

Issue Three

THE

2025

ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y



Official Publication of the United States Icelandic Horse Congress
Member Association of FEIF (International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations)



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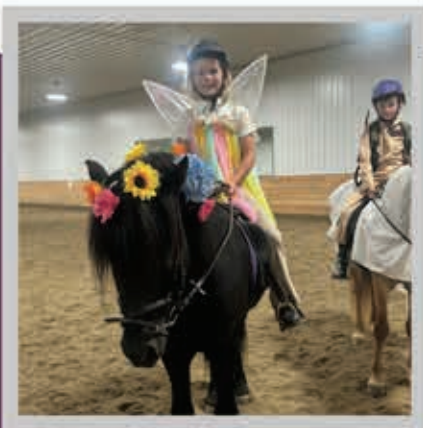
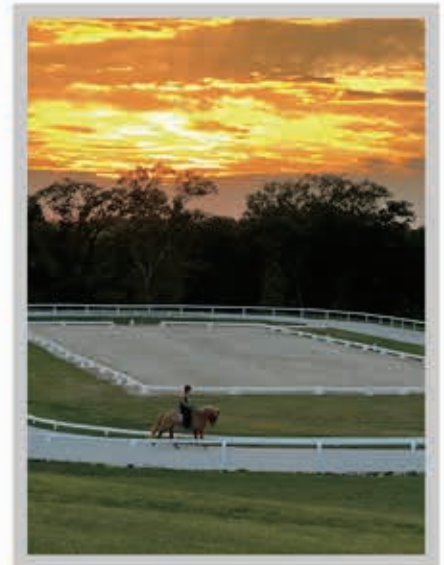
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We would like to congratulate the four riders who qualified to represent the U.S. at this year's World Championships in Switzerland!

Congratulations Alex Dannenmann, Ásta Covert, Caeli Cavanagh and Jenny Melville!

And a special thanks to the team leader, Jana Meyer, and the team trainer, Olil Amble, for their support in this accomplishment.





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On the cover: Our stunning cover photo features FEIF Level 1 trainer Janet Mulder riding her own Prins from Arctic Arrow (US2008103843) at the glacial Eklutna Lake in Alaska. Prins was imported in utero by Janet's father Bernie Willis and has been raised and trained by Janet from the beginning. The pair have been Nationally Ranked in T1 and V1 and earned their Riders Achievement Patch in USDF Level 1. Prins has become an all around joy, equally at home in the arena, on the oval track, and on the trail. He was once unwilling to put his foot in a puddle; this summer he marched right into that enormous lake without hesitation, an example of partnership, patience, and practice. Photo by Alana Wright.

ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

The Icelandic Horse Quarterly is published by the United States Icelandic Horse Congress (USIHC), a member association of FEIF (International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations), as a benefit of membership. Renew online at www.icelandics.org. © 2025 All rights reserved. **Article Submissions:** USIHC members and non-members are invited to submit feature articles and photos for publication. Send them to co-editors Nancy Marie Brown and Nicki Esdorn at quarterly@icelandics.org. All submissions are reviewed by members of the Quarterly Committee. We reserve the right to edit or reject any submission. **Affiliated Club News:** Contact your club to submit news items and photos for the Club Updates section. **Letters From Our Readers:** All readers are invited to submit letters commenting on articles previously published in the magazine or on topics of general interest. Send them to quarterly@icelandics.org. All letters are reviewed by the committee. We reserve the right to edit or reject them. **Advertising:** See <https://icelandics.org/advertising-in-icelandic-quarterly-magazine> for ad rates and sizes. For page availability, contact ad rep Jean Ervasti (917-648-8824 or jean.ervasti@gmail.com). We reserve the right to reject any ad. **Deadlines:** January 1 (for Issue One, mailed in March), April 1 (Issue Two), July 1 (Issue Three), and October 1 (Issue Four). **Quarterly Committee:** All USIHC members are invited to join the Quarterly Committee to review submissions, vote on the cover, and help edit, illustrate, and distribute the magazine. Sign up at quarterly@icelandics.org. **Committee Members:** Carol Andrew, Margot Apple, Andrea Brodie, Nancy Marie Brown, Jean Ervasti, Nicki Esdorn, Amy Goddard, Em Jacobs, Kate Kalan, Constance Kollmann, Gabriele Meyer, Anne Owen, Alex Pregitzer, Emily Potts, Chris Romano, Sara Stewart, Judy Strehler, Lynn Wiese, and Nancy Wines-Dewan. **Graphic Design:** James Collins.

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THE USIHC MISSION

- To promote the knowledge of the Icelandic horse within the United States and its correct use as a competition and riding horse.
- To keep a registry of purebred Icelandic horses in the United States.
- To facilitate communication among all USIHC members.
- To represent the United States in FEIF.

The U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress is a member of FEIF (www.feif.org), the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, representing the national Icelandic horse associations of 21 countries. FEIF governs competition activities and regulates the breeding and registration of Icelandic horses throughout the world outside of Iceland.

The USIHC was formed in 1987 by representatives of the U.S. Icelandic Horse Federation and the International Icelandic Horse Association to meet the FEIF rule that only one association from each country is allowed to represent the breed.

Alice Ryan on Hrollur frá Grímsey (left) and Felicity Ratte on Segull frá Þúfu taking part in the Komen Ride for the Cure in Woodstock, VT. Photo by Spectrum Photography.



WHY JOIN THE USIHC?

As the owner or rider of an Icelandic horse, you chose a very special breed with its own culture and history. It is important to learn about the breed's unique traits, capabilities, and needs, so that you and your Icelandic horse will have a happy relationship and it will live a healthy and long life. By joining the USIHC, you connect to a worldwide network of experts to help you care for, ride, train, breed, and learn more about your horse.

The USIHC is the umbrella organization for 12 regional clubs; activity clubs can also be formed.

Our Registry links to WorldFengur, the worldwide database of all registered Icelandic horses (USIHC members have free access to WorldFengur), and we publish *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly*, maintaining an online archive of all issues since 2008.

The USIHC sponsors scientific research on the Icelandic horse, helps promote the Icelandic horse at expos and through social media, supports educational seminars and events like the American Youth Cup, organizes leisure activities like the Sea 2 Shining Sea virtual ride, creates teaching tools like the Riding Badge Program, and offers practical and

monetary support to organizers of shows and clinics.

The Icelandic horse has international competition rules: You can compete in the same classes and receive comparable scores in any FEIF member country. Likewise, the Icelandic horse is one of few breeds with international evaluation standards, so that breeding horses from all over the world are judged on the same 8 points of conformation and 9 ridden abilities. The USIHC helps organize sport and breeding shows that conform to FEIF rules.

The USIHC is responsible for the U.S. teams at the FEIF Icelandic Horse World Championships, the FEIF Youth Cup, and the FEIF Youth Camp. Through FEIF, the USIHC votes on rules and policies that affect the welfare of the Icelandic horse worldwide.

As a member of the USIHC, your dues and registration fees make all this possible. Our board members and committee chairs are all volunteers. As a member-driven organization, the USIHC grows stronger the more active and involved our members become. Please join us so that the USIHC can, as FEIF's mission states, "bring people together in their passion for the Icelandic horse."



USIHC NEWS

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NEW JUDGES

A judging seminar took place April 10-13, led by FEIF International Sport Judge Þórgeir Guðlaugsson and hosted by Maggie Brandt and her team at Léttleiki Icelandics in Kentucky. The curriculum followed the USIHC standard for these seminars and was based on a precursor webinar, "Introduction to Icelandic Horse Sport," that was offered last year. Þórgeir proved again to be a superb clinician, who is extremely knowledgeable and experienced in his field of expertise and an enthusiastic and passionate teacher.

The participants learned not only about the FEIF Rules and Regulations that govern Icelandic horse competitions around the world, but also about the many recent changes FEIF has made to these rules in support of its increasing emphasis on horse welfare. The FEIF Judging Guidelines were another major part of the discussion. These guidelines include all the key elements that judges use to assess a performance, such as riding skills, connection, beat, balance, suppleness, relaxation, movement, and outline, as well as execution. Finally, the seminar covered the gaits of the Icelandic horse, biomechanics, sports psychology, ethics, and rules of conduct, and dove deep into equipment issues, including thorough instruction on how to conduct the mouth and equipment checks that are part of our World Ranking shows in the US; in some FEIF countries, these checks are part of every show.

Þórgeir provided countless videos, using them to discuss gaits, performances, and scores. The participants then put their newly learned skills to the test by judging live performances at an all-day schooling show organized by the Léttleiki team. Those who felt confident about their skills had the opportunity to take a variety of exams on the last day of the seminar, including theory as well as practical judging.

These exams resulted in two new judges in the US. Congratulations to Carly Zaayer and Molly Lindemann, who were each certified as a USIHC National Sport Judge B.

BREEDING SHOW

An official FEIF Breeding Assessment was held on June 11-12, with a Breeding Seminar on June 13, at Harmony Icelandics in Truro, IA. Four stallions were fully evaluated and their scores entered into the international studbook, WorldFengur. They are: the palomino Kvíkur from Beat'n Branch (US2019105421) and the black Svartigaldur from Beat'n Branch (US2020105620), both owned by Ron and Sherry Hoover and ridden by Carrie Lyons Brandt; the bay Fálki from Red Feather (US2016105130), owned by Diane Graves and ridden by Caeli Cavanagh; and the chestnut Valinn from Vindsdalur (CA2019102742), owned by Lisi Ohm and ridden by Carrie Lyons Brandt. The pinto mare Artemis from Avalon (US2021205821), owned by Ellen Parker, was also shown for conformation only.

"Congratulations to all the breeders, owners, and trainers who participated in the recent Icelandic horse breeding evaluations at @harmonyicelandicsllc!" wrote the USIHC Board on social media. "Your hard work, dedication, and passion for the breed truly shone through. This evaluation is especially remarkable for the US because all four horses are bred in North America. Here's to the incredible horses, thoughtful breeding, and bright future of the Icelandic horse in North America!" For more information, see the article in this issue.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Four riders qualified to represent the USIHC at the 2025 Icelandic Horse World Championships, held August 3-10 in Birmenstorf, Switzerland. Team USA is comprised of Ásta Covert, Caeli Cavanagh, and Alex Dannenmann, who are members of the US National Team, and Jennifer Melville, who applied for a flex spot according to the 2025 World Championship tryout rules. They were joined by Olil Amble as team trainer and Jana Meyer as team leader.

