

# POLSKA AKF

## UNDER A LEGENDARY BANNER

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**W**arsaw, the Służewiec racetrack, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, a 2<sup>nd</sup> group race for three year olds. Among horses making their debut showing at the track is **Kasir Al Khalediah** by the desert bred stallion Tiwaiq and out of the mare **Katch Me** by Dormane. In turn Katch Me is a daughter of **FMR Kartagina** by Dunajec, a mare bearing a pure Polish pedigree. Kasir had already made headlines as soon as he was born. He is the first horse to be foaled at POLSKA AKF [AL KHALEDIAH FARM – POLAND], several hours after a group of 16 horses from Saudi Arabia (13 mares, 2 stallions and a foal born during an unscheduled stop in Brussels) arrived at their new home in Poland, where in freshly built, impressively elegant stables, awaiting them was the stallion **Galba**. It was January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

It was this group of horses that gave a beginning to the Polish division of the Saudi stud Al Khalediah Stables. The stud was established in Nowe Wrońska near Płońsk, amidst typical Mazovian landscapes on an area of 40 hectares, surrounded by beautiful meadows and orchards, through which flows the Nuruszewka stream. Their arrival had stirred great excitement at the time also due to the fact that Al Khalediah Stables is a superpower in Arabian horse breeding, the owner of such stars as World Champion **Baanderos**, World Bronze Medalist **Marquis CAHR** and World Champion **Layan Al Khalediah**. It is also one of the most decorated studs in the history of the World Championships as the winner of eight titles and the organizer of the Al Khalediah Festival. Today Polska AKF consists of 51 horses, including this year's foals, with three more being expected. This year is the first in which horses foaled at Polska AKF have stepped out of the friendly stables to show themselves to the world. Nine of them, being the entire crop of 2008, together with the Michałow-bred son of Galba and Georgia by Monogramm, the stallion **Gordion**, who found his way to Polska AKF as part of financial settlements for the lease of the stallion Galba, are in training at the Służewiec track at the TRAF Racing Stable, managed by trainer Małgorzata Łojek. This group also includes the unplanned passenger of the "founding" flight from three years back, the colt **Shaham Al**

**Khalediah** by Aja Sangali out of the Galba daughter **Shams Al Khalediah**.

Meanwhile in just a moment Kasir will compete against eight rivals. Some of the competitors appear restless, but not him. Without a doubt the chestnut stallion stands out with his athletic conformation. "Kasir is a horse with a deep, capacious chest and long, slightly flat rib cage, he will nicely cut through the air", Władysław Guziuk, the director of Polska AKF, comments on the phenotype of his graduate, humorously quoting the saying of the late Tadeusz Milanowski, a many year director of the Selection Department at the Służewiec Racetrack. Will Kasir prove to be a talented athlete, similar to his half-siblings by Tiwaiq, which were foaled at Al Khalediah Stables in the desert?

The answer is soon revealed. Kasir, under jockey Mirosław Pilich, exhibits great acceleration on the final straight and wins easily with an advantage of three lengths. "It brings great pleasure and satisfaction, when efforts put into the rearing and conditioning of a young horse, from the first days of his life up to his departure to the track, together with competent racing training, are crowned with such an enjoyable success", Władysław Guziuk beams with satisfaction. "But of course this is just the beginning of his career and there are many unknowns ahead of us." Trainer Małgorzata Łojek adds: "This is not yet Kasir's top form, but he is already able to compete with good horses. Stamina in a race is important, but victory is determined by the ability to accelerate on the final meters and Kasir is capable of doing so. Moreover he is a horse bearing an evident Arabian type, unlike many foreign Arabians with French or Russian blood, which show little resemblance to the Arabian breed. Additionally he has a gentle nature, everyone in the stable loves him." Director Guziuk recalls orders that young horses from Polska AKF were to be sent to training in France. Fortunately they remained in their home country. "We were able to defend their stay here", he smiles.

Among the group of mares which arrived to Wrońska from Arabia was also the Janów-bred **Saba** 1990 (Etat – Saszetka/Engano), who at Polska AKF first foaled the colt





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***Sariah Al Khalediah** by Padrons Image – also at the track this season – and a year later the promising filly **Sahar Al Khalediah** by ZT Maghossny. The oldest foal of 2011, born on March 31<sup>st</sup>, is a very charming filly by Galba out of an extraordinarily typey mare **Nadrat Al Khalediah** by Aja Sangali. “We wanted to give Galba the chance to prove himself with this mare”, says director Guziuk.*

