

Watch – Learn – Enjoy! Ways to ‘spectate*’ at a KWPN-NA keuring.

*my own ‘active verb’

By Faith Fessenden

The *KWPN-North America* keurings are just around the corner. Locations with foals, yearlings, 2-yr olds, 3- yr olds for their studbook inspections, the IBOP (under saddle required test – jumping, hunter, dressage and harness), DG Bar Cup competitions (3,4,5 yr old dressage horses under saddle) and the Iron Spring Farm Cup competitions (4,5,6 yr old jumpers under saddle).

North American breeders and owners will be bringing horses for evaluations and commentary, as well as breeding and training guidance from the skilled Jury. They (owners and breeders) will learn if their stallion/mare pairings were optimal, what the strengths and weaknesses are in their mares for future stallion considerations, what conformation and movement strengths and weakness should be addressed in the training and management of their riding horses, - and - there is always the camaraderie of other KWPN'ers talking about and watching one another's horses, cheering each other on, and looking for what the new stallions are throwing.

Are you a breeder seeking more information on what a given stallion may produce with your mare? Do you want to present a horse at a keuring in the future? Are you a buyer looking for a youngster that catches your eye, or for a chance to purchase a promising Young Horse prospect that is already going under saddle? (Look for a colored dot on the bridle/halter number. This dot indicates this horse is for sale.) You may only want to spend a day surrounded by beautiful horses. A KWPN-NA keuring provides just such a place.

A ‘keuring’ (inspection) is your chance to see the ‘selection and evaluation’ process in motion. This process has put the KWPN on the top of the ‘World Breeding Federation of Sport Horses’ leader boards. Our international sport horse community has been thrilled by the performances of Ravel, Hickstead, Parcival, Totilas, Uthopia, etc. Every one of those greats attended a keuring as a 3-year old...and so did their sires and dams, and so did THEIR sires and dams. This is the very same process - here in North America.

So how does one maximize the experience as a spectator? A copy of the entries from each location will be available for printing from the KWPN-NA website. Pick your location of choice, print the entry list for it, or the entire tour, grab a pen and you're ready.

Here is your homework assignment before leaving home. Look through the pedigrees of horses entered. If there are several by the same stallion – highlight that stallion's name in a given color. Ditto for another stallion- use a different color. If you scan the age groups you may see successive generations out of a certain mare. Underline her name in each pedigree. Do you have a favorite stallion from the magazines and websites? Look for his name and highlight him in yet another color. Find those who interest you? Circle any predicates in the pedigree: mares – ‘sport’, ‘elite’, ‘keur’, ‘prok’, ‘star/ster’, ‘preferent’, ‘prestatie’ (pronounced ‘pres – staats – see’); stallions – ‘keur’ and ‘preferent’. Those are the indicators of quality and various accomplishments adding to the ‘royalty’ status of the respective individual. Proceed to the keuring.

As the classes begin it's time to focus on the horses. First – just look at them. Which one 'rings your chimes'? Second - circle their number and now look at their pedigree. Ditto for the next. Do you see a pattern in your preferences? In the foal class look at the dam (be aware of the designated recipient mares on the Embryo Transfer foals) and her strengths – did the stallion compliment or detract from her? Again, make your notes. Learn from the Jury commentary at the end of the class why different premiums and placements were made. Educate your own eye to see those same things. Make your notes and write down the numbers of the ringing order and what premiums were assigned.

Return to the entries list and check your notes. Did you tend to like the offspring of a given sire? Was there a stallion that you hadn't even considered? How did the offspring look compared to their dams? Did that single mare bring wonderful foals regardless of the stallion used? (That's the kind of mare we all want in our barns!)

Apply the same process to the under saddle classes. THESE classes are REALLY important. How are your favorite bloodlines doing once the saddle is on their backs and the riders and trainers have worked with them? As a group of similarly bred riding horses are they easy or difficult to ride? What is the overall quality of their gaits? The offspring of good stallions and mares optimally should be a consistent collection – there should be a commonality of type, or gaits, or rideability/temperament. Regardless of their placement (remember they are very young and it is a new, intense experience) – how did they handle the pressure? Did the rider help or hinder the horse? Many who may finish in the middle of the placements will go on to be great riding horses.

During breaks and lunch, visit with other breeders, owners and spectators. You will find all are eager to share and enjoy the experience as well. Evaluate while looking at those horses waiting for their classes, or roam the stalls (if permissible) where the foals are if one was of particular interest to you. Do you have a question that remains unanswered? Please ask a KWPN-NA Jury member when they're available. They are there for you, the spectator, too.

See you at rail side!!

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KWPN Education Committee