

“He who loves
doesn't get tired.”

Ahmed Pasha Hamza

NEWS FROM EGYPT

A Glimpse of the Breeding Scenery of Straight Egyptian Arabian Horses

INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED BREEDERS OF STRAIGHT EGYPTIAN ARABIAN HORSES.

Egypt is one of the leading Arab countries in the world of Arabian horse breeding. There are around 2000 registered farms and the registered foal production is also one of the highest. Despite the Ukraine-Russia war, the pandemic coronavirus, and the devaluation of the Egyptian pound, the Egyptian horse industry is still persisting and evolving. A lot of Egyptian breeders are very keen and proud to preserve and maintain their ancestral heritage of Arabian horses. In addition, a lot of shows are taking place and even some new ones have been added to our national agenda.

Text and Interviews by

TAREK HAMZA



Omar Dorra



Egypt has been recognized as one of the first countries to have introduced horse racing. Historically, horses were used in battle as early as the 17th Dynasty and following the invasion of Hyksos during the period known as the Middle Kingdom in Ancient Egypt. Beside the wars with horses and chariots, hunting was a common occupation. Hence, a retrospective look emphasizes a profound interest in preserving this noble creature in ancient times. The ancient Egyptians knew horses since the Stone Age, and rock drawings recorded pictures of horses. These majestic creatures were so much loved and prized possession for the Egyptian elite, particularly the Pharaoh. Although Pharaoh rarely shared the credit for a victory with people, Ramses II mentions his horses in the Poem of Kadesh, acknowledging them for their part in the famous Kadesh battle. Hence, due to their value in royal culture, in battle and hunting purposes, some historians pointed out

that breeding horses was a common practice in Ancient Egypt.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, another chapter has begun in horse breeding with Muhammad Ali Pasha, the founder of Modern Egypt and the Dynasty which ruled Egypt from the beginning of the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century. Muhammad Ali Pasha, knowing well the strength and power of Arabian horses as an important war instrument, decided to build the finest Arabian horse breeding program Egypt had ever experienced. He imported around 1100 Arabians from the best horses of the Arabian Peninsula and stabled them at Shoubra stables. Abbas Pasha, grandson of Muhammad Ali Pasha, followed the same concept of his grandfather and succeeded to make his own collection of finest Arabian horses from the desert of Arabia. His horses were very well kept in palaces and became legendary horses to the



extent that some people said to rival those of King Solomon! This passion and love for Arabian horses were transmitted to their descendants. Apart Aly Pasha Chérif and Lady Anne-Blunt, most of the influential Egyptian horse breeders were from the royal family such as the Khedive Abbas Helmy II, Prince Ahmed Kamal, Prince Muhammad Ali Tawfiq as well as Prince Kamal Al Din- Hussein.

In 1908, the Animal Breeding Department of the Royal Agricultural Society was assigned to start breeding purebred Arabian horses at Bahtim farm, and in 1928 the Society purchased around 60 acres in Kafr Farouk in the Ain Shams desert, east of Cairo in order to create a farm with similar conditions to the natural environment of Arab horses. The Horses had to move to the new farm known as El Zahraa farm affiliated to the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) later on, renamed the Egyptian Agricultural Organization (EAO). After the collapse of the Egyptian Kingdom in 1952, the Royal stud of King Farouk "Inshass Stud" was dissolved and a very small and carefully selected group of horses were introduced into the existing herd of El Zahraa horses. Since that time, the legendary Zahraa farm is considered as the only existing state stud farm in Egypt and no further horses were allowed to enter the breeding program. Few years later, the quality of horses bred out of this closed breeding program received world acclaim and many modern breeders from the Unites States and Europe decided to acquire such bloodlines.

This being said, one has noticed in the last few years a rising interest from public authorities concerning the well-being and preservation of Straight Egyptian Arabian horses. In this respect, the government has built recently a new state stud facility for El Zahraa horses based on modern international standards in the new Administrative Capital of Egypt located East of Cairo. The project is surrounded by a new race track and many land parcels offered for sale to private breeders. As a matter of fact, the

project seems to be a priority on the government agenda according to the Egyptian local press. The relocation expected date has not yet been announced to the public.

On another level, the show scene looks quite interesting with a lot of shows taking place at their scheduled dates where one can still meet old and new generation breeders. One of the remarkable facts dominating the halter shows in Egypt, is that a lot of the newcomers of the show business are among younger generation breeders. In this respect, one has to mention that most of the private farms are located in greater Cairo either at Giza, close to the pyramids, or in the north east of Cairo in Oraby city and surroundings. Visiting farms in Egypt needs several days to be able to go from one side of the city to the other. Therefore, we decided to shorten the trip to our readers and conduct interviews with a group of new and old breeders to learn more about the breeding context in Egypt. Some of these breeders have been very successful in the show ring and have achieved very good results. Others don't participate anymore and prefer more to focus on the preservation of their breeding program.

More interviews are to be conducted with other Egyptian breeders in the following issues of the magazine to provide a more comprehensive overview of the breeding scenery in Egypt.