*There are three chief sires stationed at Polska AKF: the afore mentioned **Galba** (Plakat – Gza-Gza/Negatraz), bred by Gerd Jannsen of Germany, **Forteynas Magic** by Magnum Psyche out of Bint Forteyna by Bey Shah (bred by Mike Nichols of the US) and **ZT Maghossny** by AB Magnum out of ZT Horubi by Hossny (bred by Count Federico Zichy-Thyssen of Argentina). The king of the herd is of course Galba, World Champion from the Salon du Cheval in Paris in 1999. He controls everything that happens in the stable, behaves imperiously and impatiently. He doesn't like not being paid attention to, but is also not pleased when he is being interrupted. As we previously*

*mentioned, he was the first horse to enter the still virgin stable on the morning of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, after a strenuous journey from Belgium in hard winter conditions. But it is not only these three stallions which have foals by them at Polska AKF. “We also purchased the semen of Poganin, Ganges and Ontario HF”, director Guziuk informs. In the future Polska AKF is also counting on semen from stallions from its mother-stud in Saudi Arabia. Whereas the stallions stationed here are widely available to Polish breeders, though this season many owners have limited the number of bred mares due to a harder and harder market.*

*As the newcomers arrived from a different climate, the stables have been specially prepared – the stalls have been equipped with electric radiators, set in the first period at about 12 degrees Celsius and gradually lowered over time. Today the horses do not require such over-protective conditions, though because of the drinking troughs the temperature inside the stable must remain above zero. The*





Kasir Al Khalediah before the race



Kasir Al Khalediah debuts on the Służewiec racetrack

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system turns itself on when the temperature falls below 5 degrees. "So far we had no health problems with the horses", emphasizes director Guziuk. "Though with time this environment will not be as safe in terms of health as it is now. For example all of our three year olds at the track, despite regular vaccinations at the stud, have gone through mild infections."

Located on the grounds of the stable complex is a spacious indoor arena, which, as director Guziuk explains, is extremely useful in everyday work with the horses: „A lack of weather or the foals' first walks... here we can provide the horses with necessary movement", he says. In order to see the horses we take seats in a comfortable gallery situated on a higher level right above the arena. A cozy interior, leather chairs, air conditioning or heating – all this allows for the admiring of the horses in truly luxurious conditions. Inquisitive mares and foals walk up to take a look at the spectators. And so both parties observe each other... We feel honored, as this is where the owner of the stud sits, Prince Khaled Bin Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, together with accompanying persons, when he arrives for a breeding inspection. This does not happen often, the last in September. Sometimes there is a visit from Mr. Mutlaq Bin Mushriff, the main breeder of Al Khalediah Stables. "The prince is very busy", explains director Guziuk. "But when he is here, he can't conceal his excitement – he is very pleased with both the horses and the stable."

No wonder. Horses at Polska AKF impress with a splendid condition – clearly they enjoy the ecological oats from Kielnarowa Stud and hay harvested from the meadows along the Vistula River, the delivery of which is taken care of by director Guziuk. A shiny coat, a vivid, bright eye and plenty of energy – the horses exhibit an abundance of these traits. But even the best pasture condition is not enough on its own – the further lot of the three year olds will be determined by their racing results. Kasir had a wonderful debut, Gordion – who already raced last season, ending with two wins and many money-earning finishes – is also doing great. "He has earned his keep", smiles the stud's director, who this year also expects the stallion to do well. He has personally taken care of the horse's condition during the winter, riding him regularly in the indoor arena. The stallion worked for 50 minutes each day. Gordion's first race of this season showed that this work paid off – already on May 1<sup>st</sup> he won his first race in great style. "Together with the saddle I currently weigh 90 kg, so the horse has had a decent strength training", jokes director Guziuk and explains: "I'm a believer of the breeding program for Arabian horses developed by the State Studs, where racing trials are one of the most important selection factors. A racing trial gives us information on the horse's health, his heart, lungs and muscle efficiency, on the development of the skeletal and muscle system, bone tissue, tendons, as well as his psyche." As director Guziuk admits, placing a horse in racing training today is associated with great expenses. "When we sent horses to the track back in the day" – he says, referring to the State Studs in Poland





Władysław Guziuk,  
the director of Polska AKF



Polska AKF, Nowe Wrońska near Płońsk

(he himself was a director of one of them, namely Kurozwęki Stud, for 22 years) – “the arrangement was incredibly beneficial. In a way the track leased the horses, not paying us anything for the lease, but then we also didn’t pay for anything. We only had a right to 2,25% of the prize money won, which we divided between our staff as a bonus. Horses which did not pass a racing trial, especially stallions, were not used in the breeding program.” Horses exported to the US surprised the Americans with their excellent athletic predispositions. “Horses from Poland had usually completed two, sometimes more racing seasons”, stresses director Guziuk. “They excelled not only at halter shows, but also in riding competitions, including the very spectacular and difficult for the horse Park Horse class.”

