

A CLOSER LOOK AT

BIAŁKA

after 30 years

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photo: Marta Baranowska

Egema



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Being the youngest kid in the family has never been an easy task. Of course, the elders tolerated its excesses, but, on the other hand, living under a pressure of elder siblings, in a never-ending drive for catching up with them, had to be very distressing. The more, that the role of unattainable, elder siblings was played by two leading Arabian horse stud farms – Janów Podlaski and Michałów. The first one gained its breeding experiences for 200 years, whereas the other one collected the highest awards in breeding and showing for more than half a century. How could Białka distinguish itself in such a competition? It was hardly able to struggle for catching up with those giants.

In 2012 we'd celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of foundation of the fourth Arabian horse stud in Poland. In 1982 the Minister of Agriculture decided to locate purebred mares in a former stallion depot, where since 1930 maintained were service stallions of different breeds. After fifty two years of existence the beautiful buildings constructed from yellow-tinted limestone have lived to see new residents. For Białka it was a breakthrough. From that moment on it functions as a Stud and Stallion Depot. Time has shown that it was a difficult marriage.

The foundation herd descended from Janów Podlaski, Michałów and Kurozwęki. It was obvious, that none of those studs handed over their best broodmares to a newly established one. 7 mares came from Kurozwęki, 12 from Michałów and 10 from Janów. They represented 11 damlines from 16 existing in Poland. Those 11 damlines are active at Białka until now, including a unique one, founded by Bent-El Arab DB. That damline is threatened with extinction and

occurs only at Białka, prolonged by two mares – **Celina** and **Cymra**.

So in its very beginning the management of Białka faced a perspective of a hard breeding work, but, after all, nobody promised them an easy start! Neither the broodmares' band was consolidated, nor was it supplied by the most valuable producers, who were reserved for the studs gaining more breeding successes. So made were attempts to equalize the horse population, as well as to improve its quality, in order to catch up with leading studs. The changes were occurring slowly, because the horse-breeding required a lot of time, but after several years noticeable became the first signs of a progress.

In the nineties the Arabians from Białka began to win their first show awards, but above all they distinguished themselves as excellent performance horses. The stallion **Pesal**, out of **Perforacja**, made his mark in the show arenas and thanks to him his mother stud became recognizable in the world, although to its fame contributed mainly racing and endurance successes of Białka horses. Trainers willingly picked them up to their stables, especially after spectacular wins of **Dziewierz**, **Ostragon**, **Al Adha**, **Albertina**, **Aryjka**, **El Amor** or **Medytator**. In endurance for many years unbeaten was the pair of Jerzy Urbański and the grey **Alahar**. Białka succeeded also in some transactions, as the sale of **Maesta** in 1998, who, purchased by British customers, set a record price, reaching 130 000 USD. It indicated a clearer future for Białka, the more, that after privatization of Kurozwęki State Stud to Białka assigned were 20 good mares.



Peron

photo: Marta Baranowska



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Perfirka

photo: Sylwia Ifenda

Poland's joining of the European Union forced the owner of the state farms – the Agricultural Property Agency – to change their legal status. The process of transforming state companies into commercial law companies – under the owner supervision of the Agency – in which 100% of the shares remained the property of the state, actually already began at the beginning of the 90s of the 20th century. The era of state subsidies came to an end. The situation proved extremely difficult for companies with a strictly breeding profile. Places which had no back-up in the shape of a strongly developed agriculture production began having financial problems. Białka found itself at the crossroads. What turned out to be difficult was the reconciling of a missionary role, providing equine reproduction services for farmers, being conducive to sports development and maintaining the historically monumental infrastructure with brutal economic reality.

would rather resemble a second-rate actress of a cheap thriller; when woken up in an early morning and deprived of a proper make-up! Thus no wonder, that Białka faced a hard time – its horses were unplaced in shows, withdrawn from sales rings without any interest of the customers... One had also to convince Białka staff, that their work had perspectives.

In 2010 Białka saw a change of the management board. The Stud Director's post, instead of Jerzy Urbański, was entrusted to Marian Pacewski – the specialist from outside the horse business. With small steps, laboriously, as though climbing up a steep and slippery hill, Białka was beginning to be drawn out of the shadows. The first step in the right direction was using in Arabian horse breeding a grey son of Ekstern – the stallion **Esparto** (out of Ekspozycja), bred at Michałów. He was put to stud at Białka for the seasons 2009-2010, after a

A lack of money puts every person in a position of an unimportant supplicant. Many doors become closed and the expectations must be adjusted to one's capabilities. A lack of funds for investments results in painful savings which take their toll on quality. It worked like an avalanche – horses from Białka began to disappear from show arenas. Not because their quality greatly worsened all of a sudden but because the possibilities of their proper training, promotion and presentation were limited. The results could be foreseeable – after all, even a top model



Fabryszka

photo: Sylwia Ifenda



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Pernal

photo: Sylwia Ifenda

two-years-long lease to Arab Emirates (Ajman Stud). This breeding decision proved exceptionally accurate – both foal crops sired by Esparto were enchanting! The brightest stars of that lot were revealed in the show season 2011.

The beautiful **Egema** (Esparto – Egira/Emigrant) is placed in the top of all shows she participates. For the half of a year she already represents her new owner from Sudan, but she will never lose her Polish origin. The outstanding **Peron** (Esparto – Perolia/Gazal Al Shaqab) has a chance to replace the unforgettable Pesal in the future. Appeared also some perfect mares, especially Gazal daughters: **Perfirka** out of Perforacja by Ernal, **Perolia** out of Pereira by Eldon and this year's Pride of Poland star – **Fabryszka** (out of Fula by Partner), sold to Saudi Arabia for 150 000 Euro. Up the sleeve kept are fantastic Ekstern daughters and a new generation of strong, elegant fillies by **Piaff**. Surely the staff from Białka has something to work with.

In last years we got used to treat Białka, its staff and horses, as permanent “lame ducks” – losers in shows and sales. Nevertheless, only some small changes were enough to prove that as well the people, as the horses, were the same, even if not completely alike. In 2011 Białka seemed to become a newly discovered continent.

Now it seems that Białka, above all, needs time. It needs time to put itself together in the frantic “rat race” of our days, to struggle the

unwanted “demons of the past” and create solid foundations for the future. It also needs plenty of good will and good luck... 🐾



Perolia

photo: Sylwia Ifenda

