



ESSA courier

No. 6 – March 2010

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The President's Editorial

Dear friends,

Following the latest discussions about the maintenance of national studs in Austria, Germany, France and Switzerland it seems that the authorities are unhappy with their state studs, and the breeders or the horse industries are not organised or strong enough to support them. Another reason for the ongoing discussions might be, that the traditional way of functioning of some national studs is not very well adapted to our modern world, communication and economy.

ESSA tries to represent and help the traditional studs, in order to show that the problems can be solved with some changes, but not with just reducing the budget. We want to remind the authorities that the horse is an important part of European heritage and promote the fact that the European horse industry is the best in the world, perhaps because it is supported by institutions like our state studs!

Enjoy reading the ESSA courier. It is already number 6, and as always filled with information about the European state studs and the activities of our network. The next big event will be our General Assembly in June. The invitations have just been sent and I hope to meet all of you at Neustadt/Dosse.

With best wishes,

Bernard Maurel



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20 European state studs in 11 countries are ESSA members

The ESSA network is constantly growing. In March stud number 20 joined the association. ESSA members are located in 11 countries, making the network a truly European initiative. Four studs are based in Germany and Hungary, two in the Czech Republic, France and Poland. Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland are represented by one stud each. For Romania the National Forest Administration Romsilva, managing the over 20 state studs of the country, joined ESSA.

ESSA member studs (March 2010):

COUNTRY	STUD
Bulgaria	National Stud Kabiuk
Czech Republic	National Stud Kladruby nad Labem
	National Stud Tlumacov
France	Haras du Pin
	Haras National de Pompadour
Germany	Dillenburg Federal Stud
	Marbach Principal and Federal Stud
	Neustadt/Dosse Principal and Federal Stud
	Redefin Federal Stud
Hungary	Bábolna National Stud
	Hortobágyi National Stud
	Mezőhegyes National Stud
	Szilvásvár National Stud
Poland	Janów Podlaski National Stud
	Michalow Stud National Stud
Romania	National Forest Administration Romsilva
Slovakia	Topoľčianky National Stud
Slovenia	Lipica National Stud
Sweden	Flyinge National Stud
Switzerland	Avenches National Stud



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Welcome to our new members

We welcome the Polish national stud “Michalow” and the Hungarian national studs “Mezőhegyes” and “Szilvásvár” in the network of European state studs. The fourth German stud having joined ESSA is the federal stud of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania “Redefin”.

We hope to meet the representatives of the new member studs at the ESSA general assembly in June, where they have the opportunity to introduce their stud in a short presentation.

Having four Hungarian member studs gives a good reason to make Hungary our “country in focus” in the next ESSA courier. In the last issue we focussed on Germany. To complete the introduction of the current German ESSA-studs, here is a portrait of Redefin.

Portrait of Redefin Federal Stud

Surrounded by meadows and woods, the Mecklenburg-Western Pomeranian federal stud Redefin invites not only horse enthusiasts. Roughly 70 hectares of land are home to around 150 horses. The picturesque site with its classical buildings and designed landscapes melts architecture, art history, nature and horse breeding to a harmonious ensemble.

Redefin looks back to almost 200 years of horse breeding history. The stud was founded in 1812 by Duke Friedrich Franz I. of Mecklenburg-Schwerin to improve horse breeding in his country. Today, the stud is as well an internationally renowned place of horse breeding, as – due to its historic premises and the location in the heart of beautiful Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania a magnet for visitors.

At present 45 active breeding stallions are on offer in the EU-insemination facility at Redefin and on different service stations. Fresh semen of eight additional stallions is available for the breeders.

Redefin is one of 10 stallion testing stations in Germany. Around 110 stallions and mares per year are tested in 70- and 30-day-performance-tests for stallions and 20-day-tests for mares. The horses are prepared by the experienced riding team of the stud.

Redefin offers young stallions with performance test for sale. All stallions offered on the stud’s website came to Redefin after weaning and spent their youth cared by the stud’s staff.



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All stallions and geldings for sale are trained in different disciplines, such as dressage, jumping, cross-country. Some are also trained in front of the carriage.