DORRA STUD

Mr. Omar Dorra is one of those successful breeders who achieved very good results in the show ring in Egypt. He is an Egyptian Businessman working in the real estate business. Omar has his own breeding farm located in New Sheikh Zayed city in front of Sphinx International Airport. The farm is a state of the art property built on a space of 6 acres and includes 70 boxes with a marvelous landscape area and lots of paddocks for horses.



Eng. Omar Dorra, you have been very successful in the last couple of years as a horse exhibitor in various halter shows in Egypt. Can you tell us when did you start breeding SE horses? And what are your breeding goals?

First, I would like to thank you and your highly regarded publication for the opportunity to share with your readers my

breeding vision which started back in 2009, almost 15 years ago. Generally, I have a lot of passion for animals and especially horses, which I really love.

I admire the qualities of these noble creatures, I consider the straight Egyptian Arabian horse, as one of the most beautiful and finest horse breeds, which is displayed through my breeding goals and vision - in trying to



Omar Dorra with SEIF SAKR



HASSIB DORRA
(Seif Sakr x Nadrah Al Rayyan Misr)



HASSIB DORRA, crowned Gold Champion colt at the breeders' cup 2023



SEIF SAKR

constantly breed balanced and correct horses. I usually try to breed horses with good proportions including exotic heads, well set long necks, solid bodies, and top lines. Moreover, I also focus on having equal height of legs, strong movement and type. In short, I am trying to breed a horse that is close to the ideal of the breed itself.

Do you have any particular preference towards breeding certain Straight Egyptian dam lines?

I am breeding several dam lines. However, I found my ideal horse coming out through a bloodline grouping of the renowned Alidara, Helala, MB Daleeya, Hodhoda and Wasfia dam lines.

I was very lucky with one of my foundation mares Nadrah Al Rayyan Misr which gave me several high-quality offspring. Her filly Zolfah DORRA by Seif Sakr was crowned Gold Medal Champion in 2021 here in Egypt at Al Marasem show at Rabab stud. In addition, I have a very special colt out of this same combination named Hassib



Omar Dorra with Tarek Hamza

DORRA who was crowned Gold Medal Champion recently at the breeders' cup here in Egypt in December 2023. Another root mare in my program is Asrar El Adeyyat who is a daughter of Ansata Hegazi and out of NK Ahlam. Asrar gave me very nice offspring so far and I am really very proud of her progeny at my stud. In short, these are two very important foundation mares in my program apart from other broodmares I am using now in my program.

What are the stallions you are using in your breeding program?

My main Stallion used at DORRA Stud is 'Seif Sakr' who is the son of Ansata Marengo (Ansata Marengo is fathered by Ansata Hegazy and mothered by Sara Sakr), whilst 'Shaheen Al Habel', is a sire line in my program. I used him often to cover a lot of my mares and the results were really outstanding.

Mainly that's my program (breeding formula) so far, but I like from time to time, to change it up a little bit and add some 'zest'



NAWAF SAKR (Shaheen Sakr x Nariman Sakr)

to my breeding program by using some 'NK' established stallions and their generation (Mares and Stallions) but that is done in a way that its concentration is around 20% of my program just to diverse the channels. It is extremely challenging, but I am very happy with the results obtained so far. Moreover, I would like to emphasize that I am intending to introduce a new young stallion recently acquired from Sakr stud who is, Nawaf Sakr from the renowned family of Ansata Nefisa and by El Habel son Shaheen Sakr.

Are you satisfied with what you have



SEIF SAKR (Ansata Marengo x Sara Sakr)



SARA DORRA (Seif Sakr x Sarah El Gabry)



DORRA farm



ZOLFAH DORRA

achieved in the show ring so far? Are you planning to show your horses on an international level in any major show?

For the time being, I am incredibly satisfied with what I achieved at the show ring in Egypt. My horses (mashallah) get most of the golden medals in the Egyptian shows and I'm looking forward to competing on an international level by 2025 - God Willing. It is just a matter of choosing the right time to compete on an international level in certain major shows.

What does El Zahraa bloodlines represent to you nowadays?

El Zahraa bloodlines are the main source of all our Straight Egyptian Arabian horses. It is still an important component of my breeding program. As I mentioned earlier, I have some Zahraa bloodlines in my herd of mares such as the Wasfia family bloodline and the Hodhoda family bloodline both from the Obeyyan families. I really admire the outcome when out crossing these bloodlines with my main stallion Seif Sakr. Therefore, I can assert that El Zahraa bloodlines represent to me a part of my breeding

formula. In my opinion, these bloodlines are very important to refresh the bloodlines from time to time and to introduce new elements in my breeding program.

Nowadays, a lot of breeders use embryo transfer in their breeding program. Please tell us your opinion on using such a breeding tool? Would that help you get a better chance of winning in the show ring? What is the outcome of embryo transfer in terms of the quality of offspring given the high cost of the procedure?

Embryo transfer is considered for me a breeding method only used in a limited number of cases such as when mares are either too old or too sick, so they cannot conceive easily and the delivery may comprise risk or harm for the mare and/or the foal.

