Breeding plan and selection of stallions in Danish Wamblood
/// Selection of stallions in Dansk Varmblod

The cornerstone in Dansk Varmblod’s breeding plan is a strict selection. The selection is based on an evaluation of the stallions’ physical- and riding qualities, judged at different ages and in varying contexts.

The system consists of the sections described below and secures that the stallion collection available is improved continuously.

/// PRE-SELECTION
Each year in December approx. 115 two-year-old stallions have their conformation and functionality evaluated by Dansk Varmblod’s licensing committee. Prior to the pre-selection the pedigrees of the young colts are thoroughly examined, for instance must all stallion mothers born 2001 and later have an approved riding test.

The colts are entered according to the stallion owners’ wish in either show jumping or dressage rings; dressage colts are shown free in the arena and show jumpers in free jumping. The best individuals of each discipline are picked out for an evaluation on hard surface where limbs and hooves are evaluated, and then they are shown in lunge lines. Approx. half of the 115 stallions at the pre-selections are selected to enter the stallion licensing in Herning.

/// STALLION LICENSING IN MARCH
At the licensing in Herning the stallions are presented for Dansk Varmblod’s licensing committee, separated in divisions for show jumpers and dressage stallions. All stallions are shown on hard surface on Thursday for an evaluation of their limbs. Friday the show jumpers are judged in free jumping and they are shown in lunge lines to have their canter assessed. Also on Friday the dressage stallions are shown free in the arena to enable the evaluation of their gaits. On Saturday the dressage stallions are shown in lunge lines to see their function and balance when in right posture. Afterwards, the young dressage- and jumper stallions are shown in hand and the best are granted approval. Sunday premium stallions are appointed. As from 2015 champions are no longer appointed among the 3-year-olds. Approximately 40% of the entered stallion candidates are approved for the test system so that their riding qualities can be judged before they are granted breeding permission. Prior to this, documentation of fertility control and DNA parentage verification are obligatory as well.
/// TESTING UNDER SADDLE AND FINAL LICENSING
In order to show consideration for the physical and mental development of the young stallions Dansk Varmbloed designed the stallion performance test system so that the stallions are tested at shorter tests over a period of a few years.

In 2006 the traditional 70-day test was replaced by a voluntary 10-day test and an obligatory 35-day test along with the possibility to use championships and competition results as final test admitting the stallion to the final grading.

When a stallion has completed one of the test systems he is admitted for final grading at the age of 4 or older. Here the stallion will be evaluated based on his conformation, physical development, and performance test results.

/// 10-DAY OBSERVATION TEST
Immediately after the selection at the stallion licensing, 3- and 4-year-old stallions can be enrolled at a 10-day observation test. If the stallion passes this test he gets a breeding permission for the current year. At the 10-day observation test the stallion will be lightly ridden according to the principles of educating young horses. No scores are given and the assessment is based on running observation, as the primary goal of this test is to filter the stallions with bad temper or stable vices. The 10-day test is thus an extension of the stallion selection in Herning allowing the licensing committee to see the stallions ridden. The licensing committee and the station test manager decide in unanimity which stallions have passed successfully.

35-DAY TEST
In the autumn 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old stallions can report for a 35-day test in the discipline in which they were originally pre-selected to Herning. Show jumpers are judged in jumping and rideability under station rider and test rider. Dressage stallions are tested in gaits and rideability under a station rider and a test rider. If wished for, the stallion can be tested in both disciplines. A test passed with a minimum total score of 800 in either dressage or show jumping disciplines admits the stallion for its final licensing the following year.

Among the stallions that pass the test with a total score of 700-800 points in either dressage or show jumping the licensing committee reserves the right to select a few individuals that get breeding approval for the following year. These stallions must then pass another 35-day test with a score of at least 700 before they can achieve their final approval at the stallion licensing.

/// DANISH WARMBLOOD YOUNG HORSE CHAMPIONSHIPS AND DANISH EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR YOUNG HORSES
Stallions who have passed their first 35-day test with a total score of 700-800 can, instead of going for another 35-day test, choose to have their performance ability tested either through the DWB Young Horse Championships for 5-year-olds in Herning or through the Danish Equestrian Federation Championships for 5- and 6-year-olds. If the stallion is tested at the DWB Young Horse Championships it must as a minimum attain the same scores as the last horse placed to be admitted for final licensing. If the stallion is tested at the Danish Equestrian Federation Championships for young horses it must be placed among the top three in the final in order to report for final licensing. The licensing committee reserves the right to extend the number of approvals.