In the riding and driving school, authorised by the German federation (FN), annually around 65 courses take place. Lessons in dressage, jumping, cross country, longing and driving are offered from beginner to trainer level.

The stud premises are open to the public at all times. Interested visitors are offered guided walking and carriage tours. During a one to two hours tour the visitors learn about the history of the stud, the horses and the breeding business of today. Besides the equestrian attractions visitors can enjoy the atmosphere of the 8 hectares park which was designed for the federal garden exhibition 2009.

Every summer the stud hosts three classic concerts of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomeranian Music Festival. Annually, the exhibition “Lebensart – Erlesenes und Schönes” (“Art of Living – exclusive and beautiful objects”) takes place on the stud premises. Big sport is presented in March during the indoor championships and the large driving competition and in Mai at the CSI, the most important outdoor horse trail of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

General Assembly at Neustadt/Dosse June 7th to 9th 2010

The invitations for the ESSA general assembly at Neustadt/Dosse from 7th to 9th of June have just been sent. It is the most important event of the year and a unique opportunity for the members of the network to meet and discuss relevant issues concerning their studs and the development of the association.

On Monday, June 7th the participants meet in Berlin, where a sightseeing-tour is offered before travelling to Neustadt/Dosse for dinner.

Tuesday, June 8th is devoted to the general assembly. In the evening the „Reception of the European State Studs” with performance of Neustadt/Dosse stud is planned with guests and media.

On Wednesday, June 9th the event closes with a guided tour through the studs at Neustadt/Dosse. The ESSA board hopes to see representatives of all member studs. Deadline for registration is April 30th.



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Outcome of EU-application for operational grant

ESSA has not been selected to receive an operational grant of the European Culture Programme in 2010. 180 applications were handed in at the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and 20 projects were chosen to be supported.

The main reasons for the rejection of ESSA's application can be argued with the fact that ESSA was only registered in 2009 with not much of a budget on its own. By looking at the organizations for which an annual grant was awarded we can also assume that the experts who evaluated the applications might have a very narrow minded judgment about what culture is.

The decision is a huge drawback for ESSA, since a full-time staff member was supposed to be financed by the European money. Without subsidies the ESSA-office will continue to be run on small scale and the execution of many projects needs to wait until new ways have been found to secure funding for the activities of the association.

Analysis of the European state studs

An analysis of the European State Studs' structures and business operating areas will be undertaken by Ann-Cathrin Doelzer, a 4th year student of the "Equine Leisure and Sports" class at the University of Applied Science Van Hall Larenstein. The activities are under external supervision of the Marbach director Dr. Astrid von Velsen-Zerweck and Alexandra Lotz at the ESSA-office and under internal supervision of Constanze Röhm.

The research aims to analyse and compare the relevant studs regarding their management structure, their activities in horse breeding and training, as well as in the fields of marketing and tourism. Basis for the research is a survey, which will be sent to the studs early in April. All studs are asked to participate and to send back their answers as soon as possible, so that the student has enough time for evaluation. She will present the results of her research at the ESSA general assembly at Neustadt-Dosse in June. ESSA intends to use the results of the analysis for promotion of the European state studs and further research.



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Mobility project for stud employees

ESSA plans to set up a mobility programme for stud employees. In January the ESSA members were asked if they are interested to participate in a staff exchange project, supported by the European mobility programme for life long learning “Leonardo da Vinci”. In 2010 we could not meet the application deadline on 5th of February, since all participating studs need to hand in separate applications at their national agencies. The ESSA board plans to discuss the exchange-project at the ESSA general assembly in June in order to prepare the applications for 2011.

Different studs would like to start exchanging employees as soon as possible, with or without European funding. Therefore, we offer a pilot scheme for one year and hope to be able to continue the project with “Leonardo da Vinci”-funding in 2011. Questionnaires were sent to the relevant studs, which need to be filled in and sent back to the ESSA-office by the end of March.