I try as much as possible to avoid using this breeding method and avoid any mistreatment that may happen to my horses.

Many thanks dear Omar for interviewing with us and wishing you all the best in your show career.

HAMDAN STABLES of Fatma Hamza

Mrs. Fatma Hamza is a famous breeder of Straight Egyptians horses in Egypt. She possesses one of the oldest and traditional breeding programs in Egypt, in the country side of Cairo at the village of Tahanoub, located 28 Kilometers north of Cairo. She inherited the stables of her late father Ahmed Pasha Hamza and decided to continue his legacy.



Mrs. Fatma Hamza, everybody knows that Hamdan stables which is one of the oldest Arabian horse breeding farms in Egypt cares about preserving Straight Egyptian Arabians and maintaining the identity of mare families.

Thank you very much for this introduction. The Hamza family's passion for Straight

Egyptian Arabians is the pillar for our endless dedication to preserving this noble breed following the footsteps of my late beloved father Ahmed Pasha Hamza. Since 1897, hence when my father was six years old his long-life journey of loving the Straight Egyptian Arabians started when his uncle gifted him with a breathtaking grey stallion with a silver saddle.



Ahmed Pasha Hamza with MAHASIN



Fatma Mostafa Hamza



Fatma Hamza with AMAL HAMDAN

Can you tell us how many mares' families do you breed at Hamdan Stables? And what are those mares' families?

I must start with one of my father's favorite mares, Bint Yosreia (Nazeer X Yosreia), a true representative of the Hadban Enzahi strain going back to Bint Rustem out of Hadba El Saghira. He bought her from the EAO and since then she has graced our stable with her progeny who continue till today via her granddaughter Safa Hamdan (Ibn El Bashwat Hamdan X Om El Fetouh Hamdan) and her daughters.

Another representative of the Hadban Enzahi strain in Hamdan Stables is the dark bay enchanting Saferah. I acquired Saferah (Ikhnatoon X Solafa) from the EAO, she traces back to Samiha out of Hadba Al Saghira. Her progeny continues to bless Hamdan Stables out of her daughters the bay refined mare Al Rahmaniya Hamdan (Sorour X Saferah) and the chestnut correct mare Al Shamaa Hamdan (Fateh X Saferah). Ward Shah (Adeeb X Wasfia) was acquired by us from the EAO. WardShah traces back to Maysa the daughter of Mahfouza of the Ubbayn Um Jurrays (Grees) strain. Her progeny continues in Hamdan Stables via her Champion daughter Al Shahaa Hamdan (Fateh X WardShah) via Al Ghalia Hamdan (Sorour Hamdan X Al Shahaa Hamdan) who is a true representation of how a chestnut Ubbayan mare should look like.

Hosna (Amir X Gihan), our beloved one. Hosna was acquired from the EAO. She goes back to Bint Farida out of Farida of the Dahma Shahwania strain. Hosna was a chestnut mare with a golden mane, tail and heart actually. She was very consistent; she always passed type, kindness and correctness to her progeny. She continues





Ismail Hamza with AMAL HAMDAN and NOUR HAYATY HAMDAN

to live through the progeny of her two breathtaking chestnut daughters: Nawaretna Al Asal Hamdan (Sorour Hamdan X Hosna) and Farah Al Koloob Hamdan (Sorour Hamdan X Hosna). Hamhama (Hafid Antar X Wahida) was acquired from the EAO. Hamhama goes back to Om Dalal tracing back to Ali Pasha Sherif's mare Roga El Beda of the Saklawiah Jidranayah strain. The Supreme Champion Hamahama is represented today by her daughters' progeny. They are full sisters: Al Yasoub Hamdan (Fateh X Hamhama) and Reem Hamdan (Fateh X Hamhama). Al Yasoub Hamdan was a superb bay mare like her mother and Reem Hamdan was grey like her father and was true to her name which means 'gazelle' in Arabic. In the same show where Hamama was granted Supreme Champion title, her daughter Reem Hamdan was in the same champion class and she was crowned Reserve Champion after her dam.

It is always very challenging to find good



OM EL FETOUH HAMDAN (Fateh EAO x Yosr Hamdan)

breeding stallions and it is a recurrent question that is often raised by many breeders at the beginning of each breeding season. Hence, can you tell us how do you usually select your stallions? In other words, what are the traits that you look for when you are selecting a new stallion?

Yes, it's always a very challenging task, but let me tell you this among other things is what makes breeding pleasurable.

You do your homework by trying to find the best suitable stallion and then you wait for eleven months to see the result.

I believe you must first be objective in judging your mare. You must know what she has and what she lacks, then you start to find which stallion she needs accordingly.

You start with your mare and then search for the suitable stallion, not the other way round.

Traits you have to take in consideration when searching for the stallion is to vigorously study the stallion's dam and her tail female, and to make sure what lines his sire did a good job with.

MOEMEN HAMDAN
(Gad Allah EAO x Al Shaha Hamdan)



I personally like to breed stallions with correct bodies, remember it's easiest to correct a head, but having correct legs and bodies is a great asset and if lost it is very difficult to find.