Tryouts for the team this year were held as part of the USIHC Virtual Spring Show, which was judged by five FEIF International Sport Judges. Among other requirements, the riders had to be members of the US National Team as of January

2025 and be currently ranked in the USIHC National Rankings in all their tests of choice. The riders needed to achieve the following scores in their tryout videos (these are the scores required in Iceland to compete at the master level): Tölt T1: 6.5, Four Gait V1: 6.2, Tölt T2: 6.2, Five Gait F1: 6.0, and Pace P2 under 8.5 seconds. Riders who qualified in F1 or P2 may ride in any other pace event at the Championships. Other riders who make the team are only allowed to compete in the tests they qualified for during the tryouts.

All riders must qualify on the horses they will take to the Championships, which means that Ásta and Caeli will be transporting their horses from the US to Switzerland; the horses ridden by Alex and Jennifer already reside in Europe. Photos and more information on the event will appear in the next *Quarterly*.

NATIONAL TEAM

June 1 was the deadline to qualify for the 2025 US National Team. The current team members are: Jana Meyer (Team Leader), Ásta Covert (Team USA 2025), Caeli Cavanagh (Team USA 2025), Alexandra Dannenmann (Team USA 2025), Lucy Nold, Virginia Lauridsen, Heidi Benson, Laura Benson, Carrie Brandt, Terral Hill, Jeff Rose, Lori Cretney, Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir, Mackenzie Durbin, Susan Sundstrom, Richard Davis, and young riders Brynja Meehan and Samuel Warschawski.



Carly Zaayer was certified in April as a USIHC National Sport Judge B.



Congratulations to National Team member Samuel Warschawski for his speedy pace run of 8.17 seconds at the German Youth Championships! This incredible time secured him second place overall.

tir, Mackenzie Durbin, Susan Sundstrom, Richard Davis, and young riders Brynja Meehan and Samuel Warschawski.

The purpose of the team is to develop Icelandic Horse Sport in the US by developing a sense of community and teamwork among our top riders, investing in educational resources, offering financial support, positioning our top equestrians to serve as inspirational role models and to share their skills, and serve as a prerequisite for our World Championship team.

Riders over age 22 can qualify every six months; the next deadline is January 1, 2026. You must be a current USIHC member, a US citizen or Green Card holder for at least one year, compete in at least one in-person national or world ranking show in the US, score an average of 6.0 in select classes (T1, T2, V1, F1, T3, T4, V2, F2) or be in the top 3 in P2, as well as follow the Team Code of Conduct.

NATIONAL TEAM AUCTION

The National Team Silent Auction, held May 21 to June 7, raised approximately \$9,055. The proceeds of this fundraiser will go toward expenses associated with the team, such as continuing education, apparel, coaching, and travel costs to events, including the World Championships. Over 20 items were donated by members of the Icelandic horse community, ranging from an original painting of your horse to a custom handknit sweater to a three-day riding vacation in Iceland or Iowa to an Eques or Sensation saddle. Said Marisa Shaw, head of the organizing committee, “Thank you again to all the donors. This silent auction was a huge success—we cannot wait to do it again next spring!”

2025 SHOW SEASON

In March the Sport Committee published an official list of the 2025 nationally

ranked shows. “Come join our community at any of these events. Whether you’re competing, mingling, or learning, we’d love to have you!”

Including the USIHC Spring Virtual Show and the North American Youth Cup, 13 shows have been held so far in Massachusetts, California, Vermont, Kentucky, Oregon, Virginia, and Iowa.

Shows still to come include: The Svöluhagi Klassik on September 6-7 at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY (contact maggie@lettleikiicelandics.com). Solheimar’s Pentathlon V on September 27-28 in Tunbridge, VT (contact sigrunbry@gmail.com). The Harmony Triple World Ranking Show on October 3-5 in Truro, IA (contact virginia@harmonyicelandics.com). The Fall Gamankeppni on October 25-26 in Crestwood, KY (contact carriandterra@gmail.com). The CIA Fall Show on November 8-9 in Santa Ynez, CA (asta@tolt.net).

SEA 2 SHINING SEA

Each month the USIHC Leisure Committee randomly chooses one of the 100-plus riders taking part in the Sea 2 Shining Sea Virtual Ride (S2SS) to be the Rider of the Month. This quarter’s featured riders are



Nilla Rypka of Minnesota was the June S2SS Leisure Rider of the Month.

Julie Ferreira, Kanoe Huffman, and Nilla Rypka.

Julie Ferreira lives in Wilbraham, MA. She doesn’t own any Icelandic horses herself, but as she says, “I’m blessed to have a wonderful friend, Leah Greenberger, who owns nine that I am able to ride.” Julie joined the NEIHC, the USIHC, and then S2SS at Leah’s invitation. “I am always wanting to learn more about the Icelandic horse and horses in general. My grandparents had a horse farm, so they have been a part of my life since the beginning. I am interested in how the horse can help make the human body, mind, and soul feel better. I have multiple sclerosis and fibromyalgia, and riding and being around horses helps me. I love being out in nature, riding either by myself or with friends. I also love just being around horses, brushing, touching, and talking to them on the days I don’t ride.”

Kanoe Huffman lives in Beaverton, OR and recently purchased Sigur, an eight-year-old gelding. “He’s such a sweet horse and has been patient with me as I rebuild my confidence. I rode horses for a few years as a child, but it had been over 20 years since I’d been around horses.”



Kanoe Huffman of Oregon was the May S2SS Leisure Rider of the Month. Photo by Brannon Huffman.

Kanoe discovered Alfadans Equestrian Arts after an online search and met her first Icelandic horses there. She joined their S2SS team soon after buying Sigur. “I love having a goal,” she says. Through trail riding, she is building trust and friendship with her horse. “It’s been lovely watching him get comfortable in his new home and showing me his personality.” She adds, “I have found Icelandic horses to be exactly what I was searching for: gentle and calm dispositions, with lots of willingness and fun personalities.” At Alfadans, she concludes, trainers Caeli Cavanagh and Alex Venable have built “a very special community of supportive horse people.”

Anna Pernilla Ekstroem-Rypka usually goes by Nilla Rypka, “as it’s a lot less of a tongue twister,” she says. She lives in Carlton, MN and currently owns four Icelandics, three of them full siblings out of her mare Rjúpa frá Róðli, who died last year at the age of 32. The siblings are Lundi from Arctic Arrow, Orri from Cloudberry Acres, and Kría from Cloudberry Acres; she also owns Lotta von Birkenlund. “Growing up in Sweden,” Nilla says, “I started riding mostly dressage and show jumping on three-gaited

breeds. However, we were always conditioning our horses in the woods, and I really liked trail riding. After high school I worked on a dairy farm where they had two Icelandics. There I learned more about the breed—and the fun of having more gaits than three.” In addition to trail riding, Nilla tries as many different activities with her horses as she can. “Orri and Lotta have both been 4-H horses for my daughter. I’ve participated in local dressage schooling shows and trail obstacle courses. Among my favorite activities are hunter paces, as they take a little bit of competitiveness mixed with common sense to be able to do well.”

S2SS SADDLE RAFFLE

The Leisure Committee is raffling off a Customized Sensation Ride Hybrid saddle to bring attention to the S2SS ride. “The USIHC Board wanted to recognize the large group of riders who love to ride outside of the oval track,” said committee chair Melinda Studstill. Anyone who has signed up and logged miles in this year’s S2SS Virtual Ride will be automatically entered into the raffle, and the winner will be randomly drawn after all the miles have been posted for this year. There is no special registration or entry fees involved. “I am a Sensation Ride Saddle dealer,” Melinda explained, “and the winner of the drawing will work with me to design and order their saddle. So if you haven’t yet signed up for the 2025 S2SS Ride, do it now and join the raffle—there’s still so much fun riding to do this year!”



Molly Lindemann was certified in April as a USIHC National Sport Judge B.



Julie Ferreira of Massachusetts was the April S2SS Leisure Rider of the Month. Photo by Leah Greenberger.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Melinda Studstill has been appointed to the USIHC Board of Directors to fill a vacant seat. Melinda was born in Georgia on a dairy farm, where she developed a deep affection for animals, particularly horses and dogs. She spent many years riding Morgan horses. During a trail ride in Shawnee National Forest in 1999, she discovered the Icelandic horse, a breed that would later become a significant part of her life. In 2021, Melinda acquired her first Icelandic gelding, Bolti from Harmony Icelandics, marking the beginning of a new and exciting chapter of her life. Recognizing the need for more Icelandic horses for her friends to ride, Melinda soon expanded her herd by adding three more. Her love of horses is not limited to the Icelandic horse, however; she loves all horses and owns a Kentucky Mountain Horse as well. In 2023, Melinda retired and moved from Illinois to Kentucky. Embracing her love for the equestrian lifestyle, she now enjoys the best days of her life, fully immersed in the world of horses and her herd of six. For the USIHC, Melinda will be leading the Leisure Committee and overseeing the Sea 2 Shining Sea Virtual Ride. Contact her at leisure@icelandics.org.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met by Zoom call on April 15 and May 13. Meeting minutes can be found online at <https://icelandics.org/minutes>. USIHC members are encouraged to listen in on board meetings. The agenda and information on how to connect are posted on the USIHC website.

In addition to the topics reported on above, Education Committee chair Caeli Cavanagh reported that the template for the first module, “Intro to Equine Business Management Lecture Series,” of the new USIHC education series has been completed. The Education Committee is now working on a proposal to bring to the board regarding how the modules will be distributed, paid for, and recognized by the USIHC.

Youth leader Lucy Nold reported that there were no applications for the FEIF Youth Camp that took place at Hvanneyri in Iceland in July 2025. However, there were almost 20 applications for the North American Youth Cup held in June at Harmony Icelandics in Iowa.

YOUNG LEADERS EVENT

The 2025 FEIF Young Leaders Event will be held in Denmark on Nov 21-23. “We aim to encourage young people, ages 18-26, to engage in organizational work and to inspire curiosity in a natural and reflected way,” the organizers say. “There are no prerequisites, other than a love for the Icelandic horse. You will go home with new social relations and lots of knowledge, and if you are interested in the work of FEIF, this could be a stepping stone to becoming a young member in a FEIF committee.” For info, contact catherine@feif.org.