Situation at Dillenburg federal stud

The contract of Uwe Xanke as director of the ESSA-member stud Dillenburg in Hesse (Germany) ended on February 28th. The stud is currently under the provisional authority of Florian Solle, who was the last breeding director of the former Hessian breeding association. From April 1st on the stud will be included in the “Landesbetrieb Landwirtschaft” (the regional authority for agriculture) at Kassel.

The involvement of Uwe Xanke in the ESSA-activities was much appreciated. The ESSA-board members wish him all the best for the future and hope to stay in touch.

Board meeting on April 16th and ESSA-presentation at the CSI Geneva

The next meeting of the ESSA board will take place at the CSI Geneva on April 16th. At the stand of Avenches National Stud an ESSA exhibition will inform about the aims of the association.



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Country in focus: Bulgaria (by Svetlozar Kastchiev)

The history of Bulgarian horse breeding

The breeding of elite horses at the lands of modern Bulgarian country is dated since the times of the ancient Thracians - over 3 thousand years ago. Nowadays, we can see evidences of the qualities of those horses on the pictures and bas-reliefs in the caves, vaults and different monuments tracing to those ages.

During the 7th century the founders of the Bulgarian country, the proto-Bulgarians, led by their khan "Asparuh" travelled thousand kilometres from their motherlands on the lower part of river Volga to the Balkans on the back of their horses and after crossing the Danube in the year 681 they founded Bulgaria.

Being on the crossroad between Europe and Asia, Bulgaria has always been subject of desires. During the 11th century the country was conquered by the Byzantine Empire for 200 years. Then during the 14th century it was conquered again but this time by the Turkish Empire for another five centuries. During all these years the Bulgarian people were not allowed to own and breed good horses. They had only donkeys or primitive small horses. After the liberation from the Turks in 1878 in Bulgaria neither good horses nor knowledge about their breeding existed.

At the end of the 19th century, pushed by an extraordinary need of quality horses for army, agriculture and business life, the new Bulgarian government issued first laws and decrees concerning horse breeding. In 1894 the activity of Kabiuk state stud was restored. During the next two years another two state studs were founded: "Klementina" close to the city Pleven and the military stud "Bojurishte" nearby Sofia. All the studs were obliged to create and maintain large amounts of stallion depots to improve horse breeding on large scale.

After the establishing of the communist regime in 1944 the development of horse breeding remained a priority of the country. Another two studs were established in the late 1970s: "Istar" close to the town Russe and "Khan Asparuh" nearby Razgrad. At the same time a large amount of small horse farms were founded. All the expenses for keeping the horses were covered by government and the produced horses were spread within the large amount of riding clubs for free.



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The financial crisis after the end of the communist regime in 1989 reduced the subsidies for the horses and led to a permanent deficit of money within the studs. The first victim of changes was Klementina stud. In the end of the 20th century it was privatised, but the scheme of the privatisation was fatally wrong and a few years later the breeding of horses was cancelled. After that, two of the national Bulgarian horse breeds – Pleven and Danube horses - came into a critical position and their surviving nowadays is unclear. At the same time a large amount of horse farms were closed. The same destiny struck Istar stud in 1998. In 2006 Khan Asparuh and Stefan Karadja studs were closed, too. The only surviving state stud of Bulgaria is Kabiuk. The sad statistic shows that during the transition period the amount of breeding horses in Bulgaria decreased four to five times.

Indeed, at the same time many private horse owners tried to establish their own farms, but only very few of them succeeded. In the beginning of 2010 there are only 6-7 farms which have more than 10 breeding mares.

Organisation of horse breeding in Bulgaria

In former times each stud and horse farm was obliged to maintain very detailed registers of the breeding activity of the mares and stallions. Breeding administration was a task of the “National Service for the Selection and Reproduction of Animal Breeding”. After the approval of the “Livestock Husbandry Act” in 2004 the maintenance of the stud books and the management of the whole breeding processes were transferred from the state into private hands of the breeding associations. In 2010 three licensed breeding organizations exist and one more applied for approval. The “Executive Agency for Selection and Reproduction of Animal Breeding” controls the activities of the breeding organisations for the Ministry of Agriculture.