Black eyes is another essential trait for me, the bigger the better of course. I also aim to find big fine round nostrils, clear cheek bones and refined necks. For me the ears of a stallion are a pillar when choosing him.

A type and fiery stallion is also a core.

We all try to find the perfect stallion, don't we!

What would be a recommendation that you

**"Truth be told,
breeding is not
an easy task"**

would like to share from the perspective of an experienced breeder for new breeders who are starting their breeding programs?

I was a first-hand witness of the impeccable dedication my father had for preserving

this noble breed. Whether it was saving Hamdan (Ibn Rabdan X Bint Radia) after King Farouk's abdication due to the coup d'état or when he

had to re-buy all his own auctioned horses again because they were confiscated for his affiliation with the King's regime as he was three times Minister. I feel that preserving the straight Egyptian Arabian is a duty bestowed upon every sincere breeder



Mohamed Hamza with SAHAAB AL SHARG (Ansata Al Murtajiz x Mouna Al Rayyan)

including myself. My humble advice to new breeders is most importantly and foremost love and know your horses, their temperament and their traits. You must always judge your horse objectively to be able to advance as a breeder. You must also read and learn the pedigrees of your horses, know their tail female lines, their strains, look at old photos of their grandparents and converse with other breeders. Truth be told, breeding is not an easy task, it includes trials and errors, ups and downs, happy moments and more difficult ones at times; hence, I always remind myself with my father's words: "He who loves doesn't get tired".

With the development of the show business, what do you see as a major difference or challenge in today's breeding world in comparison to 20 or 30 years ago? Do you know breeders in Egypt or in other Arab countries who share with you the same breeding concepts or vision in trying to preserve Hamdan Stables' bloodlines?

Everything in the universe is dynamic, nothing is static; hence, change in the horse show business is inevitable. I have witnessed many changes over our years of breeding Straight Egyptian Arabians. I have seen many breeders in and out of the straight Egyptian Arabians' world.



AMAL HAMDAN (Omayr EAO x Alyassoub Hamdan)



A group of mares at Hamdan Stables



Alyaa Al Hammoudy with AMAL and NOUR HAYATY HAMDAN (Serag El dine EAO x Khyrate Hamdan)

Those who continue are the ones who have perseverance and will to preserve their Straight Egyptian Arabians.

For me like my father, I choose to preserve our Hamdan Stables' straight Egyptian bloodlines which we have been very selective in choosing; keeping in mind that we always refresh our bloodlines by choosing stallions from Egypt and all over the world who add to our breeding program and are in harmony with our bloodlines.

Many breeders in Egypt, the Arab countries and all of over the world share with us our passion for preserving Hamdan Stables' bloodlines.

We are not only very selective in our bloodlines, but we are also very meticulous in deciding which new homes we agree that our Hamdan Stables' Straight Egyptians go to. We feel it's our duty to make sure that the breeders provide them loving homes; this the least we can do for them, they are truly our family.

We are very blessed by our fellow breeders who share our vision and passion for preserving Hamdan Stables' bloodlines and legacy.

Many thanks dear Fatma for interviewing with us

AL HAMD STUD

Madam Hanan Serag El Dine is the owner of Al Hamd stud. She worked for more than ten years as a researcher at the Arab Council for Childhood and Development before deciding to dedicate most of her time to her passion and love of horses. She established her own breeding farm, which she named Al Hamd stud. It is located 20 kilometers north of Cairo at a village called Sandyon, amidst of wonderful palm trees and blossomy orange trees accommodating around 35-40 horses.



Dear Madam Hanan Serag El Dine. You are one of the few traditional Arabian horse farms in Egypt that often participate in shows. Can you tell us when did you start your breeding program? And what are your breeding goals?

I started breeding horses in 1996 but honestly being new in the field at that time - and with no experience back than - my breeding

program was humble and vague.

But gradually growing and developing love and admiration and learning more about Arabians especially straight Egyptians, I noticed that a breeding program never ends it simply keeps developing and evolving.

My goal is to preserve and maintain the natural beauty, type consistency and the overwhelming quality of Straight Egyptian Arabian horses. In any breeding decision,



FAYROUZ AL HAMD (Anubis Ra Al Qusar x Belkis Al Hamd), crowned Reserve National Champion at the EAO Show 2010



SAFERAT AL HAMD (Sultan Badrawi x HF Emeera Isis)



SAFERAT AL HAMD winning at the show



ZEINA AL HAMD (Nasr Al Sharbatly x Negma El Gabry) Gold Champion 2012 and Gold Champion at Rabab show 2015

I always try to balance between beauty and conformation as well as I pay a lot of attention to the overall refinement of the horse in order to emphasize the charisma and grace of our Straight Egyptian Arabian horses.

Do you breed horses mainly for show purpose? How do you select your breeding stallions?