EHN FORESIGHT STUDY

FEIF is one of the founding members of the European Horse Network (EHN), a non-profit network that unites 34 stakeholders from across the European equine sector to coordinate actions and strengthen their voice at all levels. It promotes the development of the equine sector in Europe and represents common interests to European institutions.

To create a robust strategy for ensuring that horses remain a key part of the European landscape in the years to come, EHN promoted a co-creative process to generate scenarios of the future. Note, these scenarios are not predictions or expressions of desired futures. They are thought experiments that envision how the future may plausibly develop, and how it would then impact all dimensions of the horse industry.

The scenarios were then used to create a survival strategy for EHN, regardless of what actually does happen. In our case, four scenarios were created around the two axes “sustainability” and “the social acceptability of equine activities”:

Scenario #1: A new place for horses in society. Horses are well integrated in the countryside, alongside of innovative agriculture. A pragmatic use of research and a strong implementation of welfare practices ensure the industry has a full license to operate.

Scenario #2: Horses must fight for their status. The transition to a low carbon economy due to climate change impacts food production, which becomes the priority to the detriment of horses.

Scenario #3: The horse comes last.

The industry faces strong criticism, costs to keep horses are increasing, and transport possibilities are extremely restricted.

Scenario #4: Horses for the happy few. The industry is managed by the wealthy and is marginalized. It is a very expensive leisure activity for only a small part of the population and is highly criticized by the others.

These four scenarios were built on similar exercises conducted in France, the Netherlands, and at an EHN Workshop organized in June 2023. They are extreme but possible futures. Each elaborated scenario comes with specific opportunities, risks and options.

Based on these scenarios, the EHN has carefully built its action plan for the coming years, during which specific tools will be developed, new research supported, and a strong and specific communication plan expanded.

EHN wishes to play an important role in creating a sustainable horse world where horses, humans, and the environment are all cared for. The document can be downloaded at <https://www.feif.org/2025/06/23/ehn-foresight-study-looking-forward-towards-2040/>.

BLOOD MARE INDUSTRY

Around 4,000 pregnant mares in Iceland are used for the production of PSMG (also called eCG), a fertility hormone that is mainly used for breeding pigs in Europe. Animal welfare groups within Iceland and abroad have been protesting against this practice for several years now, and this year an official complaint concerning animal cruelty was lodged with the police in Iceland.

FEIF, too, has previously spoken up against the misuse of these horses. Again, in May 2025, FEIF sent an open letter to the Icelandic Ministry of Industry, which is responsible for issuing the license to Isteka, the pharmaceutical company involved. You can download the letter at <https://www.feif.org/2025/06/02/blood-mare-industry-in-iceland/>

The EHN supports FEIF’s latest position paper condemning the so-called blood mare industry. The practice of extracting massive amounts of blood from pregnant mares for purely commercial purposes is

of ethical concern, as it often results in the mistreatment of these mares. EHN calls for clear regulations, transparency, and rigorous enforcement to ensure the welfare, good treatment, and handling of these mares, to prevent stress and injury risks. Additionally, strict rules on blood collection should be developed, based on the recommendations of the World Organisation for Animal Health. See <https://www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu/publication-category/position-statements#publications>

NEW SPORT RULE

Starting April 1, 2025, a new rule came into effect to support horse welfare in sport competitions. The FEIF Sport Committee reminds all organizers and riders that the number of tests per horse per day is limited as follows: A 5-year-old horse may start once per day. A 6-year-old horse may start 2 times per day. A 7-year-old or older horse may start 3 times per day. Please ensure compliance with these updated rules to prioritize the well-being of the horses. More information on updated rules and regulations can be found in the FEIF Rules & Regulations manual at www.feif.org/sport-dept/documents/.

JUDGING CONTROVERSY

It has been brought to FEIF’s attention that at some tournaments riders are giving organizers or judges letters from veterinarians and other professionals stating that a certain horse has undergone surgery in the mouth or another veterinary procedure. These letters request that the judges ignore it if the horse shows behaviors that might otherwise lower the mark for riding skills/connection. FEIF wants to make it clear that such letters will not be accepted and has issued the following statement: “Judges’ decisions must be made according to the FEIF Rules & Regulations and the FEIF Sport Judges Guidelines. Requests from riders, veterinarians, or anyone else for dispensation on how these rules/guidelines are applied will not be accepted.”

VIRTUAL RIDES

The new FEIF virtual ride is all about collecting kilometers with your horse, with the goal of riding the distance from the



World Championships 2025 in Birnenstorf to Landsmót 2026 at Hólar in northern Iceland. In the previous virtual rides the participants rode from their home countries to the World Championships, virtually of course. You can find more detailed information about the ride and log your kilometers at <https://www.feif.org/leisure-riding-dept/virtual-ride/>.

HORSE HISTORY CENTER

A new exhibition opened this summer at the Icelandic Horse History Center at Hólar in Hjaltadalur, in the picturesque landscape of North Iceland. Visitors are invited to learn about the colors of the Icelandic horse and the WorldFengur studbook, as well as to explore a variety of fascinating objects connected to outstanding horses and riders. The exhibition offers insight into the rich history of the Icelandic horse and its influence on the culture and daily life of the Icelandic nation in the past century. The project manager of the center is Kristín Halldórsdóttir.

GERMAN FIZO TOUR

For many years, breeders in Iceland have benefited from regional opportunities to present their horses for assessment—now Germany is following suit. From April 6–11, the Icelandic Horse Association of Germany (IPZV) organized a FIZO tour with seven stops across the country. Many breeders, some of them less well known, took the chance to showcase their horses.



The first stop was in southern Germany, followed by visits through the southwest and central regions over the next few days. The tour then moved on to the north, with the final stop in the west. Judges Þorvaldur Kristjánsson and Jens Füchtenschnieder evaluated the horses at every location. After each assessment, they made time to speak with the breeders, explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the horses based on the scores they received. Many interested spectators also followed the events with great enthusiasm.

The idea for this tour was developed last year by Jens Füchtenschnieder and Horst Gerhold (IPZV Breeding Director). The vast majority of participants—as well as other breeders—are already hoping for a repeat in 2026. The IPZV is therefore planning a follow-up tour around mid-April 2026, potentially expanding to even more locations.

50 YEARS OF FEIF'S LOGO

In 2025, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the official logo of the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations. FEIF was established in 1969 but did not have an official logo for the first six years. In 1974 the Norwegian silversmith and Icelandic horse enthusiast Inge Høivik designed the well-known symbol for the Norwegian Icelandic Horse Association (NIHF). In turn, Norway donated its symbol to FEIF, and it was adopted as the official logo in 1975.



The story begins in southern Germany around the year 800—the period we refer to as the Viking Age. Near the town of Heidesheim, a high-ranking woman was buried with a silver medallion, likely intended for use on a belt. Several hundred years later, the medallion was discovered by archaeologists and sent to the National Museum in Stuttgart. In Norway, as a young student at the School of Arts and Crafts in Oslo, Inge came across an image of the medallion in a book. The design stood out from the typical depictions of riders, which often included spears and shields. This rider was unarmed, with raised arms. The meaning of the image is unknown, but some believe it is linked to Norse mythology or Christianity and may symbolize a gesture of peace. The design has since been referred to as the “peace rider” or the “sun rider.” Read more about Inge’s story at <https://www.feif.org/2025/04/08/50-years-with-the-feiflogo/>.

BLUP UPDATED

The BLUP calculations will now include competition data from selected events, along with breeding assessments. Adding the competition data increases the accuracy of the estimated breeding values and allows for the publication of breeding values for competition traits. Read more about the new BLUP calculations in the article in this issue.

CLUB UPDATES

There are 12 Regional Clubs affiliated with the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress. To find the one nearest you, see the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org. The following clubs filed updates on their activities this quarter.



ALASKA

by Ellen Halverson

Greetings from Alaska! We all very much appreciate the summer time with our horses. AIHA members are spread out across the state, and we never have all gotten together.

However, one of our members, Janet Mulder, has been giving clinics all around Alaska. In June, Janet was in Homer; at that clinic, she reports, seven riders participated with five Icelandic horses, and all were very enthusiastic. The clinic took place at the Homer Cottonwood Equestrian Center, which was lovely, and the weather was wonderful. Janet's other clinics are in Fairbanks on July, 11-12 and in the Mat Su Valley, July 19-20. We really appreciate her sharing of her knowledge with us.

Freya Sturm was here for her first clinic of the year on May 31 to June 1, and will be back for a fall clinic Sept 5-6.

On August 23, we are having a schooling show, followed by a one-day clinic with Alexandra Montan Gray on August 24.

Misty Bohnert has been getting



Above, AIHA members Alana Wright on Rubin from Ice Horse Ranch, Jay Murray on Kolfinna frá Selfossi, Amelia Carney on Tryggur from Arctic Arrow, and Janet Mulder riding Prins from Arctic Arrow at Eklutna Lake in May. Left, Janet's new foal. Below, Stormi Nugen's new filly.



out in the community to show off her Icelandic horses. Her stallion Alfasteinn from Fitjamyri, along with her gelding "Fuzzy," participated in a reenactment on Juneteenth in Palmer; they were in the Fourth of July parade as well.

In June, Stormi Nugen welcomed a new filly, who has yet to acquire a name. Her dam is Velgja from Fitjamyri and the sire is Alfasteinn from Fitjamyri.

CASCADE

by Lisa Roland

With summer in full swing, our members have been busy with clinics, trail rides, and local parades. Barbara Harris and Lisa Roland rode in the annual Cherry Festival Parade in The Dalles, OR. It's fun to see and hear people starting to recognize the breed, the more exposure they get. More and more often we hear the question: "Is that an Icelandic?"

From Camp Wilkerson, to Stub Stewart, to Milo McIver Park, our members have been venturing out on the trails, camping or just going for day rides. Coming up in July is our annual beach ride in Washington.

