Put your Warmblood to the test

by Frances Cheboub
The South African Warmblood Horse Society is a developing register and briefly operates within the following categories:

- **Basic section:** Horses that do not meet the standards accepted by the society
- **F1:** A horse with blood other than accepted Warmblood or Thoroughbred and of unknown parentage, but which conforms to minimum standards
- **F2:** The progeny of an F1-mare and a licensed Warmblood stallion with at least 25% Warmblood blood in its pedigree. Thoroughbred mares and stallions, with three generations of breeding and current Jockey Club passports
- **F3:** The progeny of an F2 and a licensed Warmblood stallion. An F2-mare that has produced seven or more registered progeny of exceptional quality or has an excellent performance record in the sport, may be promoted to the F3-section of the developing register
- **F4 Full Warmblood:** The progeny of an F3-mare and a licensed stallion or the progeny of an F3-mare and an F3 prospective licensed stallion.

**Inspection categories**

The general inspection system of evaluation or scoring for mares and geldings, can be interpreted as follows:

- 65 to 69% = Acceptable
- 70 to 74% = Fairly good
- 75 to 79% = Good
- 80% and more = Premium.

The first acceptance approval (pre-stallion licence for colts between 2,5 and 3,5 years old) is for colts and young stallions, and will be an "approval only" for the three years or less before the horse is to be presented for full licensing. The stallion licence should take place within three years of the approval.

**General inspection**

A horse must be three years or over two years, but standing a minimum of 15,1 hh to be inspected by a minimum of two inspectors of which one is at national level and the rest at least at regional level. For fillies or mares, the minimum accepted height is 15,1 hh.

Colts, fillies, mares and geldings are required to walk and then trot away and back to the inspectors in a straight line, and will then be stood up for a conformation examination. After that an appropriate enclosed space is required for the horse to trot and canter loose.

After the marks have been given, the inspector will discuss the results with the owner and provide a copy of the inspection results. The owner will, in time, receive an official certificate from the studbook. There is a possibility of adding a jumping section in the future.

**First acceptance approval**

This occasion is for an approval to breed with a stallion for a limited time only, and is conducted by three inspectors of which two must be at national level and the other at least at regional level. The format is similar to the current general inspection format where the horse is examined in hand, at the halt, walk and trot, and assessed on conformation, movement and temperament. At this time a DNA-sample must be taken of the horse and placed on record.
Next is an assessment of the paces and loose jumping. This consists of three jumps with distances of approximately 6 m, 6 m, 7 m – upright, upright, spread. The acceptance approval can yield two possible results:

- If he seems good enough he will be "first acceptance approved" and present himself under saddle at a later date for full licensing
- If he does not seem good enough, he can only cover the mares of his/her owner. These will be assessed and then it will be decided if he continues or is rejected.

"During the inspection, selected stallions may be tested for the presence of impermissible substances"

Should the horse be accepted, he will be given the title "approved" and will be obliged to return within a time period of approximately three years for final licensing. Failure to do so will result in loss of the "approved" title and the removal from the society's main database of foals, birth-notified as sired by this stallion.

These papers/data will be kept in the basic section at the society for horses of unknown parentage and are not sent through to the South African Agricultural Research Council's national database, Intergis.

Stallion licence approval
This is the occasion for full licensing and is conducted by three inspectors, two of whom must be at national level and the other not less than regional level.

The stallion must measure 15,3 hh or more and is required to, in addition to the in-hand inspection for conformation and paces, be shown under saddle at the walk, trot and canter. The owner can then elect to freejump the horse or for the horse to be jumped under saddle. The height will be about 1 m over an oxer. The horse will again be seen loose to assess his paces.

During the inspection, selected stallions may be tested for the presence of impermissible substances. Any positive test will disqualify the horse. Every intervention, either by means of an operation, medication or other proceedings, which have or can, influence the original constitution of a stallion must be declared in writing prior to the licensing. Non-disclosure may result in disqualification.

Although a radiographic examination is voluntary at this stage, it is preferable for all stallions. The stallions which have been X-rayed, will have this stated in their licensing report. Examination of the larynx is also preferable, but voluntary, at this stage.

Although semen investigation is not yet compulsory, every stallion's owner is obliged to send in yearly lists of mares covered by that stallion. Stallions that have been licensed by another society and imported into South Africa, will still be required to present themselves for inspection by our inspectors.

Both dressage horses and jumpers still have to jump. The society hopes that, in future, it will be able to offer owners the choice to do either a course of jumps or a dressage test or both, to show specialisation of the stallion. This will then be stated in its stallion licensing report.

The stallion register
The current list of recognised stallions is divided into the following categories:

A. Licensed stallions (must achieve 75% or more in the stallion licensing test). The following stallions are eligible:

   South African bred horse, registered as a Warmblood in section F4, subject to passing the South African Warmblood Society's stallion licensing inspection. Thoroughbred, F2- and F3-stallions are required to produce an acceptable amount of approved progeny before becoming fully licensed. Pending
progeny testing these are considered as "prospective" stallions.

**Licensed imported stallions** recognised as a Warmblood by an official breed society that is a member of the World Breed Federation of Sports Horses, and accepted by the SAWH Society or such other society recognised by the SAWH Society. These stallions also need to pass the South African Warmblood Society's stallion licensing inspection in South Africa.

**Registered (unlicensed) imported horses** recognised as a Warmblood by an official breed society that is a member of the World Breed Federation of Sports Horses and accepted by the SAWH Society. They also need to pass the South African Warmblood Society's stallion licensing inspection in South Africa.

**B. Prospective stallions** which have achieved 70 to 74.99% in their licensings and have not met with:

- The required standard of excellence due to a minor conformational fault which would not be considered to hamper performance. Therefore a full Warmblood stallion may be considered a prospective stallion if it has a minor conformational fault that in the view of the inspection committee will not affect his sporting ability.
- Or has less than the required amount of Warmblood blood (50%) or in the section F3 or less. A stallion in the F1-register can be presented as a prospective stallion subject to passing the South African stallion performance and licensing inspection (minimum 75%). In order to be promoted to the licensed stallion register, he will be required to sire a number of progeny which must be inspected, approved and registered, and comply with all birth notification and recording requirements.
- A Thoroughbred stallion (recorded in the F2-register) will be required to sire progeny from registered approved F3 or full Warmblood mares to the satisfaction of council.

**C. Stallions not accepted** are stallions which have undergone licensing, but have not met with the required standard of excellence due to a conformational fault or other issues that could hamper performance. At the discretion of the council, any prospective or fully licensed Warmblood horse (South African bred or imported) may be removed from the stallion register.

A stallion which is prospective and/or "not accepted", may still qualify for the licensed stallion register if:

i) It later performs successfully at the highest level in the sport

ii) It has sufficient progeny later performing at the highest levels in the recognised sport. It is possible for such a stallion to then be placed in the licensed stallion register. This is done on the request of the stallion's owner. A stallion must always have the chance to prove himself through the actions of his progeny.