

The WBFSH Young Breeders World Championship was hosted by Teagasc and Horse Sport Ireland at Kildalton College, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny on Friday and Saturday, the 17th and 18th of July. The competition comprised 17 different studbooks from Europe including from Sweden, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland and Germany and a team from as far away as Canada. The long planned event really came into being as soon as the three large buses transporting some 100 plus team members and supporters pulled up in front of Kildalton College around lunch time on Friday.

On Friday afternoon the teams completed their theory test of 20 questions on the subjects of Breeding, Health and Welfare, Stable Management, Nutrition and Sport. Following that they made their way to the indoor arena where judges Tom Slattery and Olaf Hagemann assessed the prejudgement horse for loose movement and loose jumping ability. Their marks set the standard for the competitors. Then the competitors had four horses to mark. Olaf and Tom made their own evaluation of the four horses. The competitors are assessed on how close their marks are to those of the judges.

On Friday evening the teams and supporters were treated to a display of hurling and camogie and a 10 aside match was put on with a mix of the Irish and the foreigners. The Germans it transpires have a talent for hurling too!! Later on the foreigners showed their interpretation of Irish dancing to the sound of local musicians. Much amusement and enjoyment was had by all.

On Saturday morning competition got into full swing again with the seniors moving into the stable yard to turn out horses in teams of three and the juniors went out to the field to assess the conformation and movement in hand of mares. Judges Tiernan Gill and Olaf Hagemann assessed and publicly scored the prejudgement mare again setting the standard. The competitors went on to score a further three mares. Their scores were again compared with those of the judges.

Next the seniors and juniors swapped positions with the juniors taking to the stable yard to groom and plait the next batch of horses and the seniors assessed a further group of mares.

The remainder of the day was taken up with a display of horse showmanship. The competitors with assistance from a whipper person had to convince the judges of their skills in showing horses on the triangle. Judging the junior section were Patrick Hester and Jane Bech Jensen. The senior section was judged by Susan Minnion and Marcel Koch. The standard was high on both triangles and it was a joy to see horses turned out and presented to such a high standard by the breeders of the future.

Saturday evening was rounded off by a display of traditional Irish dancing by a local group of dancers, the presentations to the winners and an evening barbeque and of course a disco to finish off what was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend.

The overall winning studbook was the German studbook Pferdezüchtverband Brandenburg-Anhalt.

In the senior section first place also went to the Pferdezeitungsverband Brandenburg-Anhalt. The team comprised of David Bahnemann, Claudia Constabel and Viktoria Herzog. Second place went to the Swiss Warmblood team of Cahrmaine a Wengan, Natalie Koch and Sonja Zahnd. Third place was taken by the Irish Sport Horse team comprised of Jean Meagher, David Bourke and Aine Geoghan with assistance from their whipper person Iris Brazil. This is a phenomenal achievement from the Irish team as a result of the hard work put in at the numerous training sessions over the preceding months with the team trainer Phillip Scott of Ballina and the Teagasc Equine Advisory Team.

In the junior section the German Westfälisches Pferdestammbuch took first place with the team comprised of Gregor Bensmann, Ricarda Schluter and Christina Len. The Westfalen trainers have been of enormous assistance to the development of the Irish training programme over the past two years. The Young Breeders Training DVD which is available from Teagasc, uses footage taken in Westfalen, and has been of huge benefit.

The Hannoveraner Verband took second with their team of Meta Christmann, Leonie Fischer and Kristina Gehrdau-Schroder. The Pferdezeitungsverband Brandenburg-Anhalt took third place with their team of Lisa Wachtel, Sophie Wachtel and Hans-Martin Michaelis. The Irish Junior team finished in an extremely credible 5th position – only 10 points short of their senior Irish counterparts.

The best individual competitors were also recognised with David Bahnemann being named as the best individual senior competitor achieving a total of 366 marks and excelling in the loose gaits and jumping section, while Ricarda Schuler took the best individual junior award on 367 marks, excelling in the theory section.

The competition has developed enormously since its introduction in Germany in 2001 and involves a theory test, judging horses on gaits and loose jumping, assessing the conformation of mares and presenting a horse in hand. Competitors had a wonderful opportunity to represent their studbook while competing against their peers and it is a great learning experience and a valuable way to make friends and contacts in other countries.

Particular thanks are due to

- HSI for their affiliation with the competition and generous sponsorship,
- the staff at Kildalton college for their hard work in the preparation for and during the weekend,
- the Teagasc Equine Advisory team and Phillip Scott for their role in training the Irish young breeders and organising the event, and to
- Rosemary Gaffney and her team, who sourced, produced and turned out approximately 50 horses to an exceptional level for the event.
- Thanks are also due to the judges for the event: Mr. Tiernan Gill, Ireland, Mr. Olaf Hagemann, Germany, Mr. Patrick Hester, Ireland, Ms. Jane Bech Jensen, Denmark, Mr. Marcel Koch, France and Ms. Susan Minion and Mr. Tom Slattery both from Ireland.

All concerned are looking forward to the next Young Breeders World Championships which are to be held in France in 2011. Anyone interested in partaking in future

training events and learning more about the concept can contact any member of the Teagasc Equine Advisory Team: Norman Storey 087 2222513; Wendy Conlon 087 9879083; Declan McArdle 087 6831876; Ruth Fennell 087 9602537



Irish Junior Team - Jennifer Malone, Conor Higgins, Miriam Bourke, PJ Hegarty, Amy McCarthy, Michael Hegarty