

## Foundation Sires of the Modern Holsteiner

By Wendy Webster

The career of the original Holsteiner horse was to pull a plow or a carriage. Eventually the automobile replaced the carriage, and the more efficient tractor replaced this sturdy breed subsequent to the end of World War II. The number of broodmares inhabiting the countryside dropped substantially as the 1950's rolled on, until in 1961 there were only 1,322 mares left from a population of nearly 10,000 a decade earlier. The breeders sought a new career for their hardy and steadfast servants. The sport of riding simply for pleasure and competitions for the rank and file were surging in popularity, so the breeders took advantage of this trend to reinvent their horse as a top sport model.

To a large degree the Thoroughbred is responsible for the transformation of the Holsteiner from farm laborer to international competitor. Approximately 60 different Thoroughbreds were brought in to stud service during the 1960s. Many achieved some degree of success in producing sporty types from the existing mare population. However, several went on to produce dynasties of unimaginable proportions which have formed the basis of what the breed is today.

**Cottage Son** was introduced to Holsteiner breeding in 1959. A tall, imposing, dark brown horse with enormous presence, he came from England where he had already created multiple top level eventing horses, several of whom competed in the 1960 Olympics. He produced big horses that were easy to ride, good jumpers with super dispositions. Still today his presence in a pedigree is highly valued as a guarantee of performance capabilities. Sadly he had to be put down after only four years at stud but left behind 14 approved sons to the benefit of the Holsteiner breed.

**Ladykiller** was a Thoroughbred stallion that could not have been more appropriately named. The bay colt was introduced to Holstein's broodmares in 1965 as a four-year old. From his very first foal crop 12 stallions were approved. He went on to sire a total of 35 approved sons, among them the two fantastically successful progenitors Lord and Landgraf. The number of sport horses produced from the line of Ladykiller numbers in the thousands now. His ability to pass on beauty, marvelous basic gaits and particularly spectacular jumping talent has never been equaled by any other Thoroughbred in Holstein.

**Marlon**, a successful racehorse from England, was also introduced to Holstein in 1965. By 1975 he had established his dominance as a producer of event horses and had become Germany's leading producer of horses for the sport. His son Madrigal won individual bronze and team silver at the Montreal Olympics. He produced horses with beautiful, correct conformation and superb gaits, many of which found their way into dressage sport at the time. In the end, 21 sons of Marlon were approved as stallions.

**Sacramento Song** in hindsight was somewhat overlooked by the breeders during his time in Holstein, from 1973 through 1979. Despite his classic English breeding, good looks and tremendous jumping ability, as a privately owned stallion he did not get a substantial number of mares. Now any pedigree containing his name immediately garners respect. Sacramento Song sired the successful stallion Sandro who despite being a top class jumper and producing such has also become a widely recognized name in modern dressage breeding.

**Ramzes**, an Anglo-Arab, was leased to Holstein in 1951, 1952, 1959 and 1960. His crosses with Holsteiner mares produced a long list of first class jumpers and a breeding dynasty to his credit from his five Holstein approved sons. His influence was not limited to his sons, as his daughters also became top producers, ensuring that many of today's sport competitors carry the name of Ramzes in their pedigree. His grandson Ramiro went on to produce nine sons for Holstein after a tremendous jumping career at the international level.

**Cor de la Bryere**, an Anglo-Norman horse bred in France, was discovered by the Verband breeding director who had gone to Normandy to evaluate a different stallion for possible use in Holstein. When the two year old "Corde" was let out of his stall, he so impressed the visitors with his elastic and easy going movement that the visitors were smitten. A week later, Cor de la Bryere arrived in Holstein looking a bit scruffy in his winter coat, unfit and tired from his journey. The first impression by all who viewed him was one of disappointment. He was correctly built, very easy to ride and his talent over fences was superior. At the end of his first year in Germany he won the Holstein stallion performance test. His first year at stud he bred 70 mares and when the resulting foals arrived the following spring, confirmation of the young sire's quality was revealed. It would be hard to find any other stallion who contributed so dramatically to the success of a particular breed. Corde created stallion sons by the dozen who in turn have continued the legacy of their great sire. There are few horses in Holstein now which do not include the name of this phenomenal sire multiple times within their pedigrees.

**Quidam de Revel** has become the most recent stallion to advance the breeding goal of the Holsteiner Verband. The Selle Français stallion had an illustrious career as a jumper which included being a member of the Bronze Medal Jumping Team in the Olympics in Barcelona. He has been ranked the number one producer of jumpers by the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses numerous times since 2004. He was approved for breeding to Holsteiner mares in 1993. As of 2010 he had produced 16 approved sons for Holstein, who in turn have produced an additional 15 approved sons as well as a host of top class performance horses.