Lori Birge spent a few days at Alfadans Equestrian Arts in Newberg, OR with Caeli Cavanagh and Laura Benson of Valkyrie Icelandics, where they held a Gæðingalist clinic. "Gæðingalist means beautiful and impressive riding arts," Lori said. "It can be a competition, but we were there to learn rather than to compete. The competition involves a set of exercises and figures performed in any order. The figures should improve the gaits and help balance the horse. Gæðingalist combines dressage and an artistic program performed to music. It should contain at least two speed changes, two dressage exercises, and two showing direction control. Throughout the weekend, we worked on different possible elements that we could put together and perform to music as either a single horse and rider



Cascade Club members Barbara Harris on Falki and Lisa Roland on Krakatindur taking part in the Cherry Festival Parade in Oregon.

or a pair. The last afternoon of the clinic involved everyone riding their performance for the whole group. It was interesting to watch which elements each rider chose to put together for their performance and which songs they chose. The music was varied, from classical to rock to country. It looked like everyone was having fun, both humans and horses.”

HESTAFOLK

by Lisa McKeen

April started off with our President Lauren Murphy and her gelding, Andi going to the Breed Showcase at the Spring Fair in Puyallup, WA. As spring passed into summer, we have all been riding and attending clinics when we can. Freya Sturm hosted a dressage clinic at her Vinur Farm in Trout Lake, WA in June.

We are continuing our Zoom meetings and recording exercises (see our last quarter’s update) to share with one another. Video really helps you see the reaction of

your horse to your movements, and sharing our strategies and ideas is a great way to support one another.

Now we are well into the summer’s riding. I found a great new riding area on Whidbey Island, thanks to a horsewoman I met saddle shopping. Horse people are the best!

KLETTAFJALLA

by Ellen Lichtenstein



Tilraun frá Pulu playing a patient with an eye injury at the Klettafjalla Club’s first aid clinic.

KIHC has had a busy quarter with planning for the rest of 2025 and enjoying being with each other, our horses, and fantastic visiting clinicians during the first half of the year. So far, some of our region’s highlights have included an equine first aid clinic with club president Ellen Lichtenstein’s horses playing the educational patients, an obstacle play day and overnight campout at member Cindy Loader’s farm, and a Memorial Day Weekend clinic with certified FEIF trainer Vibeke Thoresen at Gyetorp II in Cheyenne, WY. This clinic focused on recognizing and working with asymmetry in our

Left, Ljufa from Fitjamyri celebrated her 10th birthday party with Salina and Elska, both from Evans Farm. Below, attendees at Hestafolk’s dressage clinic with Freya Sturm were, left to right, Barbara Brim, Karen Crawford, Lauren Murphy, Freya, Mary Chamberlin, and Kristen Petersen.





At Gyetorp II in Wyoming, Klettafjalla Club member Stephen Pace consults with Vibeke Thoresen, a Hólar University graduate and certified FEIF trainer. Vibeke's clinic focused on recognizing and working with asymmetry in Icelandic horses.

horses, which everyone found extremely valuable. These three educational events included multiple KIHIC members and Icelandic horses playing the starring role. On top of that, we're always trail riding. Many of our members are in Iceland as we speak, so we'll certainly have more updates and pictures to share in the next issue.

NEIHC

by *Miette Jennings*

The NEIHC had a lively spring season marked by shows, clinics, and meaningful connections. As the days grew longer, members took to the trails, visited other barns, and participated in training events that sharpened their skills and brought the community together. From education to adventure, the season was filled with memorable moments for riders and horses alike.

To start the season, Nancy Rohlf, Andrea Smith, and Brigit Huwyler enjoyed a wonderful workshop in Iceland at Hestaland. Each day included lessons on their "project" horses from Guðmar Pétursson, followed by individual afternoon sessions working with the horses. By the end of the week, the riders saw noticeable improvements—the horses were more supple, relaxed, and showed better gaits. The peaceful Icelandic landscape, topped off by sightings of the

aurora borealis, made for a truly memorable and relaxing experience.

At West Wind Farms in Delhi, NY, a dedicated group of participants, including Leslie Chambers, Amy Goddard, Brigit Huwyler, and Heleen Heyning, attended a clinic led by well-respected Icelandic horse trainer Herdís Reynisdóttir (aka "Disa"). "Disa is an excellent instructor, and the shared enthusiasm among the participants is always energizing," said Leslie, who experienced

a personal highlight at the clinic. Her horse, Harpa, had never been away from home or worked in an indoor arena before, yet performed beyond expectations throughout the weekend. Leslie also praised the hospitality, adding, "I must note that the food served for our lunches was absolutely the best."

Meanwhile, in Hamilton, MA, Black Oak Stables hosted a clinic with Vibeke Thoresen—a Hólar University graduate and certified FEIF trainer. The clinic brought together riders Nancy Rohlf, Phebe Kiryk, Andrea Smith, Charity Simard, Jennifer Bergantino, Anna Wallström, Colleen Sullivan, and Cindy Tolbert for two days of hands-on instruction. "We had a great learning weekend," said Nancy. "Vibeke focused on exercises to keep our horses active and healthy, which was incredibly valuable for all of us."

Charity Simard recently completed an Advanced Pre-Certification Course in The Masterson Method, a specialized approach to equine bodywork. The course focused on evaluating biomechanical patterns and learning techniques to release tension and improve movement. "I'm excited to bring this knowledge back to our Icelandic horse community," said Charity. "It's all about strengthening the horse-rider relationship and reduc-



At West Wind Farms in New York, Herdís Reynisdóttir gave a four-day clinic in April. "Our hero, Samantha Tuttlebee (mounted) enjoyed being back in the saddle, only nine months post heart transplant surgery," said members of the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club.



Above, NEIHC member Nancy Wines-DeWan on Sinna (age 22) and a friend on Nancy's second horse Máni (32) enjoying the carriage trails at Acadia National Park in Maine. At right, the Merrimack Valley Icelandics booth at the Essex County Trail Association Expo; from left, Kate Kalan, Scott Smith, Valerie Moore, and Shelby Walker. Below, Alicia Flanigan and Fura training in Iceland; Alicia, from Fire & Ice Icelandics in Maine, is currently attending Hólar University's equestrian program in Iceland.



ing physical stress.”

Nancy Wines-DeWan took her love of trail riding to new heights—literally—by trailering two of her Icelandic horses to Acadia National Park in Maine. She spent three days exploring the scenic Carriage Trails, known for their natural beauty and perfect footing.

For Anne Owen, the season brought a heartwarming milestone: her daughter-in-law Jenn and daughter Sierra took their very first Icelandic lesson together.

At Merrimack Valley Icelandics (MVI), the season was filled with events, training opportunities, and competitions, starting with their first show in late March and continuing with a series of top-tier clinics. Among them was a well-attended two-day session with National Team member Ásta Covert, in which 12 enthusiastic riders took part. In early April, Ebba and Brynja Meehan traveled to Sólheimar Farm in Vermont for an intensive training clinic with National Team coach Olil Amble.

MVI returned to the Essex County Trail Association (ECTA) Expo in late April, with riders Shelby Walker and Scott Smith showcasing their horses Rom, Oddur, Loki, and Balthasar. Special thanks go to Kate Kalan and Valerie Moore for representing the breed at the MVI booth. Riders have also been actively preparing for the MVI/Hestaland Trek in August, and the MVI Drill Team—now 10 members strong—began rehearsals for their upcoming performance at the Topsfield Fair. June kept the momentum going with lessons, trail rides, and a fully booked clinic by FEIF trainer Vibeke Thoresen on June 9-10.

Sólheimar Farm in Tunbridge, VT kicked off its 2025 Pentathlon Series with two well-attended National Ranking shows judged by FEIF international judges, offering riders valuable experience and a strong start to the competition season. The first show, held in early May, provided a welcoming and educational atmosphere—an ideal way for many riders to ease back onto the track and start the season on a positive note. The second show, held over the summer solstice weekend, drew over 100 entries

and saw strong participation from our club members. Many thanks to Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir for her tireless work in creating a supportive show environment that showcases both the competitive spirit and strong sense of camaraderie within our community. We are looking forward to the next three shows in the series!

After completing her first year at Hólar University, Alicia Flanigan reflects on a year of growth, learning, and meaningful progress, accompanied by her two horses, Hnokki and Fura—brought to Hólar specifically to support her studies. She has spent the past year thoughtfully developing and refining their training to meet the program’s rigorous standards. “This first year has been such a learning experience. I’ve grown so much, and I’m really excited for what’s next,” Alicia shares. This summer, Alicia has returned to her position at Export-Hestar, where she plays a key role in training horses and preparing them for export. She is also organizing an upcoming “dream horse” shopping trip with a new client—a service she takes great pride in. To offer an insider’s view into the process, Alicia has been filming behind-the-scenes segments that document the preparation and scouting involved in matching riders with their ideal Icelandic horses. She also intends to compete in several events this season. “It’s going to be a full and rewarding summer—I’m looking forward to every part of it,” she adds.

Two NEIHC youth members from Vermont, Finja Meyer-Hoyt and Miette Jennings, participated in the 2025 North American Youth Cup, held June 22-29 at Harmony Icelandics in Truro, IA. During the weeklong event, they had the opportunity to learn from top trainers from across the country, including Alex Venable, Ásta Covert, Virginia Lauridsen, and Lucy Nold. The event culminated in a two-day competition judged by Will Covert. Both riders advanced their skills riding open programs—a valuable learning experience. Finja rode Ögn frá Ketilsstöðum and Miette rode Kiljan frá Korpu, and offer huge thanks to their owners for providing these incredible horses.



SIRIUS

by Janet Kuykendall

The officers decided last year that a Zoom membership would be a worthwhile expenditure of club dues dollars. Initially, the reason was to allow people to actively participate in the yearly general membership meeting. A phone call just wasn’t hacking it. Once we had Zoom, we decided, by golly, to use it. The general membership meeting was a huge success. And, as happens when you can see other people, there was a lot of discussion among the participants. That Zoom turned into another Zoom webinar, when Nancy Radebaugh suggested that her bodywork provider would be interested in being on the agenda. So, Scott Christman of Stride-Rite Specialty Bodywork was scheduled. While Scott planned on doing a live demo and taking questions, the weather did not cooperate. It’s Ohio, what can you say? So, that Zoom is on the agenda for the future.