SHAHRAYARAL HAMD
(AN Mayrak x HF Emeera Isis)

Breeding horses for the show is among my purposes. When I select a stallion to breed, I usually focus on choosing a stallion who complements and fits my mare. In this respect, I study carefully the mare attributes as well as her negatives points and observe the stallion strengths and weaknesses to be able to make a proper breeding decision. In the case, where the stallion has already produced



FAYROUZ AL HAMD

before, it is very important for me to see his offspring because this helps me in assessing and evaluating the common traits that he passes to the colts and fillies he produces. Later on, I check and study well the pedigree of the stallion to make sure it is compatible with the mare I choose for him.

What do you think of inbreeding or line breeding to strengthen certain positive traits in horses? Do you use these breeding methods in your program or do you prefer out cross breeding?

In my program I usually don't prefer

inbreeding because as it strengthens some traits it also weakens some. It sometimes results in undesirable traits like smaller size or poor conformation and there is a

"I noticed that a breeding program never ends it simply keeps developing and evolving."

high chance of carrying genetic defects from one generation to the other and while you are concentrating good things in your horse you are potentially also concentrating bad things

Most of the time I go for outcrossing as it promotes a high degree of genetic diversity and variation. Generally speaking, breeding is a risk that you have to take and so long that you see improvement in the outcome



ZOMORODA AL HAMD
(Ibn El Basha Hamadan A x Shahd Al Hamd)



ISHRAK AL HAMD
(Murtajab Al Nakeeb x Belquis Al Hamd)



FADEL AL HAMD out of Fayrouz Al Hamd



SALMAN AL HAMD, Reserve Champion at Rabab show 2014

then you are on the right track and you will be willing to take more risks.

Do you use embryo transfer as a horse reproductive tool in your program? Would that help you achieve better results in breeding show quality horses?

I don't use embryo transfer. I feel it is partly the cause of the problem of the poor market today in Egypt. You have too much supply and very little demand. For example, if a stud with ten mares uses embryo transplants at the end of the year instead of having 10 new foals it will have twenty which is beyond the market needs and needless to mention the high financial costs and expenses.

I believe that embryo transplant should be done only if you have a mare who has a medical problem that hinders her from carrying her own baby.

Many thanks dear Madam Hanan for interviewing with us and wishing you all the success in the show ring.

AL HAWADY STUD

Al Hawady Stud was founded by the engineer Mohsen Al-Hady and the architect Moataz Al-Hady near the city of Harms. There are currently 21 Straight Egyptians on the farm. The beautiful facility guarantees quality of life for the horses. In general, quality plays a major role for the brothers, which they also show in the selection and breeding strategy of their horses.



Dear Mohsen Al-Hady, can you tell us when did you start your breeding farm? And what are your breeding goals?

Firstly, let me introduce ourselves. We are the twin brothers Mohsen and Moataz Al-Hady. One of us is an architect, and the other is a construction engineer. We specialize in design and contracting, and, of course, we share a deep passion for Egyptian Arabian horses. Actually, my relationship with Arabian horses began in 2007 when I attended a show jumping championship. At that time, a distinctive horse caught

my attention—a horse with a small head, medium-sized body, wide eyes, a curved neck. Inquiring about the horse, I was told it was an Arabian horse. That sparked my interest, leading me to read and learn more about Arabian horses, particularly the Egyptian Arabian horses. I felt proud and fortunate to be in a country that is home to such magnificent horses.

Our breeding goals for Arabian horses are commendable.

Firstly, preserving the purity of the Egyptian lineage and ensuring its continuity reflects a



TEE EL GAMIL (Yannah x Tabark Elgabry)



TEE EL GAMIL (Yannah x Tabark Elgabry)

commitment to the heritage of these horses. Secondly, aiming for high-quality Arabian horses with robust bodies and enhancing their aesthetic qualities to compete globally demonstrates a dedication to excellence in international shows.

What are the dam lines and families you have selected for your farm?

I believe that luck has favored us after significant efforts to acquire many distinctive and prestigious horse pedigrees over the past five years. Among the most important ones

we have the following strains descendants:

- Al-Obayan, Um Jurees, Majidah family, most notably Bint Majidah.
- Al-Dahman, including Bint Naihah Al-Saghira, Bint Al-Bahrain family, Bint Sabah family, and Tamriah family.
- Al-Kuhilan Kurush family, specifically Rowida family.
- Al-Kahilani Jilabi.
- Al-Saklawiyat, including Maar-ree family and Thuraya 1 family from the EAO.



AL HAWADY farm

What does El Zahraa horses mean to you? Do you use this bloodstock in your breeding program?

El Zahraa horses hold great significance for us. We consider them valuable and integral to our breeding program. In fact, that made us already own two key mares, both indirectly produced from a sire and dam originating from El Zahraa. Additionally, having a pure bloodline mare directly from El Zahraa adds a valuable dimension to our breeding program. This demonstrates a strategic approach to integrating the esteemed bloodlines of El Zahraa into our own collection.

The bloodstock from El Zahraa contributes to the diversity and excellence we aim for in producing high-quality Arabian horses. Their lineage and traits are carefully integrated into our breeding strategy to enhance and maintain the quality of our horse breeding program.