Kabiuk National Stud

The only surviving state stud of Bulgaria is the oldest and most famous stud of the country: Kabiuk National Stud. It was established in 1864 by Mithat Pasha, the governor of the Danube Province, as a military stud for producing horses for the Turkish army. The stud is situated 13 km northeast of Shumen; the average altitude is 194 metres. Even in the first years of its operation, the number of horses reached about 1000. During the Russian-Turkish war 1877-1878 all the horses of the stud were exported to Anatolia, Turkey and the stud was closed.



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The actual revival of its activities dates back to autumn 1894. The farm was called “Kabiuk State Stud and Stallion Depot”. As early as it started operating, the farm had different supplementary departments: cattle farm, sheep farm, pig farm and poultry farm. A later name of the stud was “Vasil Kolarov State Agricultural Farm”. When the Livestock Husbandry Act was adopted in 2004, the company was renamed into “State Enterprise Kabiuk”. Under that act, it shall stay 100% property of the state, it shall be governed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Foods and shall be protected against privatisation and bankruptcy. Its key activities are horse breeding and state-funded preservation of indigenous cattle and sheep breeds in the genetic reserve existing in the company.

The farm owns 2832 hectares; 2067 hectares is arable land, the rest is meadows, pasture-grounds, constructions etc. The company is divided into the following departments: the stud, the reserve, the cattle farm, the pig farm and the field husbandry

Breeding focus and breeding history of Kabiuk stud

In the initial phase after Kabiuk stud resumed its operation in the autumn of 1894, the studs were formed by Arabian horses, Orlov Trotters, Arden heavy draft horses and some warmblood crossings. Most of them were imported from Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. The foundations of two of the breeds that are still in Kabiuk’s variety of breeds were laid in that period: the East Bulgarian Riding Horse and the Shagya-Arab. The Thoroughbred section was formed later, in 1954, and the Purebred Arabian section followed in 1977.

Over 400 horses live at Kabiuk. The stud is home to 18 sires and 130 mares. Every year, more than 100 foals are born and more than 90 horses of different training degree are sold in Bulgaria and to foreign markets. The horses currently bred are Eastbulgarians, Shagya Arabs, Purebred Arabs and Thoroughbreds. Furthermore, the farm maintains small Shetland pony and Haflinger herds.

One of Kabiuk’s greatest advantages is the availability of vast natural meadows where the horses are free to run in spring, summer and autumn. Parallel to the abundant natural grass that ensures nourishing and diversified feeding, the unlimited possibilities to move helps the young horses to develop a healthy locomotors system, strengthen their joints and tendons and build proportional strong muscles.



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The flat race and classical horse riding practice is performed in the Shumen Hippodrome and Riding school.

Kabiuk today

Today, Kabiuk stud is leader in the field of horse breeding activity with special attention to the development of the Bulgarian horse breeding in general. Many horses of the stud were and still are members of the Bulgarian equestrian sport teams. The stud provides a large number of services for private breeders, including artificial insemination with the best sires world-wide, testing and licensing of the young horses, professional education, etc.

Kabiuk is a very attractive and popular location for people who love horses. Annually, over 15.000 tourists visit Kabiuk. Over 90% of them come from foreign countries. Apart from horses one can see the only horse museum of the Balkan countries, where the development of Bulgarian horse breeding from the time of the ancient Thracians until today is illustrated. The visitors are lead with carriages around the broad ranges of the stud where they can observe the herds of horses.

ESSA dates 2010

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| April 16 th : | Board meeting in GENEVA, Switzerland |
| June 7 th : | Board meeting at BERLIN |
| June 7 th to 9 th : | General Assembly at NEUSTADT/DOSSE, Germany |
| July 21 st to 25 th : | Fair "Eurocheval" with ESSA presence in OFFENBURG, Germany |
| October 3 rd : | Presentation of draught and rare horses in STRASBOURG, France
(the date was postponed from April to October) |
| November 10 th : | Event at the seat of Baden-Wuerttemberg in BRUSSELS, Belgium |