At the general meeting, there was an in-depth discussion of liability, with regards to the club and clinics. That led to questions about personal liability. Member Patrick Neill said he learned a lot from his



insurance agent, Eric Tapp. Patrick texted Eric, and boom! We had a Zoom webinar scheduled on farm, liability, and horse mortality insurance. Eric is a lifelong horseman and realized he could provide much-needed information for other horse owners. Eric answered questions and clarified issues, and everyone learned a lot.



Gunnar, owned by Sirius Club member Nancy Radebaugh, visiting with parade participants.



Above, Sirius members Pamela Livingston with Skvetta from Clear Lake Farm (previous page, far left), Jill Schermacher looking back in Iceland, and Abbie Brock showing off her Icelandic's "party tricks" at the University of Kentucky's Ranch Horse Practice.

Complaints at the meeting then turned to those little fuzzball horses and their thick furry coats. Clipping! Why just talk about it when we could have a Zoom demonstration? Krystal Blue provided a great demonstration of how to clip an Icelandic's thick coat. She talked about clipper recommendations, types of clips, and when to clip. Her best quote was, "The difference between a good clip and a bad clip is about 10 days." She gave her horse model, Gunnar, a modified Irish clip and explained why. The video is still up on our Facebook page.

The meeting turned to fun things. Member Lindsay Gunzburger was recruited to speak about her thrilling trip to Mongolia for a trek and cultural experience. This was the most recent Zoom webinar, and left us all wishing we could hop on a plane, fly 30 hours, and have such an adventure. Lindsay and her mom have had three great horseback adventures paid for by their earnings in their Etsy shop, Mares and Minis. Lindsay and her mom are the mares; Lindsay has twin daughters, so those are the minis. They make miniature accessories for Breyer horses. As luck would have it, two of the Léttleiki stallions are Breyer models. Lindsay's trek in Iceland resulted in the purchase of her first Icelandic.

In addition to Zoom meetings, we had many other activities scheduled. But

the weather got in the way. Sadly, our Ride Like a Viking Clinic was canceled. But luckily the weather held for the Malabar/Mohican club ride. Cindy Gray, Ron and Sherry Hoover, and Nancy Radebaugh enjoyed every minute of the break in the weather.

Members Jill Schermacher and Shellie Greyhavens recently returned from an Icelandic horse trek. They had the pleasure of riding for six days at Hestaland. They chose a relax-and-ride week of lessons and trail rides with Guðmar Pétursson. Shellie says, "It was quite the adventure. The horses were great, and once we found our horse for the week, after each lesson we could see progress in our riding and in our horses. We could also do trail rides if we didn't want lessons. The last day was an all-day beach ride to an island that was so beautiful." Guðmar's wife Christina cooked some amazing meals, and everyone had a great time. They also got to meet some of the people from Tamangur in Colorado, including owner Coralie Denmeade. Jill and Shellie agree that it was a trip they'll never forget.

That leaves us looking forward to the Cattle Sorting Clinic on September 13, our Gait Clinic with Maria Octavo September 26-28, our Pine Creek ride September 12-14, and our Members' Retreat at Léttleiki October 24-26. Until next time, happy trails!



Left, Sirius Club members Shellie Greyhavens and Jill Schermacher on the trail in Iceland, and right, Pamela and Herb Livingston in Northern Michigan.

ST. SKUTLA

by Katherine Forrest

St. Skutla members Quentin Bartholomew and Katherine Forrest hauled to the Green Mountain Horse Association's Spring CTR/Endurance weekend, meeting up with Jess Haynsworth and Judson Hally and stabling a (possible record) four Icelandic horses, entered in distances ranging from 5 to 25 miles. It was a cold and rainy weekend full of challenges as well as successes—a great learning experience for all horses and riders, and a positive start to the competitive distance season. Horses Beta frá Efri-Rauðalæk, Spönn frá Efri-Rauðalæk, Gaukur frá Sveinsstöðum, and Ómur from Cornell

were breed ambassadors at GMHA, complete with Icelandic flags over their stalls.

A special shout-out to Quentin Bartholomew and Ómur from Cornell, who tackled their inaugural long haul to Vermont, slept in a horse trailer in the pouring rain, and completed 5 CTR miles of serious GHMA hills with ease. Ómur won the “cool kid” award among the four Icelandics, eating, drinking, and relaxing like he was born to travel to competitive rides. He is on his way to becoming an accomplished distance horse.

St. Skutla member Quentin Bartholomew (left), with Jess Haynsworth at the GMHA endurance ride. Photo by Nick Goldsmith.



TOPPUR

by Brandie Gean

The Toppur Icelandic Horse Club was abuzz with excitement from June 9-15, hosting an extended week packed with events. Our host Harmony Icelandics spearheaded the week, bringing together a Breeding Assessment, a Young Horse Evaluation, and a National Ranking Show, all set against Harmony's breathtaking backdrop of over 1,000 acres of trails and natural beauty. This wasn't just a show; it was a true Icelandic horse experience.

On June 11-12, breeders had the chance to present their horses for evaluation, contributing to the future of the Icelandic horse breed. Following this, on June 12, the

Young Horse Assessment provided a valuable platform for assessing the potential of the next generation of Icelandic horses. Adding an educational component to the week, the USIHC Breeding Seminar took place on June 13. This seminar offered attendees a deeper understanding of breeding practices, genetic considerations, and the standards that define the Icelandic horse.

The grand finale of the week was the Toppur National Ranking and Fun Show, sponsored by the club on June 14-15. Riders and horses showcased their skills in various disciplines, vying for national rankings while also enjoying the camaraderie and spirit of a fun show. We even had a costume contest for the kids to dress up with their horses



Victoria Halstead riding Gosi frá Lambastöðum in the costume class. Photo by Brandie Gean.



Svartigaldur from Beat N' Branch, presented by Carrie Lyons Brandt. Read more about the Toppur Breeding Show in the next article in this issue. Photo by Virginia Lauridsen.

and show off their talents. The stunning trails and natural surroundings of Harmony Icelandics provided the perfect setting for both competitive and leisurely rides, truly highlighting the versatility and joy of these unique horses.

Harmony Icelandics once again proved to be a premier destination for Icelandic horse events, offering a comprehensive and engaging week for breeders, riders, and enthusiasts alike. Toppur is grateful to have such a wonderful place to host the show! The combination of assessments, seminars, and competitions, all set within such a beautiful natural environment, made for an unforgettable experience.

We look forward to a summer filled with trail rides and time enjoying our horses with our Toppur friends. We have several fall events coming up, including an orienteering ride and a Working Equitation Clinic.

BREEDING ON THE RISE

by Virginia Lauridsen



We recently completed an official FEIF Breeding Assessment at my farm, Harmony Icelandics in Truro, Iowa, and it was an unqualified success! Although there were only four stallions for full official assessment, they were all North American bred, they were all under the age of 10, and all received first prize scores for conformation. This tells me that we are heading in the right direction.

One of the biggest challenges for



growing our community is the price of importing a horse. Last year it cost about \$7,500 to get a horse from Iceland to the central U.S. That makes the total price of an imported Icelandic horse comparatively higher than a horse of most other breeds. However, it is far better to pay more for a well-bred and well-trained horse than to find yourself owning something you can't ride!

THE GOAL

A well-bred horse with good conformation is easier to train and more comfortable to ride. It is understandable that if the horse's body has good conformation, good movement is easier. Of course, good breeding lines do not guarantee excellence, but the odds are much greater. Every trainer will tell you that the best sport horses are also the best leisure horses. Truthfully, we are one community.

Growing a North American community of breeders who are focused on breeding Icelandic horses with a good mind, a calm demeanor, quality movements, and excellent health is a boon to all Icelandic horse owners. Research tells us that domestic-bred animals have less incidence of summer eczema, and the issues associated with acclimating to new and drastically different surroundings are mostly eliminated.

The key to this endeavor is elevating

Four North American-bred stallions were evaluated at the FEIF Breeding Assessment in Iowa in June. Left to right, Fálki from Red Feather (US2016105130), Svartigaldur from Beat N' Branch (US2020105620), judge Elisabeth Jansen, organizer Virginia Lauridsen, and judge Elsa Hreggviðsdóttir Mandal, Kvíkur from Beat N' Branch (US2019105421), and Valinn from Vindsdalur (CA2019102742). Below left, owner Ron Hoover on Reserve Champion Svartigaldur with head judge Elisabeth Jansen; at right, owner Sherry Hoover on Champion Kvíkur from Beat N' Branch.





Trainer Carrie Lyons Brandt posing Valinn from Vindsdalur for the conformation judging portion of the breeding assessment. Valinn is bred and owned by Lisi Ohm. Photo by Katie Livingood.

the quality of breeding stock in the United States, and to assessing that breeding stock to ensure that we are improving with each successive generation. The stallions shown this year have great potential, but we also need great mares. In fact, many breeding experts would argue that the mare is more important. The stallion and the mare each contribute half of the foal's genetic material, but the mare alone is responsible for the mitochondrial DNA and the microbiome.

ASSESSMENTS

When I began my role as Breeding Committee chair, official FEIF breeding assessments were at an all-time low. In fact, there were several years when there was not even one assessment in the U.S. People began to view assessing their breeding horses as unnecessary, frightening, and expensive. Owners did not want their scores entered into the Worldfengur database. However, that very database is an invaluable resource for every Icelandic horse owner, and unless we have data on North American horses entered, it is not as useful.

Although the entry fees are not prohibitively expensive, it can take years to properly prepare a horse for a breeding assessment. Additionally, many owners choose to hire a professional rider to show the horse. That is not a requirement, though. Olil Amble, our National Team trainer, says, "If you are good enough to train your horse, you are good enough to show your horse." Most breeding assessments in the U.S. also offer "mock assessments" for owners who want to get an idea of their horse's potential, but do

not feel adequately prepared for a full FEIF assessment. The horse is assessed in the same way, but no scores are entered into Worldfengur.

It is true that breeding assessments can be daunting. However, they can also be fun! They are always educational and are essential for helping breeders develop a successful breeding program. If your horse does not get the scores you hope for, you can learn from the judges how to improve. In Iceland, breeding horses are evaluated year after year to improve their scores with training and maturity. I have seen some horses assessed seven times!