I learned from you that you are trying to create a very appealing and comfortable

environment for horses at your farm. Can you tell us more about this music story and how it affects your horses?

Certainly, creating an appealing and comfortable environment for horses is a top priority. At our farm, we focus on providing spacious and well-designed stables, ensuring proper ventilation, and maintaining clean surroundings. Additionally, we incorporate soothing music into the stable environment. Studies suggest that calming music can reduce stress and anxiety in horses, creating a more relaxed atmosphere. This approach aims to enhance the overall well-being of our horses, promoting a positive and stress-free experience for them.

What are your goals in the breeding process, and to what extent do modern methods influence those goals?

I believe that a successful breeder needs a clear vision at its core, and must define the goals of that vision. We see that it is preferable to acquire horses of moderate size, with distinctive movement and well-



WAAD AL-HAWADY (Ashiek Zeina x Warda Rabab)

proportioned bodies. Consequently, our plan relies on selecting mares that possess these key traits through research and observing their offspring with various stallions, paying attention to the most inherited characteristics. When we find the suitable mare, we purchase her and choose the appropriate stallion to achieve the vision's goals.

Of course, there are moments of joy and others of frustration, but this is part of the enjoyment of horse breeding. We learn more from moments of failure, guiding us towards better choices in selecting stallions. Additionally, we engage in a somewhat modern process involving embryo transfer from donor mares, with diversity in selecting stallions, helping us refine our choices more effectively and saving time.

How do you see the future of the SE breeding?

Predicting the future of Straight Egyptian (SE) horse breeding involves considering various factors such as evolving breeding



MAOUSSOF AL-HAWDY (Malak Eltarzy x Mahsoub Al Amin)



GHAZAL AL-HAWADY (Deffaf EAO x Gharam Alhaday)

practices, emerging technologies, and the ongoing efforts to preserve the purity and qualities of the SE Arabian breed. Advancements in genetic research and reproductive technologies may play a role in shaping the future by allowing breeders to make more informed decisions and maintain the authenticity of SE bloodlines. Additionally, the dedication of breeders and organizations to uphold the standards of SE breeding will likely continue to influence the breed's future positively. For the most accurate insights, consulting experts in SE Arabian horse breeding and staying updated on industry developments is recommended.

What does the shows mean to you?

Competitions in the field of Arabian horse beauty hold significant importance for

breeders. Here are some key points:

1. **Quality Assessment:** Competitions help evaluate the quality of horses and their adherence to the specific standards of the Arabian breed. This allows breeders to assess the success of their efforts in improving and developing the breed.
2. **Marketing and Reputation:** Winning competitions provides breeders with an opportunity to market themselves and increase the visibility of their reputation. Winning horses gain fame, attracting the attention of potential enthusiasts and customers.
3. **Community Building:** Competitions encourage interaction and knowledge exchange among breeders. These events can foster a community based on collaboration and the sharing of expertise.



MAOUSSOF AL-HAWADY



TEE EL GAMIL

4. Motivation and Continuity: Competitions can serve as a motivator for breeders to continually improve the quality of their horses. Seeing their horses succeed in competitions encourages more effort and innovation.
5. Preserving Heritage: Competitions contribute to preserving the distinctive genetic traits of the Arabian breed, crucial for maintaining its genetic diversity and continuity.

In general, competitions are an integral part of the breeder's experience, reflecting their efforts and contributing to the development and enhancement of this unique aspect of the Arabian horse breeding world.

Many thanks dear Mohsen for interviewing with us and wishing you a lot of success.

HAMDAN STABLES of Ahmed Hamza

Mr. Ahmed Hamza former president of the EAO from 2007 until 2011, an international ECAHO judge as well as a breeder and owner of Hamdan Stables in Egypt. Apart from carrying the same name of his grandfather Ahmed Pasha Hamza the founder of Hamdan Stables, he has been able to prove himself as a successful breeder in the show ring in Egypt for quite some time.



Dear Ahmed Hamza, you have been involved through many decades in breeding Straight Egyptian Arabians and you succeeded in breeding many champions that won in the show ring in Egypt. Also, as a former President of the

EAO, can you explain for us the importance of the EAO bloodstock in preserving the Straight Egyptian breed? What are in your opinion the strong points of EAO horses? The EAO has a very long history in preserving the Arabian horse bloodlines. The