/// COMPETITION CLASSES
Older stallions can report for final grading if they have attained five placings as 1st, 2nd or 3rd at international shows at S-level, being at least Intermediaire II dressage or 1.50 m show jumping.
Breeding policy and breeding objective of Dansk Varmblod

HISTORY
With horse breeding being one of the traditional activities of Danish agriculture, Dansk Varmblod was based on strong relations and high standards of the Danish farmers when it was officially founded in 1979. A group of breeders wanted to change the existing breeding stock into modern riding horses. Their aim was pursued by crossing Europe’s best bloodlines in a system of strict selection. In a rather short period of time a population of refined, leggy riding horses true to type and with a beautiful expression was created - and the trade mark of Dansk Varmblod ever after had seen the light.

SPECIALISED BREEDING
The original breeding objective of Dansk Varmblod was all-round horses that could excel at both dressage and showjumping competitions. But in 2004 it was decided to specialise the breed and radical changes were made in the selection system. These changes comprise, e.g. that dressage horses were no longer tested in free jumping, because selection for improved jumping skills was proven to have a negative influence on walk and trot. Likewise, the judging of walk and trot was no longer a part of the evaluation of jumpers.

BREEDING OBJECTIVE
A refined, leggy, and supple riding horse with high ridability and a strong health. It has capacity in either show jumping or dressage to compete at international level.

A VISIONARY BREED SOCIETY
Dansk Varmblod is known to be visionary and adaptable to changes – two contributory factors in the society now being one of the leading sport horse studbooks in the world. Breeding policy and objective are adjusted continuously to the needs of the consumers, this being the fact again in 2012. Longevity is one of the traits on which Dansk Varmblod aims to increase their focus in future. Therefore, a unique co-operation with equine veterinarians on registration of diseases has been launched. In 2014 Dansk Varmblod introduced linear scoring to obtain an increasingly objective, systematic, and informative evaluation of the breeding stock. At the same time the implementation of genomic selection is proceeding which in turn will add to the increasing safety in the breeding work and speed up the progress of the breed as well as shorten the generation interval.

HOW DANSK VARMBLOD ACHIEVES ITS GOAL:
• Dansk Varmblod focuses in a goal-oriented way on specialized dressage and show jumping horses with the aim to produce internationally successful top athletes
• Strong selection of the Danish breeding stock is carried out and only the very best individuals from competing studbooks are approved for breeding
• For a young colt to have access to the selection system all individuals of at least 4 generations of his pedigree must have been judged by a team of judges from a recognised sport horse studbook. Dam and grand dam must have scores that qualify them at least for the DWB mare studbook. Mares must likewise have 3 generations of gradings in order to have access to the main studbook
• No stallions are fully licensed before they have passed an approved performance test. This assures that only stallions with very high ridability and good functionality sire the next generation
• Mares must pass a riding test to be selected for the Elite Mare Show and to become a potential stallion mother
• Dansk Varmblod is approved by the Danish Ministry of Agriculture and thereby also by EU. Keeping of studbook is maintained, like in the case of most other horse breeds registered in Denmark, by SEGES, the Danish Agricultural Advisory Centre, Dept. Horses. Every objective information regarding each individual horse is found in a central horse database, leaving this a valuable tool for the breeders
• Dansk Varmblod calculates breeding evaluations (index) based on conformation, riding tests, young horse championships and official sport results
• Dansk Varmblod attaches great importance to international cooperation and exchanging of experience. This is for instance assured through membership of WBFSH (World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses). WBFSH is a world-wide association of sport horse breed societies. Since 2000 the presidency and the WBFSH head office have been managed by Dansk Varmblod

THE LOGO OF DANSK VARMBLOD – THE CROWN AND THE WAVE
The Danish Warmblood brand – a crown over a wave – symbolises a kingdom surrounded by water. The logo was originally designed by the well-known silver smith and designer Georg Jensen.