

Breed differences in behaviour-related characteristics of stallions evaluated in performance tests

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Abstract :

Present study was aimed at testing the possible breed differences in behaviour-related traits evaluated in performance tests of stallions. The results as regards the traits labelled "character", "temperament", "trainability" and "rideability" were examined. The results of 326 three-years old stallions submitted to the 100-days training at two training stations in the period 2004-2007 were used. Breeds tested were Polish Halfbred Horse (PH), Ma?opolska (M), Wielkopolska (W) and horses of foreign origin (F). Horses of F breeds scored highest on all behavioural characteristics. The M horses scored the lowest on "character", differing significantly from other breeds. PH and W horses did not differ in regards to this trait. There were no differences in "temperament" between the breeds, except for the F horses. "Trainability" was rated the lowest in M horses, increasing successively in W, PH and F horses. The "rideability" within PH, M and W horses was similar but was significantly lower than in F breeds. Expectations of raters as per horses' mental characteristics were met best by the F horses; the M horses met them at the lowest level. It may be concluded that F horses are best fit to fulfil the breeding objectives in terms of their behavioural characteristics. It should be noted that the breeding objective seems to favour behavioural characteristics enabling horses to perform well in sport rather than in leisure. It should be also emphasized that the method of evaluation of behaviour-related traits of stallions in performance tests may not be valid enough to detect real differences between individuals and breeds.

Key Word :

stallion, performance tests, behaviour

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