There are fewer than 30 FEIF breeding judges in the world. They are all highly knowledgeable and eager to help us improve our standards here in the U.S. I believe we are heading in the right direction. I hope that other breeders will consider assessing their horses and will join the warm camaraderie and support of others in the community at a breeding horse assessment next year.



Above, Kvikur from Beat N' Branch shows his flying pace, ridden by trainer Terral Hill. Below, Falki from Red Feather, owned by Diane Graves, shows an elevated canter, as ridden by trainer Caeli Cavanagh. Photos by Diane Graves.

THE NEW BLUP SYSTEM

by Þorvaldur Árnason, Gísli Guðjónsson, and Þorvaldur Kristjánsson

Editor's note: One of the online tools FEIF offers to Icelandic horse breeders through the international registry, WorldFengur, is the BLUP, or Best Linear Unbiased Prediction score. BLUP is an algorithm based on a horse's genetic lineage. A horse's BLUP score can be used effectively to select the best mate to pair with your mare or stallion in order to reach your breeding goals.

In April of this year competition results were incorporated into the BLUP calculations for Icelandic horses and published in WorldFengur. Until now, the calculations have been based solely on breeding assessments, but from now on, they will include competition results from selected events in sport and gæðingakeppni competitions as well.

Below are the key points, with more detailed explanations in the accompanying text:

In the updated BLUP calculations, data from sport and gæðingakeppni competitions will be used alongside breeding assessments. Competition data from World Ranking events, major gæðingakeppni competitions, and pace competitions in adult classes from 2006 will be included. Results from the following competition tests will be used: Tölt (T1, T3, T2, and T4); Four gaits (V1, V2, and B-class); Five gaits (F1, F2, and A-class); Pace tests (250-meter pace, 100-meter pace, and pace test). The genetic correlation between similar tests, such as T1 and T2 or four-gait and B-class, is extremely high, therefore these tests are combined into the four above-mentioned competition traits.

Adding the competition data to the BLUP calculations increases the accuracy of the estimated breeding values and allows for the publication of breeding values for competition traits. More extensive data equals greater accuracy of the breeding values. The accuracy of the new competition traits will be published, but it is always important to consider this accuracy when interpreting BLUP values. The heritability of the competition traits ranges from 0.27 to 0.29, with a very high genetic correlation between them and the traits assessed



How do you breed a spectacular foal? BLUP is one tool available through the international WorldFengur database. Shown here, Grímur from Sand Meadow (Sire: Strákur frá Vatnsleysu, Dam: Herborg frá Oddhóli). Photo by Andrea Barber.

in breeding assessments.

The heritability of the competition traits is lower than that of breeding assessments (which is about 0.4), so the primary emphasis will remain on breeding assessments in the BLUP calculations. Breeding assessments are strong predictors of competition success and provide valuable insights into the potential use of assessed horses in breeding for competition.

BACKGROUND

This innovation is based on the doctoral thesis of Elsa Albertsdóttir from 2010, where she demonstrated a strong genetic correlation between the traits assessed at breeding shows and competition results. At the end of 2022, Þorvaldur Árnason and

Gísli Guðjónsson updated these findings. They reassessed the heritability of competition traits and their genetic correlation with breeding assessment traits.

Heritability indicates the extent to which traits are determined by genetics; both breeding assessment and competition traits are influenced by both genetic and environmental factors. Heritability shows how much the assessments reveal about the genetic value of a horse; the higher the heritability, the more informative the assessments are about genetic potential.

The heritability of combined competition traits ranges from 0.27 to 0.29, which is lower than the heritability of the breeding assessments (which is about 0.4). This means that while competition traits help evaluate breeding potential, greater emphasis will be placed on breeding assessments in the BLUP calculations.

Genetic correlation between two traits indicates how much they are influenced by the same genes. The higher the correlation, the more the traits are influenced by the same genetic makeup.

When examining the genetic correlation between competition tests and breeding assessment traits (see the table), it becomes clear that the correlation is extremely high between comparable traits. For example, there is a 93% genetic correlation between tölt in breeding assessments and tölt competition tests.

Moreover, there is a 92% genetic correlation between pace in breeding assessments and pace competition tests. The genetic correlation between general impression at breeding assessments and oval track competition tests is high, confirming that this trait strongly predicts competition performance on the oval track.

This demonstrates the significant benefits of incorporating competition data into the BLUP evaluations. This additional information on the traits included in the breeding goal for the Icelandic horse will enhance the current BLUP calculations.

USING THE DATA

The updated BLUP values for all conformation and performance traits, height

at withers, total score, total score without pace, and competition traits, will be based on data from breeding assessments and the specified competition events.

For example, when evaluating the BLUP value for tölt for an individual, data from its own breeding assessment, assessments of parents/ancestors and offspring, and information from related traits (due to genetic correlation) are used. These related traits include traits evaluated at breeding assessments (such as trot and pace) and the competition traits incorporated into the BLUP evaluation. Thus, competition traits are not weighted separately, but are integrated into the system based on their genetic correlation with conformation and riding ability traits.

In breeding evaluations, only one breeding assessment is used for each horse—the highest age-adjusted score. However, all of an individual horse's competition scores will be used, increasing accuracy with the number of recorded competition results. The accuracy of BLUP values for competition traits in horses with results from at least four to five competitions becomes nearly comparable to the accuracy of one breeding assessment, despite the lower heritability of individual competition scores.

Additionally, competition traits will be included in the Stallion Selection and Virtual Mate Selection tools in WorldFengur, allowing stallions to be ranked based on their BLUP values for specific compe-



Two full siblings sired by Strákur frá Vatnsleysu on Herborg frá Oddhóli: At top is Herborg's 2025 foal, Gæska from Sand Meadow; below is her foal from 2024, Soley from Sand Meadow. Photos by Andrea Barber.

tion traits. This is particularly beneficial for breeders focusing on producing top competition horses.

ATTENDANCE

The fact that a breeding horse produces offspring that are likely to attend a competition or be presented at a breeding assessment provides valuable insight into its overall quality. This information strengthens breeding decisions and has

been successfully used in the breeding of racehorses.

In the current BLUP calculations, the trait "attendance at breeding assessments" is only defined for mares. However, this trait will apply to both sexes in the updated BLUP values and will be based on attendance at both breeding assessments and/or competitions.

When this value is calculated, all horses aged six years and older will receive an attendance record (0 = no attendance, 1 = attendance), influencing their BLUP values and that of related horses. The impact varies for different traits, depending on the genetic correlation with the attendance trait.

Attendance has a heritability of 0.4 and is most strongly correlated with the traits rideability, general impression, tölt, trot, neck-withers-shoulders, and gallop (correlations of 0.39 to 0.56). The genetic correlation between attendance and competition traits is 0.24. Research has shown that the attendance trait helps correct for selection bias, which could otherwise skew the BLUP values.

ACCURACY

The accuracy of the updated BLUP values increases by an average of 10% when competition data is included. Incorporating the competition data significantly enhances the information about the quality of the horses.

The competition dataset currently includes 121,938 records for a total of 19,921 horses. The increase in accuracy is most significant for horses with limited existing





The breeding mare Lögga frá Laufhóli and her foal Sprækur from Sand Meadow. The sire was Svall frá Tjörn. Photo by Andrea Barber.

data. For stallions with many offspring, for example, the BLUP values change very little with the addition of competition data.

Regarding the ranking of horses in the new evaluation, compared to the current one, the correlation is extremely high (99%). The following changes in total score were observed:

- 2.97% of horses increased by ≥ 5 points
- 0.39% increased by ≥ 10 points
- 0.014% increased by ≥ 15 points
- 2.05% of horses decreased by ≥ 5 points
- 0.001% decreased by ≥ 10 points
- 0% decreased by ≥ 15 points

Breeding assessments:	Tölt (comp.):	Four-gait (comp.):	Five-gait (comp.):	Pace (comp.):
Tölt	0.93	0.90	0.85	0.36
Trot	0.81	0.90	0.78	0.28
Pace ≥ 5.5	0.35	0.22	0.79	0.92
Gallop	0.83	0.88	0.75	0.23
General impression	0.95	0.93	0.91	0.42
Rideability	0.90	0.88	0.91	0.71
Walk	0.19	0.53	0.47	0.06
Slow tölt	0.96	0.95	0.82	0.17
Canter	0.76	0.86	0.60	-0.13

This table shows the genetic correlation between traits scored in competition (comp.) and the same traits scored in breeding assessments. Adding the competition scores increases the accuracy of BLUP significantly for horses with limited existing data.

If the variance of the updated BLUP values is examined, it is a little bit less than before, which is solely due to how the updated BLUP values are scaled. Because of this, most horses get a slightly lower BLUP value for the total score in the new evaluation (by about 2-3 points).

BENEFITS

The benefits of incorporating competition results into the BLUP calculations are significant:

- Valuable additional information on gaiting ability, temperament, and general rideability.
- More data on a more significant number of horses increases the accuracy of the BLUP values.
- More valuable insights for the breeding of competition horses.
- Future possibilities of adding more competition tests to cover a broader range of horse types.
- Future potential to assess longevity of Icelandic horses based on competition data.

ABOUT

Elsa Albertsdóttir, PhD, is project manager at the Agricultural University of Iceland and in charge of genetic evaluation and research at the Farmers' Association of Iceland. Her doctoral thesis, "Integrated genetic evaluation of breeding field test traits, competition traits, and test status in Icelandic horses," from November 2010, is published here: <https://skemman.is/bitstream/1946/10835/1/elsa%20alb.%20doktorsritgerd.pdf>. Geneticist Þorvaldur Árnason, PhD, developed the first BLUP method for Icelandic horses and has worked as a consultant in Icelandic horse breeding since 1986. Þorvaldur Kristjánsson, PhD, is the government horsebreeding advisor at Iceland's Agricultural Advisory Center. Gísli Guðjónsson worked on this project as a master's student at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. This article is reprinted from the FEIF website at https://www.feiffengur.com/documents/BLUP_article_2025.docx.pdf.

SPOTLIGHT ON SÓLHEIMAR

by Carol Andrew

Sólheimar Farm sits in the middle of the beautiful Green Mountains of Vermont. The farm is run by Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir, who has been showing, breeding, importing, and selling Icelandic horses there for more than 20 years.

