

Long-term policy plan KFPS 2015-2020

1 Introduction

Every five years the KFP draws up a long-term policy plan. With this plan the KFPS aims to look ahead at how strategic choices can be used to realise the intended objectives. These strategic choices serve as the stepping stones for our operational policy. This long term policy plan will be discussed with the members at regional meetings. These meetings are a platform where members can come forward with their own contributions to the policy-making.

2 Objectives and ambitions

2.1 The Friesian horse

In KFPS objectives the Friesian horse takes up the central position. Whereas the preservation of the Friesian horse used to be our top priority, the positive developments over the past few decades now allow us to focus on (international) growth. The key to the success of the Friesian horse lies in its unique combination of stunning appearance, pleasant personality and aptitude for the sport. In the next few years the ambition of the KFPS will mainly be directed at the sport, aiming to realise stronger representations in basic sports as well as a stronger position in the (sub) top. This ambition will be endorsed by a breeding policy based on scientific grounds.

2.2 KFPS members

Alongside the Friesian horse itself, another central position in relation to policy development is off course taken up by KFPS members. With this in mind, the KFPS is continually concentrating on how to expand its level of services to members within and outside the Dutch borders. Quality of service in the fields of breeding, education, as well as facilitation and development of sales markets, etc.

3 Breeding

3.1 Breeding goal and Breeding Policy

The formulated breeding goal is at the heart of the KFPS breeding programme. The KFPS breeding goal consists of three equally important pillars: 1) the characteristic exterior (breed characteristics); 2) the pleasant personality; 3) aptitude for the sport. In terms of breeding program these three pillars are also considered equal. For some characteristics there obviously is the need for a catching-up phase. Therefore, in the next five years the key priorities of breeding policy will be:

I Health

Partly due to past inbreeding, the Friesian horse is subject to a number of unwanted characteristics. The KFPS has the ambition to phase out these unwanted characteristics.

II Personality

Even though personality is a distinguishing mark of the Friesian horse, through the years this aspect has not received that much attention in terms of selection. Because the sport has taken up a much more prominent place in both breeding goal and breeding program, there is a chance that these developments could undermine the easy-going personality of the Friesian horse. The improvement of characteristics that are more suitable to sport horses should not be allowed to have a negative effect on the reliable personality of Friesians. To counteract this tendency the KFPS is planning to develop certain selection tools which are set to become part of the implementation of the breeding policy.

III Sport aptitude

Seeking to realise the ambition of the Friesian horse as (recreational) sports horse leads to a more prominent role for sport aptitude in the selection criteria. This development should not just be restricted to the selection policy of the Studbook, but must also be embraced in breeding circles. The current trend to lend more weight to the assessment of sport aptitude in aptitude tests and/or sport, than to sport aptitude assessments in the inspection ring, will be intensified over the next few years. This selection process will be progressively supported by scientific findings, for instance in relation to 'measuring/data accumulation' of stamina and personality.

3.2 Technology

The recent breakthrough in the field of Genomic Selection (selection based on knowledge of genes in genomic architecture) offers unprecedented possibilities. The KFPS is taking the lead position in this development, primarily for use as an ultimate means to phase out unwanted characteristics. Over the next few years the KFPS is also planning to look into additional uses of Genomic Selection for the purpose of selecting 'positive' breeding goal characteristics such as exterior, fitness, sport aptitude and personality.

3.3 Genetic diversity

In the past decade the KFPS has taken a strong stand against inbreeding, with good results to show for it. During the last few years the increase in inbreeding has stabilised below the generally accepted norm of 1% increase per generation, which is considered to be the threshold above which a species or breed faces extinction. Nevertheless, in future years the monitoring of inbreeding will remain a top priority of our policy.

4 Sport

4.1 Objective

Towards the end of last century the rediscovery of the Friesian horse as a utility horse has played a crucial role in the preservation of the Friesian breed. These days, the sport constitutes an essential aspect in the growing national and international interest for the Friesian horse.

Number-wise, the elementary sector is by far the largest category in equestrian sports. Thanks to its personality and sport aptitude the Friesian horse is exceptionally suited for elementary sports which, naturally, has contributed to its apparent success. Therefore the focus of the KFPS sport objective lies on elementary sports and the sub top. Still, the KFPS aspires to raise the bar even further for the coming years. In a bid to develop (elementary) sports we absolutely need idols and role models. Performances of Friesian horses in the (sub) top appeal to the people's imagination. That is why KFPS policy should be directed at increasing the representation of our Friesian breed in elementary sports in combination with an ongoing effort to stimulate participation at (sub) top levels. Practical implementations towards realising set goals could for instance involve membership of the WBFSH and taking part in the WC Young Horses (qualifiers).