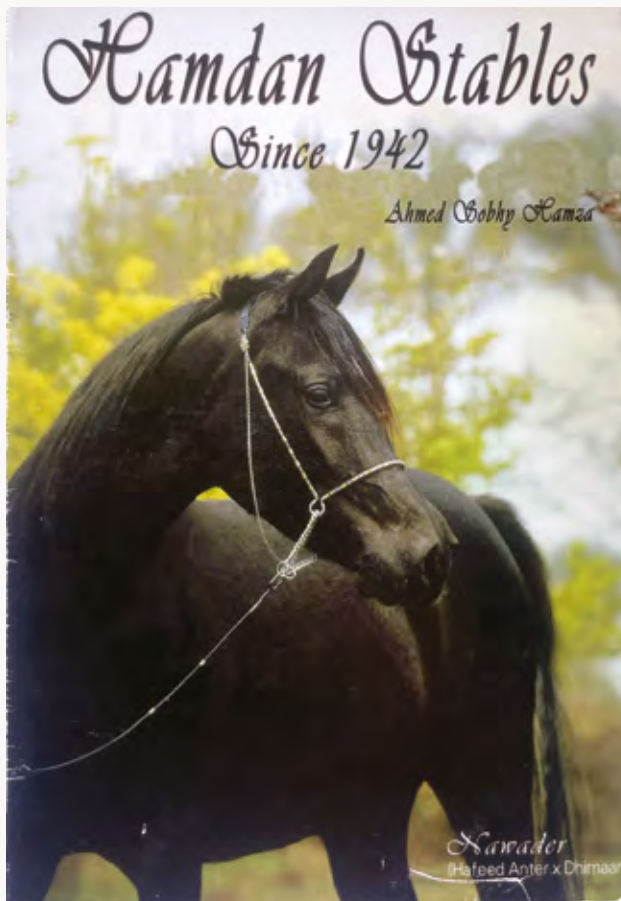


Dr. Hans Nagel, Judith Forbis and Ahmed Hamza

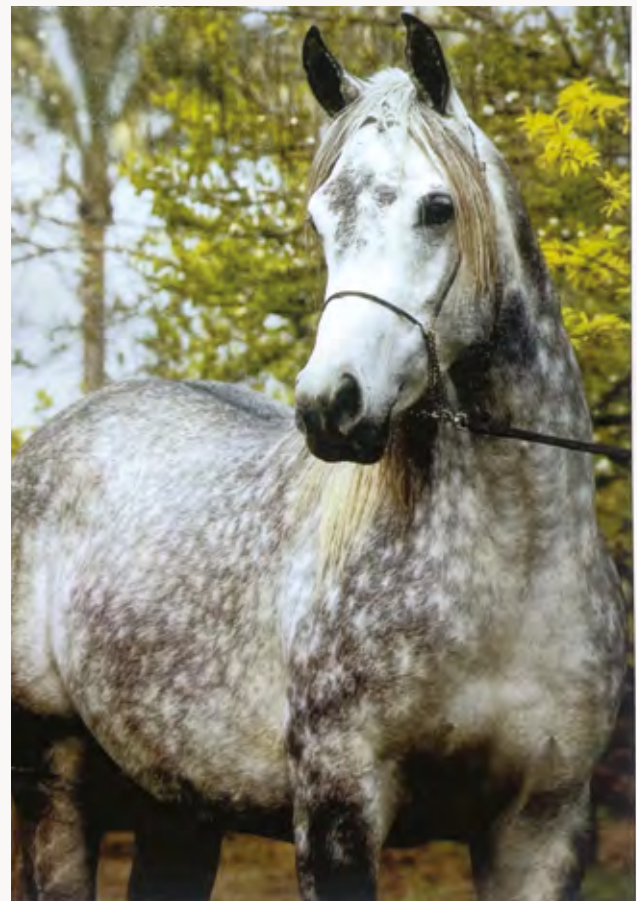
EAO bloodlines is considered an important genotype pool for all Arabian horses. As a contribution in the past and I believe also still in the future. In fact, it is essential to highlight that a major importance of the EAO bloodlines remains in its authenticity. These horses are the result of selection breeding by Bedouins and Arab tribes since hundreds of years. Hence, the purity of the blood is historical but in addition, these horses have certain specific characteristics which make them unique and highlight the identity of the breed such as the good-looking heads, the big black dark eyes, the fine skin, light strong dense bones,

The challenging part in preserving these horses nowadays is to try to breed them as close as possible to the original Arab horse of the past.

dry legs, good and light movement, a good tail carriage, their overall conformation etc... In addition, the personality of the Arabian horse is another very important element that counts since the Arabian horse has a lot of presence and is full of vigor and power. One must say that what really helped a lot to preserve these bloodlines until now is the fact that these horses were kept with knowledgeable and enthusiastic breeders starting from Mohammed Aly Pasha, the Viceroy of Egypt, and his descendants, and afterwards the RAS and Inshass stud who had major roles and for sure one can never forget the



NAWADER (Hafeed Anter x Dhimaara)



MAGDA (Ibn Rashid x Manshouda)



Ahmed Hamza with MAGDA

an outcross alternative for all other Arabians including show horses. Therefore, it is our duty to try to maintain these horses and bloodlines in a good health and shape.

In light of your long experience as an International ECAHO judge and an SE Breeder, do you think that Straight Egyptian horses have still a chance to compete in international major shows?

Yes, for sure high quality Straight Egyptian Arabians can compete in the show ring even though their numbers in terms of quantity of horses bred are relatively less than the numbers of the non-straight Egyptian Arabians bred worldwide. I remember a coincidence for example when I was judging the world Arabian horse Championship in Paris in 2016 when Royal Colours entered the arena and the horse was really fascinating and impressive for all the judges and the crowd and he won the platinum award.