Sigrún says horses have always been her passion. She grew up with horses in Iceland and, by report, her first word was “horse”; she was certifiably “horse crazy” by age two. Her dad’s father had a friend with a large gray horse, and Sigrún was allowed to ride around the barn while her dad and his friend talked. She has been a professional trainer since age 12.

Today, Sigrún enjoys competing and hosts National Ranking competitions, as well as fun shows, several times each year. In 2025, she held five National Ranking shows, with the last scheduled for September 27-28. As of this writing, she and her competition horse Markús from Sun Crest Farm are ranked first in the US in T3 (Group Open Tölt), with an average score of 7.10. They rank second in V2 (Group Open Four Gait), with a score of 6.50.

At Sólheimar, Sigrún has three first-prize stallions, two of whom are actively available for breeding; she does not engage in artificial insemination. Her famous chestnut stallion, Parker frá Sólheimum (US1998103222), has been retired. Ljósberi frá Efra-Langholti (US2018106056) is a 15-hand homozygous bay dun pinto with scores of 8.56 for conformation (plus 9.5 for mane and tail) and 8.05 for rideability. He is a very calm and easy horse, Sigrún says, who anyone can ride. Her third stallion, the black Hringur frá Kommu (US2018105942), is her up-and-coming competition horse. He has “amazing tölt,” she says, and is “incredibly fun to ride. He is responsive and wants to please the rider. He has the best temperament you can ask for—you forget he is a stallion.” Hringur scored 8.28 for conformation and 8.26 for rideability; since he is a four-gaiter, his ridden scores convert to 8.85 without pace.

In terms of importing, in 2020 (her peak year) Sigrún imported and sold 68 horses. Over the last five years, she



Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir (right) and her children Kamilla and Tristan at the entrance to Sólheimar Farm in Vermont.

has imported 171 horses and expects more horses in the fall of this year. This represents one third of all the horses entering the US from Iceland in the last five years. Her next shipment is in September and includes a first-prize stallion which is already sold.

Overall, Sigrún says, she prioritizes her children, staying healthy, and enjoying her friendly community in Vermont and the good people who are “part of the Sólheimar family.” Her daughter, Kamilla, is also connected to horses and is joining in competitions at the farm now. She currently ranks second in the US in V6 (Youth Four Gait), with a score of 6.30, and third in T8 (Youth Tölt), also with a 6.30. Sigrún’s son, Tristan, also rides, but does not enjoy showing in the same way as his sister. In addition to her equine business, Sigrún breeds Cavalier King Charles spaniels from her AKC champion dogs.

THE FARM

Sólheimar encompasses 25 acres of grazeable land, which Sigrún has divided into smaller plots of one to two acres. At any given time, she limits the number of horses at her farm to 23 at the most. With the help of her interns, she uses a four-wheeler to herd horses into the various areas for grazing, and then back into their “diet pens,” so that none of them become obese—which is a fairly common concern

on farms with excellent pasture, like she has in Vermont.

In addition to having a competition track, Sólheimar is attached to a network of trails. There are hundreds of miles of riding trails in this part of Vermont, she explains, which can be used from June (after mud-season) until November (deer season). Sigrún uses the trails extensively when training horses and takes clients on them for trail lessons. At other times of the year, or for specific training purposes, Sigrún uses the dirt roads of the town, many of which are hilly and provide good conditioning rides for the horses.

Sigrún’s barn has 16 stalls and is attached to an indoor arena of 60 by 80 feet in size. In this indoor arena, she trains the imported horses when they arrive in the US, so that she gets to know them very well and can make sure their transition to their new owners is as smooth as possible. She also trains the new imports on the roads around her farm, based on her “pre-knowledge” of their needs and characters from her contacts in Iceland. Sigrún is a certified Centered Riding Instructor and, in the past, has given many Centered Riding clinics in her own arena and around the country. Now she has clients in training all year around, filling the majority of the lesson spots that she has available. She gives priority to the new owners of the horses she imports, rather



Views of Sólheimar, or “Home of the Sun”: Kamilla and Erpur, the oval track, Sigrún showing Markús, the family greeting the stallion Parker, and the “diet pens.”

than offering riding lessons on a stable of available school horses. She dedicates her time to these clients and offers training specific to the horses that she imports, working with each horse-rider pair to ensure that they will have the best experience possible.

THE SECRET TO HER SUCCESS

Sigrún sees the heart of her business as training both people and horses together for the best possible outcome. She wants to have “the time and energy to make each journey the best it can be.”

She typically limits the number of horses she will import at one time, because she insists on bringing in only calm and well-trained horses. She works closely with breeders in Iceland and prides herself on finding the best horse for each person who comes to her for help in selecting a horse. She believes in matching horses to people carefully, based on behavior and safety as her main criteria, along with good breeding lines.

To successfully match horses and people, Sigrún says, she relies on “a special system” that she has developed over many years. She began sending horses to the US in 1995. Since then, she has studied the US market and has developed a system that seems to produce horses that “anyone can ride.” These are horses with a calm nature, who are brave and rational, but also have smooth gaits.

To find these special horses, Sigrún puts every horse she is considering importing through a series of tests, based on what is likely to upset a horse and what the potential owner indicates will be the environment and activities in the horse’s new home. She and her colleagues in Iceland produce videos of the horses, and she chooses ones that freeze, rather than run or act out, when something unexpected occurs.

Once a horse has been imported to the US, it then stays at Sólheimar until it is acclimated and receives further training specific to the needs of the new rider. Among other things, she exposes the horses to vehicles of various sorts, noisy chainsaws, and neighbors with fireworks.

Sigrún also sells tack and arranges transport, as needed, to make things as easy as possible for the horse and for its new owners. She provides access to her help for the life of the horse.

She admits she has had some unusual requests over the years, such as “a blue-eyed Cremello” which was “kid safe.” There were only three of this type of Icelandic horse registered in World Fengur when the request was made, and the horse was meant for a nine-year-old child. But Sigrún did, indeed, find an appropriate horse, and the child was easily able to ride it when it arrived, after a few lessons.

HER PHILOSOPHY

Sigrún believes in honesty and service—and in making dreams come true. Striking a balance between her horse business and the needs of her two children is essential to her, as is maintaining a happy environment and positive energy. Therefore, she does not keep so many horses on the farm that she cannot give each one her full attention.

She knows that each horse needs a different training schedule so that it can meet the needs of its rider, whether it is for endurance riding, dressage, show riding and competitions, or just riding around in the woods. She does not believe in placing demands on the animal which will be unnecessary for the person she is training the horse for, but if she notices that a trail horse is not limber, for example, she will suggest some dressage-type activities to help with the bodywork for that horse.

She considers the well-being of the individual horse, regardless of what others might say. For example, some people ask, “Will I ruin my horse if I only tölt?” Sigrún says no. “What if I can only ride twice a week?” That can also work. You can use a western saddle, if that is what you want, she tells her clients, as long as it fits the horse and doesn’t lead to chafing or injury. The horse can be barefoot, as long as it isn’t rid-

den in rocky areas. If a horse’s tölt becomes pacey, but both rider and horse are happy, it’s not a problem. If the pacey horse seems uncomfortable, however, she can help the rider fix what’s causing the stiffness with the right exercises.

There is often pressure in the Icelandic horse world for show training and appearances, Sigrún says. She believes “you ride for you.” If what you are doing is comfortable for you and for the horse, it is the right thing. “Not every person is an NBA all-star,” she says, “and not every horse is meant to be in competition. Each horse has its own temperament and its own needs. Each rider needs to be educated about what they are doing, so that they can help their horse to be the best it can be.” If it is necessary for that horse to walk all the time, that is what the rider needs to understand—as well as learning possibilities to help the horse and the rider to improve.

Sigrún concludes, “The Icelandic horse world in the US is a very small community, and therefore we need to work together. Leave ambition on the sidelines. We all want a positive and uplifting community that is a happy place for both people and horses. In your riding life, make sure that you are having fun and, if you are not having fun, don’t do it. Don’t feel pressured into doing something that is too difficult for you or your horse. Just do what makes you and your horse and your family happy.”

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A view of Sigrún’s house and the Sólheimar stable, indoor arena, and outdoor run-in shelters in a typical Vermont winter. (Notice the kids’ treehouse behind the main house.)

RIDING PSYCHOLOGY

by Nicki Esdom

On May 10, the fourth and final webinar in the 2025 Virtual Education series sponsored by the USIHC Education Committee was held, postponed from April 19. It was an excellent interactive session with Jen Verharen. A coach for equestrians and general aspects of life both in and out of the saddle, Jen has a background in psychology and is a dressage rider and trainer. For the past 20 years, she has specialized in helping riders overcome their mental and emotional blocks and create a solid partnership and joyful connection with their horse. She is currently coaching members of the USIHC National Team. She found in her practice that only about 20 percent of riding problems are mental; the rest are emotional and physical, connected to our own nervous system. In the webinar Jen explained why and how, and provided successful strategies for success.

First, Jen asked the audience about their own riding challenges. One woman talked about getting ready for a hunter pace, another about riding on the trail on an overreactive horse, yet another about going away from home to a clinic. An instructor wanted to know how to correctly interpret her students' fears in order to know whether to work through them or have the students dismount.

Jen explained that we are fight or flight animals sitting on large fight or flight animals. Our nervous system recognizes this as inherently dangerous. It triggers our sympathetic nervous system, the one in charge when we are stressed and fearful. We act instinctively. We don't think logically, but have habitual reactions. This state becomes a vicious cycle affecting our horse: Our mind triggers a fearful emotion, which in turn triggers a physical response like tension, increased heartbeat, and shallow breathing. This is felt by the horse, and he in turn becomes tense, fearful and less responsive.

We need strategies to change from a sympathetic state to a parasympathetic state in our nervous system. This is characterized by feeling relaxed, calm, responsive, breathing, and thinking. We can act intentionally, and a state known as "in the zone" or "flow" is possible. "Being in the zone" is a dimension of human experience shared universally. Its characteristics include



Jen Verharen, a mindset and performance coach for equestrians, spoke on "Riding Psychology on the Trail and the Track" in the final webinar of the USIHC's 2025 Virtual Education Series.

deep concentration, highly efficient performance, emotional buoyancy, a heightened sense of mastery, a lack of self-consciousness, and self-transcendence.

