around the world in the coming years from these young stallions.

..... Thank you, Mr. Al Sulaiti, for this interview and your provided input to the presence and future, and your visions for and with Al Shaqab!



Photo: Irina Filisanger