Breeding and training work require the creation of a proper foundation and systematic, patient and competent work. This will still take a while in the case of Polska AKF, but already director Guziuk announces that in the near future he will begin presenting his horses at shows – not only the youngsters, but also older horses. But a rush is not advisable and the “slow and steady” concept is consistent with the philosophy of the Middle Eastern owners of the studs. In the meantime the guests are impressed by the attention to detail both in the stables and on the outside. There are four people working in the stables, while the greenery is taken care of by a gardener and his three co-workers. A part of the oats and hay comes from their own crops. The farm also sells fruit from their orchards. They

were to partially find their way onto the princes’ tables, but their transport proved too complicated and definitely unfavorable to the fruit’s quality.

Does the fact that at Polska AKF everything runs like clockwork result from the many year experience of Władysław Guziuk in breeding and stud managing? He himself is not convinced. “I don’t think that an extensive experience in horse breeding determines success”, he says and points out that sometimes a hobby type of approach gives a greater chance for spectacular achievements. “For example, a professional breeder will never put together a pair of parents with similar flaws or conformation defects. He sees and knows those elements, as he has been working with the herd for many generations. An amateur breeder, for whom breeding is most often an escape from everyday work, will be driven by modern trends or intuition, which can sometimes prove right. Whereas the task of the professional breeder is to refine the breed and shape the herd with which he works. Strict breeding criteria are applied in such work – for example the late director Andrzej Krzyształowicz [from the Janów Podlaski State Stud] would never use a stallion which did not have a successful racing career from the track. In the State Studs we paid great attention to the preservation and strengthening of sire and dam lines, because the richness of a population lies in its diversity, not in making it uniform.”

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Nowe Wrońska

Although the director of Polska AKF does not attach significance to experience, it is hard to omit the fact that he has been dealing with Arabian horse breeding for over 40 years. When asked about the breeding goal of Polska AKF, he answers: "My experience lingers on – I have been working in this field since 1970. For decades we have been realizing a breeding program mutually worked out by breeders from the State Studs and inspectors of the Department of Horse Breeding of the Breeding of Reproductive Animals Federation, based on experiences of breeders from the interwar and earlier periods. Polish breeders, after World War II, had a small population of surviving Arabian horses at their disposal. Abiding by the rules of this program they achieved great successes on a world scale. For that reason I regard this program as a very good one and I try to realize it here, with this herd. When after the change of the political system in Poland private Arabian horse studs received a green light, for me it was a guarantee that this breed will be preserved in our country and that it will flourish. Because a State Stud, if it can't care for itself financially, will be liquidated – today there are no subsidies for this sort of commercial activity from the state. Whereas a private breeder, if he can afford so, can run his business at a loss during a slump in the economy – it is only a matter of good will. Small breeding operations, typical for private studs, have an easier time coping with crises."

The idea to locate a division of the Al Khalediah Stables in Poland first came up at the beginning of the new millennium, just 10 years ago. This was probably inspired by the position of Polish breeding in the world. "The successes of Polish Arabians have a great propaganda impact", explains director Guziuk. "Arabian horse enthusiasts who visit Poland find it to be a country of hospitable, skillful and kind people to foreigners. Poland is regarded as a good place to make investments and for businessmen from hot climate zones it is very attractive due to green springs, summers and autumns and white, snowy winters."

„The presence of horses from a country considered to be the cradle of the Arabian breed should be treated as an acknowledgement of the achievements of Polish breeders”, adds the director of Polska AKF. “The Polish division of Al Khalediah Stables gives hope for a mutually beneficial cooperation.”

The location of the stud was chosen from among several offers placed in paper publications. The peculiarity of this choice was discovered during the realization of the investment. It turned out that the 20 ha area, purchased in the first stage, was part of an about 400 ha pre-war estate of Antoni Jaworowski, the father of the merited

director of Michalów State Stud, Ignacy Jaworowski. It was here, in Wrońska, that Ignacy Jaworowski was born in 1924 and lived with his parents until the end of World War II. He came to Michalów in 1953 with a group of Arabian horses and built the stud for 44 years, until 1997. “We decided to continue the initiative of the late Ignacy Jaworowski’s family and fund a commemorative plaque”, says the director of Polska AKF. The unveiling ceremony took place on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, in a circle of the closest family and friends of director Jaworowski.

„I was very fortunate to be able to cooperate for several decades with the late Ignacy Jaworowski”, says Władysław Guziuk. “We also spent a lot of time at social gatherings, which usually oscillated around horse issues. For me they were an opportunity to mix and meddle with true authorities in a respectable, pleasant and educational kind of way. I have always admired the life optimism of Ignacy, his great passion for horse breeding, animal breeding and a general fondness for farm management. And now my professional and equine life has developed in such a way, unintentionally, that I found myself with Arabian horses from the Middle East in Wrońska, a place where the great breeder Ignacy Jaworowski was born. To me this series of events is an omen heralding fortune for this here breeding.”

#### The commemorative plaque to honour the late director Ignacy Jaworowski from Michalów State Stud