4.2 Disciplines

The KFPS sport objective has defined three disciplines: dressage sports, driving sports and show driving sports (carriage driving). It is not very likely that new disciplines will be introduced. This has no bearing on the fact that the Friesian horse may also be suitable for other disciplines in which it could progress to competition levels. In terms of numbers, out of these three disciplines for Friesian horses, dressage and driving sports together make up the largest group. In spite of being a small-scale sector, show driving deserves special attention. Its representative historical value together with its promotional qualities (particularly in the Netherlands) are worthy of the ongoing, guaranteed support of the KFPS. This includes the breeding aspect, which however must be considered in proportion to the small-scale character of the discipline.

5 Foreign countries

5.1 Importance of foreign countries

The Friesian breed is well represented in 72 countries across all continents with the number of foreign members practically matching Dutch numbers. As studbooks go, the KFPS is pretty unique because regardless of country, Friesian horses are registered with the mother Studbook and involved in its worldwide breeding programme. In doing so, the KFPS aims to make the most of the entire population of Friesian horses to advance both genetic progress as well as genetic standard deviations. Additionally, our active presence abroad boosts our sales market for breeding material from which both our foreign and domestic members stand to gain.

5.2 Foreign policy

The most important part of KFPS foreign policy is its overseas programme for registration and breeding (inspections). On top of this, the Studbook has invested considerably in foreign countries in recent years. Notably with the transfer of expertise (distribution in various languages of newsletters, Phryso and manuals concerning the Friesian horse), founding and supporting foreign associations under the umbrella of the Royal Friesian Flag and encouraging breeding (for example by stimulating availability of good-quality stallions). We will continue to further intensify this policy in the coming years. We are investigating how account management could help to improve the efficiency of our foreign programmes.

5.3 Market development

A strategic aspect of our foreign policy is the development of new markets. For reasons of expected potential, the KFPS has pinpointed two key areas for market development: Central- and South America and China. In the immediate future the KFPS is planning to develop strategies to maximise the opportunities in these regions.

6 Services

6.1 My Horse

In the past few years the KFPS has invested a great deal in the website and My Horse ('Mijn KFPS'). This serves to improve information channels particularly as regards breeding, but also to simplify the administrative workload for members, the KFPS and foreign daughter associations combined. By now, digital processing of stud services, births and inspections has been streamlined. In the years ahead we will continue to expand the KFPS digital portal.

6.2 Marketing

Contrary to studbooks in some other countries, the KFPS is not directly involved in marketing horse sales. However, the KFPS accepts its role in the facilitation of such, for example by developing and creating new markets. A survey conducted among members has revealed that the KFPS should possibly adopt a more supportive attitude towards marketing. One of the results is the introduction of 'KFPS-marktplaats', a digital platform matching supply and demand. According to the KFPS more options are being considered which could be constructive to facilitating trade. For instance the introduction of a hallmark for trading companies, specifically for the Friesian horse.

7 Association policy

The KFPS is an association and should preserve the characteristic status which defines an association. This means that the involvement of members in KFPS matters is essential. The members have the power of direct influence on policy-making regarding a number of KFPS key issues: breeding and sports. In relation to operational performances of the association the KFPS has articulated two key priorities for the years ahead:

- 1) promoting the appeal of regional meetings with the aim of improving its standing as contact platform between the Studbook and its members.
- 2) the training of management for the most crucial functions within the KFPS, such as the body of judges.

8 Stallion Inspection

The Stallion Inspection is the ultimate instance where all functions of the KFPS blend together. In addition to traditional elements, such as the inspection of KFPS stallions and selection of young stallions for the Central Examination, the show elements and transfer of expertise have become increasingly important. Especially in jubilee years, imaginative and inspirational shows and theatre productions have been created thanks to the input of members. Right now work is underway to create a grand theatre production in the light of 'Leeuwarden, Capital of Culture 2018'. In the intervening years we will strive to raise standards to an even higher level. The target groups for these

evenings increasingly range across a far wider spectrum than just KFPS members. This must all help towards boosting the charisma of the Friesian horse as cultural heritage and a means to raising financial revenues.

9 Other policy aspects

9.1 Merchandising

Recently, a lot of attention went into the development of KFPS merchandise in terms of assortment, promotion and distribution. The underlying objective is to generate income in addition to traditional studbook activities as well as contribute to the charisma of the Friesian horse and its Studbook. The position of merchandising will be expanded over the next few years.

9.2 Communication

The world of communication is rocketing. The social media have proven to be valuable communication channels for the KFPS. In the face of these rapid changes the KFPS must constantly remain on the alert to respond with the right communication mix. In spite of all this, traditional means of communication such as the Phryso and the KFPS website are still playing a major part.

9.3 Member policy

These days, membership of an association is (generally) weighed up from a direct benefit principle. This is reason for the KFPS to evaluate the added value of membership. We must continuously keep asking ourselves what the benefits are that come with membership. We have already taken action in relation to this subject and now this will be taken to the next level. The members have accepted the proposal to research other membership options which could be more geared to the individual user of the Friesian horse. There are various possible alternatives.