



Poland-Qatar bond in Arab horse breeding an exceptional success story: Expert

Hanna Sztuka, a leading Polish expert, journalist specialising in Arabian horse breeding and former director of breeding at the Polish state stud in Michalow, is all praise for Qatari studs saying they have accomplished a lot in the breeding of mainly show horses



Pianissima mare: Polish-Qatari World Champion



Polish-Qatari mare Emarella: National Champion of Qatar



Horse studs in Bialka

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COOPERATION between Poland and Qatar in the area of Arab horse breeding has been an exceptional success story, Hanna Sztuka, leading Polish expert, journalist specialising in Arabian horse breeding and former director of breeding at the Polish state stud in Michalow, has said in a recent interview.

In an interview conducted in cooperation with www.polskiearaby.com, Sztuka said, "Both Qatar and Poland love horses and we have developed a special bond with these animals in our hearts. I can reveal that work is underway on the scenario of events that may be interesting for both sides. Certainly, further ideas and specific steps will be implemented soon."

Sztuka, who recently visited Qatar to witness the Arabian Horse Festival 2021 organised from February 2 to February 6 by the Cultural Village Foundation, said, "The cooperation between Poland and Qatar in the area of Arabian horse breeding is ongoing and it has been highly successful. To start with we can, of course, refer to the 19th and the beginning of 20th century, when horse breeders from Poland collaborated with Arab sheikhs, often learning the old ways and methods from them. In recent times it began in 2002, when Gazal Al Shaqab, a stallion bred by the Qatari Al Shaqab stud, was leased to the Polish state stud in Janow Podlaski. Gazal spent two years in Poland and at that time many wonderful horses were born in Poland in his lineage, including the extraordinary Pianissima (World Junior Mares Champion 2004, US Junior Champion Mare 2006, World Senior Champion Mare 2008, Platinum World Champion Mare 2013), Pinga and Emandoria."

Since then, Sztuka said, breeding contacts between Qatar and Polish studs have continued.

"In 2012, the grandson of Gazal Al Shaqab, the stallion Kahil Al Shaqab, was leased to Poland, and similarly to his grandfather, he left very good offspring in Poland. At the same time, in those years, breeders from Qatar purchased breeding mares from Poland in order to strengthen their own breeding. The last on the list of stallions from Qatar is the lease of the stallion Sahn El Arab from Aljassimya Stud, who stayed for two years at the Polish state stud in Michalow and the result of this transaction is the Qatar's 2021 national champion in the junior mares category, Emarella," she said.

"We hope that these activities will not only help to strengthen the relationship between Poland and Qatar but also significantly contribute to raising purebred horse breeding in both countries to another level," Sztuka said.

Praising Qatar for successfully organising the Arabian Horse Festival 2021, she said, "Not only the luxurious conditions and the high prize pool of approximately 4 million euro attracted attention of Arabian horse breeders from all over the world, but, as I saw with my own eyes, the professionalism of the organisers, and the extraordinary achievements of Qatar's Arabian horse breeding. As I found out

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Hanna Sztuka



later, a dedicated team was working on the quality of the show many weeks before the event began."

"Katara Cultural Village, where the show was organised, is a wonderful place. It attracts attention with perfect design, clearly associated with the Bedouin tradition. And the arena was a modern, phenomenally beautiful variation on the theme of a Bedouin tent. To match this, historical fishing boats were moored in front of the VIP box. Against the background of the blue-sapphire sea, they looked extremely harmonious. The design of the arena and the decoration was very aesthetic. I have not experienced this in any other event I visited around the world," she said.

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"While in Qatar I realised that horses, that are so important to me, and Arabian horses in particular, are a source of national pride in Qatar. The government has been taking care of horse breeding for many years, sparing no funds for its development. A strong Qatari state stud, whose breeding achievements are known to me and which I had the opportunity to visit, brings to mind the existence of similar breeding entities in my country. In Qatar, however, the role of the state is not limited to organising shows, but extends to the continuous support of breeding and equestrian sports. The Qatari studs, such as Al Shaqab, Aljassimya Farm, Al Thumama or Al Nasser have accomplished a lot in the breeding of mainly show horses. They have been able to fill the podiums with their pupils at each show. At the same time they have not forgotten about

the breeding traditions, including purely Egyptian horses," she said.

"While the shows, due to the spectacular nature and the organisational costs incurred, are very elitist and luxurious, I noticed that Qatar supports the development of broadly understood equestrianism, including racing and long-distance rallies. The Al Shaqab Arena is impressive, and a few weeks after the Katara show, it hosted the amazing jumping and dressage competitions in the Longines Global Champions Tour," Sztuka said.

Talking about Poland's exceptional history and traditions and in the area of the breeding of the Arabian horse, she said, "The history of Polish Arabian horse breeding is closely related to the turbulent history of our country. Destroyed many times by the turmoil of wars, it was always conscientiously rebuilt, each time going beyond the achievements of the previous era. In the state studs of Poland, where the surviving Arabian mares and stallions were gathered after World War II, a unique, on a global scale, the breeding programme was implemented based on female and male families cultivated since the end of the 18th century, an integral part of which was a performance test on the racetrack."

"After many years, on the basis of mares from state studs, private breeding was also rebuilt in Poland, which today is already on the highest level internationally. The post-war years, which brought Polish breeding a lot of success around the world, confirmed that the Polish breeding programme, built on the experience and knowledge passed down through generations and based on a centuries-old tradition of breeding this breed in Poland, is unique in the world and is our cultural heritage. The Polish Arabian horse is to a large extent a reflection of the features of the nation that bred it: beautiful and brave, strong and ambitious, and the mares have the charm of femininity, motherhood and exotic beauty," she said.