Also, we have seen previously some years ago many Straight Egyptians who succeeded to win in the show ring like F Shamaal and Al Lahab. So, I believe it is still possible with selective breeding and knowledgeable breeders especially that high quality Straight Egyptian Arabian horses have always a unique type.

great contribution of Lady Anne Blunt to the breed.

The challenging part in preserving these horses nowadays is to try to breed them as close as possible to the original Arab horse of the past. These horses have to remain sound and in good health and condition in order to be able to maintain these genotype and characteristics.

I am a strong believer that these horses and bloodlines can serve one day and help to be

A lot of breeders in our Straight Egyptian world affirm to adopt breeding programs that focuses more on preserving the Straight Egyptian horses? What's your opinion about that?

First of all, let me say that the term "Preservation" is truly employed extensively in our Straight Egyptian glossary. Effectively, the term has a multiform meaning. It can connate for example to maintain and protect a group of horses from any loss, danger or



BINDJI (Messaoud x Bukra Bint Salam)

illness. It can also mean to breed them away from another group of horses as well as it can mean to make some improvements in the bloodlines. Hence, the term preservation can still have a variety of significance but in all cases it implies for sure the necessity to adopt breeding techniques allowing to reassure that the intended herd of horses continue to exist in a healthy and sound manner. Good



LAHLOUBA (Dorian Shah El Shams x Lolowah)

care for horses is indeed a prerequisite for preservation of Straight Egyptian Arabians as for any other breed. Breeding in terms of horse reproduction is for sure as well one of the other essential elements for Straight Egyptian Arabian horse preservation but it does not cover the whole concept. Thus, in my opinion the mere horse reproduction process by adding to the horse population new offspring cannot be considered as horse preservation.

Regrettably, a lot of breeders use this term of preservation out of context. Some others use the term solely for promotion reasons and they don't even mind to discriminate against certain bloodlines. In order to be able to truly preserve the Straight Egyptian Arabian horses, it is very important to build our breeding decisions on evidence based facts. Physical characteristics and phenotype of Arabians can certainly be an element of consideration in preserving



The mares paddocks at El Zahraa stable where Mr. Hamza was director EAO

this breed but it cannot be sufficient. In addition, it has to be mentioned that our breeding decisions have to be supported by science to make sure that we do not replicate certain hereditary and genetic diseases in our Straight Egyptian Arabian horses such as the well-known CA disease for example. Otherwise, I believe that the term is misemployed.

In your opinion, what would have to change to make breeding Arabian horses more exciting again?

This is an interesting question. Well one has to admit that breeding Arabians is still exciting though one can notice that

the purpose of breeding has changed overtime. In this respect, I would like to raise the attention to the importance of breeding not solely to the purpose of winning in the show ring. For sure, this can be a goal but the Arabian horse is more an athletic horse who is supposed to be bred for other purposes. Bearing this in mind, this will affect our selection and vision how horses are being bred. Actually, one has to highlight that for each particular purpose or function of horses, there is a particular form of breeding and selection that will enhance that function. In this respect, the overall horse conformation plays an important role in the ability of



A Bath in the crowd. Ahmed Hamza among the enthusiastic breeders at the EAO show



Ahmed Hamza with the late Dr. Ibrahim Zaghloul

a horse to perform as well as to remain sound.

Usually, when choosing a breeding horse for instance, one should be able to distinguish between standard conformation and conformation faults in order to try to match the selected horses to fulfil a certain task or purpose. Arabians can fit in many disciplines. One can notice that, in many countries, Arabians have been used as an endurance horse that has proven itself in that field. I believe it is very important to try to revive the race industry again in Egypt as this was the original

domain of breeding sound athletic horses long time ago which contributed to the promotion of the SE horses worldwide. A lot of our famous Arabian horses used at the state stud of Egypt have existing race records. Unfortunately, this is not the case anymore in Egypt but we hope with the new establishment allocated in the new administrative Capital of Egypt to see again the revival of this important discipline for SE horses.

Many thanks dear Ahmed for sharing your opinion and interviewing with us.

TAREK HAMZA is a recognised international ECAHO judge and breeder of straight Egyptians in Cairo. His love for Arabian horses is already anchored in his genetic code. For generations, members of his family have successfully bred Arabian horses. Tarek studied at the Sorbonne University in Paris and is a successful lawyer. Following the tradition of his family, his great passion became horse breeding and he started his own breeding program in 2005, which is based on four root mares. Tarek has a very good knowledge and expertise in El Zahraa bloodstock. Years ago, he managed to acquire two of the finest quality remaining Hadban Enzahi fillies at an auction at El Zahraa State Stud. He wanted to preserve the old lines and at the same time breed straight Egyptians with a lot of type and good functionality. He is a strong believer that successful results can happen when out crossing and infusing the closed EAO bloodlines with horses from modern breeding programs. Through his small stud, this approach made himself internationally well known. Tarek wrote this article for Desert Heritage Magazine, interviewing a group of interesting breeders. Although they are very different, they reflect the diversity of Arabian horse breeding in Egypt.

Monika Savier

