



DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF EXTERIOR INDICATORS OF BREEDING SPORT HORSES

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Abstract:

The article presents information on the exterior indicators of breeding and sport horses, their evaluation based on these exterior characteristics, bonitization, and the requirements set for specific indicators when selecting sport horses.

Keywords: number of horses, Karabair breed, breeding horses, sport horses, breeding, exterior indicators, constitution, evaluation, bonitization.

Introduction

In recent years, the number of horses in Uzbekistan has significantly increased. By 2024, the total number of horses across all categories of farms reached 274,118. This marks a 2.5% growth in the horse population compared to the 2023 figures.

In the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the total number of horses across all types of farms in 2024 was 27,845. To date, the growth rate across all types of farms has reached 102%, including 7,104 in farming enterprises, 19,929 in dehqan (private subsidiary) farms with a growth rate of 102%, and 812 in agricultural service organizations, where the growth rate is 101%.

In Uzbekistan, horses can also be effectively utilized in the tourism sector and equestrian sports. In this regard, it is essential to understand the biological and exterior characteristics of horses. The exterior indicators and qualities of horses are directly related to the purposes for which they are used.

The Karabair horse breed, an ancient and national breed created in Uzbekistan, accounts for over 90% of the horse population in the country. This breed is distinguished from others by its strong adaptation to the local climate, suitability for sports, utility in agricultural work, and high milk and meat productivity.



The Karabair breed includes 10 lines, 12 genealogical groups, and 31 families, with four volumes of the State Breeding Book published for the breed. The "Atrek," "Fanatik," "Olovkhon," "Filin," "Bosket," and "Qapqan" lines are considered the leading lines within the Karabair breed.

Therefore, it is essential and timely to improve the lines within the Karabair breed, recognized as Uzbekistan's national horse, to develop new genealogical groups and thereby enhance the selective traits of the breed.

In improving the Karabair breed, creating new genealogical lines and families is of critical scientific and practical importance and will serve as a foundation for developing new lines in the future.

In evaluating breeding horses, it is impossible to bonitize them without knowing the measurements of body parts. Historically, people assessed horses by their exterior structure, considering specific indicators. For this reason, special attention has always been given to the exterior of horses.

The exterior refers to the outer structure of an organism, which characterizes an animal's productivity, work capacity, and breeding qualities. In horses, the exterior is related to the overall body structure and work capacity, as well as the structure of the skeleton and muscles.

Experience in studying horse breeding shows that failing to fully assess a horse's exterior, or not considering its exterior holistically in evaluations, can lead to weakened constitution, the emergence of various flaws in appearance, and a decrease in work capacity. Therefore, in breeding and production farms, horses must be evaluated based on their exterior. When assessing their exterior, first, the identification details such as inventory number, breed, name, and gender are determined. In mares, the time of covering and the last foaling date should also be recorded. Then, horses are led out onto a flat area, where special attention is given to their physical health, body type, overall structure, walking speed, leg positioning, breathing, and body movement; after this, the individual parts of the body are evaluated. The evaluation begins with the head and continues down to the legs.

In the bonitization of breeding horses, the assessment of their pedigree is based on the guidelines provided in the breeding instructions and the breeding book. The process involves identifying elite, Class I, and Class II horses. According to the approved guidelines of the "State Breeding Association" (GMA), the bonitization (evaluation) takes place in September and October. During this process, horses are assessed based on their origin and typicality, body measurements, exterior, work capacity, and the quality of their offspring, using a 10-point system for evaluation.



The first bonitization (evaluation) is conducted at the age of 1.5-3.5 years, based on the origin, body measurements, and exterior characteristics. The second bonitization takes place between 3.5 and 7.5 years of age, focusing on the origin, body measurements, and work capacity. The third bonitization is carried out after 7.5 years of age, during which the quality indicators of the horse's offspring are also assessed.

In addition, each year, the exterior and development of 6-8 month-old foals are evaluated through bonitization, as needed, to monitor their growth and development. Breeding horses, based on the bonitization system, are divided into elite, first, and second classes. A horse's origin and typicity are determined according to the breed documents. If there are no documents regarding the horse's pedigree or hybrid origin, the horse's exterior, typicity, and work capacity are assessed instead.

The ability to transfer high productivity indicators from generation to generation is crucial for improving the breed. The evaluation of stallions and mares, based on their offspring's work capacity (such as speed and the number of top placements in races), is essential. Regardless of the breed, breeding stallions generally produce more offspring than mares. Therefore, if a stallion's offspring demonstrate excellent qualities early on, that stallion is crucial for the development and improvement of the breed.

In selecting sport horses, specific characteristics are required depending on the type of equestrian sport in which the horse participates. Horses that are suitable for high-level dressage and racing must meet certain criteria. Their exterior appearance should be graceful, their build should be proportional, and their temperament should enable them to move easily in various types of races. For example, horses in these categories typically have a height ranging from 156 to 170 cm, a well-developed chest with a circumference of 180-200 cm, a long neck, an average-width head, wide-set eyes, long ribs, well-developed muscle structure, and a long and slightly slanted breastbone. For showjumping (cross-country jumping), horses should have a well-developed build with a height of 162-164 cm, a chest circumference of approximately 200 cm, and a cannon bone circumference of 21-22 cm. Horses that meet the exterior standards for a specific type of sport will have a long neck, a smooth movement, a deep and slightly slanted chest, a short back, strong muscles, and sturdy, straight legs with no defects. They should also be resilient, patient, and strong.

The Karabair breed of horses plays an important role in supplying our people with meat and dairy products (especially in the production of horse meat and mare's



milk), serving as working animals, contributing to equestrian sports, and providing biological and additional products for industrial purposes.

This breed is well-suited to local conditions, requiring minimal feed, and is considered a universal breed suitable for year-round grazing management.

In recent years, the attention to breeding and selection work in breeding farms, as well as the breeding records, has declined significantly. As a result, the number of breeding horses in these farms has sharply decreased, and the lines and families within the breed are disappearing. The development of new lines has come to a halt. Therefore, in horse breeding, it is essential to fully implement selection and breeding work, classify horses based on bonitization results, and establish breeding lines. This approach will create opportunities for the improvement of both the quantity and quality of horses in our country in the future, leading to an increase in the number of breeding and sport horses.

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