

Farhang FAZELI

Interviewed by Sonja Smaldon

Interviewing DC's is something we do not often do, so I wanted to bring to light and underline the constituent parts of this profession by talking to Mr. Farhang Fazeli from Iran. He was very pleased to walk me through the main aspects of his personal experience as a Disciplinary Commissioner inside of the Arabian Horse show industry.

Who is Farhang Fazeli? Please share with us some background to you and your family.

I was born in a horsey-family. My father is still a Veterinary practitioner, so I have been with horses since I was a teenager. After I finished university, I started breeding Arabian horses seriously, actually I was the first person after Islamic Revolution in Iran, in 1979, who concentrated on breeding and promoting a new generation of the Arabian horse. As you might know, Iran is one of the oldest countries in the world with Arabian horses, but, what I was looking for it was new bloodlines and new breeding programs. My daughter Neela is a big fan of Arabian horses although she is only 7, but, we talk a lot



about this beautiful creature so I hope she will continue what I have done and I still do for my native country.

Farhang, when did you meet an Arabian horse for the first time?

The journey with a new generation - or let's say a new type of Arabian horses - started in Poland in 2005-2006. I could visit private breeders and state-studs for my very first time, and I got simply hypnotized by the stunning quality and beauty of their horses. Ever since that time, I have been travelling to Poland every year and I still have many good friends which makes Poland like a second home to me.

When and why did you start this profession as a DC?

That's a nice question! I was sitting in a restaurant with Tomasz Tarczynski, who is still one of my best friends, talking about horses on the way to visit Sylvatica Arabians. At some point, Tomasz came up with an idea and said to me out of the blue: "Let's try to become ECAHO officials, I will maybe start as a Judge and you as a Disciplinary Commissioner". After many years, he has become an A-list judge, for sure one of the best, while I am an A-list Disciplinary Commissioner. Pity that Tomasz didn't come up with the idea of being on the list of Forbes top 100 billionaires in the world!





What is the core of your work? What does a DC exactly do during an Arabian Horse show competition?

I believe many people still underestimate the job and jurisdiction of DCs at shows. The main responsibility is to work for the welfare of the participating horses; the second one, it is to ensure a very fair com-



petition for all the exhibitors. As matter of fact, the job of a DC starts before the show and finishes after the show, it is not as easy as it looks. During a show if everything goes wrong, it's the job of DCs to take care of it. So, as a DC, I have to stay sharp from the beginning until the end of the show, making sure that everything is under control and that the rules of Blue Book are being applied in details. All sorts of complaints are made to DCs during a show and, sometimes, in less than a second, I am required to decide what to do to solve the issue.



If any, which is one of the most frequent complaints that you can hear about the disciplinary process at shows?

“Don't interrupt my horse presentation!”. This is what my DC colleagues and I commonly hear at shows...Of course, it is never our intention to interrupt some handlers, but, sometimes, we have to!



In your opinion what really defines a good and reliable DC?

6. I believe honesty comes first, then you have to have some natural ability to serve as a manager but, even more than that, you got to have personality! When you appear in a show-ground, you should forget about all the friendships. The Blue Book is the only friend during a show! Being a manager with an ability to handle multiple tasks is also important as sometimes, in some shows, you can also be required to assist as an accountant, as a speaker, as an organizing team member, as a show officer, and so forth...

A lot of animal activists would argue that horses are often subjected to ill-treatment at shows. Any thoughts?

In general, this is NOT the case, but, there are many cases with evidence that the answer is YES unfortunately! This is more likely to happen among unprofessional handlers whom are trying to be like the famous handlers without knowing the basics of the horses.

Any specific goals for the next year?

For the year 2020, I am going to organize an event in Tehran to promote Arabian horses. This will be some time in May, after which I am looking forward to being on the National list of judges to get more experience about horses in general.

Farang, anything else you want to add and say to our readers?

Please read the Blue Book at least once. If you are an exhibitor, this will be very helpful both for you as a handler and for us as DC's in order to have a better cooperation at shows. Finally, all of you are more than welcome to come and visit my Farm in Tehran. You will have a very pleasant and unforgettable stay. I promise!

Thanks a lot for your contribution Mr. Farhang. It was such a pleasure talking to you. On behalf of the entire AHM Team, I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.