Using the example of the overreactive horse on the trail, whose unpredictable reactions to shadows and small items put his rider on edge, Jen counseled this: Since she could not change the circumstances, the rider should focus on changing her thoughts first. Fear lives in the past or in the

future. She should not say to the horse, "There is nothing to be afraid of"! This is like telling someone not to think about a pink elephant! Instead, she should tell the horse, "I've got you," or "Let's do this together," which puts her in the moment and gives her a feeling of competence. This can then also be expressed physically, by relaxing her legs and arms, sitting up straight, and breathing deeply.

STRATEGIES

Here are Jen's strategies for improving confidence, connection with the horse, and performance in the saddle.

Know your big "why." To the question of why do we spend so much time, money, and effort on horses and riding, the audience responded with "addiction," "therapy," "partnership," and "peace." It is important to have a clear understanding of our purpose and well worth the time to think about it and write it down. Athletes who have a clear understanding of their purpose perform better than those who don't.

Set a clear, powerful goal. Here, Jen used the example of the rider going to a clinic. Her goal should not be "my horse will behave perfectly and everyone will think I am cool," but rather "I have fun, I use all my skills, I support my horse." Note that the goal is stated in the present or past tense. It contains an intention and measurable result. It inspires a visceral/emotional response and uses meaningful descriptive language. It is concise. It does not reference a past or current state (more, better, lose, gain, improved...). It contains a time reference. The number one performance challenge are ANTS: Automatic Negative Thoughts. Having a well thought out goal will help keep those in check.

Use mantra magic. A mantra can be a word, a phrase, or a line from a song and should inspire an emotional response. It is not an affirmation or a directive, like "I am a good rider" or "keep my heels down." Jen used the example of one of her students. She thought about the mantra "like a duck," with the image of all tension and stimulation sliding off her like water drops from a duck's plumage during her working equitation rides on her temperamental horse.

Promote your inner coach. Fire your inner critic! We all know that one: It says you are not good enough, not ready, you will make a fool of yourself, everyone else thinks... Your inner coach's voice, however, is you. It's the voice of your dreams, your wisdom, your authentic self, and your deepest self-regard. Your inner coach reminds you about your vision and your goals, asks what is really true, reminds you that you're okay, has a growth mindset vs. a fixed mindset, has a calm, committed tone, and knows your strengths.

Know how to interpret your fear.



Only about 20 percent of riding problems are mental, says Jen Verharen: the rest are emotional and physical, connected to our own nervous system.

Jen uses a concept from "Be Still and Get Going" by Rabbi Alan Lew: Red light fear (Pachad) versus green light fear (Yirah). Red light fear is projected or imagined fear. It is astounding how often such fears become the organizing principles of our lives and how much they close us off from the world. Green light fear is a very different kind of fear. It is the fear that overcomes us when we suddenly find ourselves in possession of considerably more energy than we are used to, inhabiting a larger space than we are used to inhabiting. Both fears trigger a sympathetic response. It is up to you to figure out whether to go forward or to change the plan. An approaching thunderstorm could be a real danger, while cantering up a hill is rather a slow expansion of our comfort zone.

Master mental rehearsal. Jen used the example of the rider preparing for a hunter pace. She counseled practicing a mental rehearsal in great detail, including how she feels and breathes. It is a good idea to practice visualizing when all goes well, but also when things are not perfect and how to face a challenge toward a good outcome.

EMOTIONS

Emotions are meant to move, Jen reminded us. It is our responsibility to be as emotionally supple as we expect our horses to be physically supple. The steps for processing emotion are:

- Name it.
- Where on the fear scale are you?
- Where in your body is it?
- What is the sensation of it?
- Breathe and repeat. Your emotions

will move as you become an observer, not a victim.

We can come at it from another angle: "Our bodies change our minds, and our minds can change our behavior, and our behavior can change our outcomes" (from "Presence" by Amy Cuddy). Breathing and changing our posture will change our emotions. Hunching over results in a lack of confidence, whereas an open, erect posture results in increased confidence and a positive outcome.

By retraining your mind, your emotions, and your body, you can change your nervous system from a fearful, tense, sympathetic state into a confident, calm, parasympathetic state. Your horse will respond in kind!

To learn more go to jenverharen.com

PLAYING VIKING

by Dave Loftness and photos by Nadia Honary-Satriano

Icelandic horse enthusiasts understand our horses are curious and willing to try almost anything. The enthusiasts themselves are often very helpful and encouraging. Many activities that Icelandic horses take part in have been outlined in the *Quarterly*, in articles and club updates. In Issue One of this year, for example, the Sirius Club told of the Archers of Arvak and their adventures demonstrating mounted archery at the last two Fenrir Viking Festivals in Kentucky. One of the archers was also featured on the cover of Issue One 2024.

That got me thinking about our own involvement with Viking festivals. These festivals are popular in many countries, and Viking Age reenactment groups seem to have increased in number after the successful “Vikings” TV series. Our involvement began in 2021, when my wife Eve connected with a work colleague who is part of the Viking Encampment reenactment troupe and coordinated with a subset of their group, Northstar Vikings, to visit our barn for an early spring photo shoot with our horses. The troupe closed the day with an authentic camp setup and meal preparation. That summer, they participated in the Flugnir Icelandic Horse breed demonstration at the Minnesota Horse Expo, portraying a holmgang (or



Members of the Northstar Vikings (known on Facebook as The Norðrlönd Viking) reenactment troupe visit with Dave and Eve Loftness's Icelandic horses to get a better idea of how Vikings interacted with their mounts and to plan their demos at the Viking Festival in Minnesota.

duel) with members of the local Sons of Norway group. We had members of the group return for a late fall 2022 photo session, which coincided with the first day of snow for the year.

Eve and I presented the Icelandic horse at the Crow Wing County Viking Festival in Minnesota the last two summers, although we were more breed ambassadors in “modern kitting,” and not reenactors. This event was organized and sponsored by the Sons of Norway Sagatun Lodge of Brainerd, MN. This fall

we've been asked to present our horses at the Viking Fest just south of Minneapolis (<https://vikingfest.com/>), billed as the country's largest Viking festival, and are working on our authentic kits/apparel as I write this, in addition to practicing activities with our horses.

As part of our presentations at the previous festivals, we tried to inform attendees on how the Icelandic horse fit into the lives of “Vikings,” relaying that not all Scandinavians were Vikings and the Icelandic horse was a valuable part of daily life. We offered a complimentary contrast to our friend Heike Fischer's Norwegian Fjord horses, showing the difference in gaits and conformation between the two breeds. We had our horses in a round pen in the pavilion, allowing for up close interactions, and answered many questions, not unlike at a county fair or expo.

Since the foremost event at these Viking festivals seems to be battle reenactments, we were often asked how Viking horses, and particularly the Icelandic horses, were utilized in battle. Often it was the reenactors themselves asking this question!

Our short answer has always been that horses were too valuable to be possibly injured or lost in battle. But to us this doesn't seem explanatory enough. The use of horses may have changed



“Since the foremost event at Viking festivals seems to be battle reenactments,” Dave says, “we are often asked how Icelandic horses were utilized in battle. Our short answer has always been that they were too valuable to be possibly injured.”

over time, while for overseas conquests it would be difficult to give up warship space for horses when rowing warriors were more important. We've tried doing some research and noticed that even an annual Viking festival in Iceland doesn't include horses. We thought these questions could be better answered by members of the Icelandic horse community!

WHAT'S A VIKING?

First, a useful definition of "Viking" and the "Viking Age." Scandinavians, or Norse peoples, were predominantly seafarers who were attracted to the wealth in other lands, particularly the fortunes held by mostly defenseless monastic communities. They left their home shores to raid, trade, and ultimately settle in these more hospitable territories.

I asked Nancy Marie Brown, who in addition to editing the *Quarterly* for the USIHC has published several books on the Icelandic sagas and the Viking Age, several questions and she provided some clarity: "The word 'Viking,'" she said, "does come from the Viking Age and means a raider or trader—or simply a person who hangs around in the 'vik' or bay, so a seafarer. It was also used as a verb, to 'go viking,' which meant to go raiding." Nancy notes that the term "Viking Age" does not encompass everyone, just as the term "Jazz Age" doesn't mean everyone was a jazz musician!

For English speakers, the Viking Age is generally dated from June 793 to September 1066, beginning with the



The Viking Age is generally dated from 793 to 1066, though raiding began decades before and continued for centuries. The Viking world stretched from Greenland to Kiev. Most horses at that time were about the size of the Icelandic horse, though not all of them could tölt.

raid on the monastery at Lindisfarne and concluding with the death of Norwegian king Harald Hardrada at the battle of Stamford Bridge, both events taking place in England. However, scholars don't all agree with these specific dates, as evidence of raiding began decades (or even centuries) before and continued for centuries later, while Viking settlements stretched from Greenland in the west to Kiev in the east. Viking assimilation with the European kingdoms helped shaped our language and history (consider our names for the days of the week, for example).

WAR HORSES?

So where does the horse fit into the Viking escapades? When I asked Chris Marks of the Archers of Arvak the basic question of how horses were used in battle, her response paralleled the conventional wisdom that Vikings did not really use horses as war animals—they preferred fighting on foot. They did, however, employ them to transport goods and men to the battlefield. Horses were quite valuable and Viking ships were not really designed to haul them around. It's possible they might have done some hunting of large game while mounted, but they did not field cavalry.

Nancy's thoughts on the question were similar. Based on her reading of the sagas, she agreed that horses were crucial in getting to the battlefield, carrying provisions, weapons and shields, and for escaping from the battlefield. But horses were not used in the actual fighting. They were put out to pasture or kept in a corral. Sometimes people were designated to stay with and protect the horses during a battle. Other sources indicate the Vikings would appropriate horses from villages as part of their conquests.

Nancy provided some context about horses in battles from the *Sturlunga Saga*, which is the saga she happened to be studying when I approached her. The events these episodes describe are from the 13th century (so technically not the Viking Age), but were scribed at the same



Vikings did not use horses as war animals—they preferred fighting on foot. They did, however, employ them to transport warriors to the battlefield. Often someone was designated to stay with and protect the horses during the battle.



Personal wealth played a large part in determining a Viking's kit. Thorleif, says one saga, "bought the best horse he could get, along with an elaborate, painted saddle. He carried an ornamented sword, a gold-inlaid spear, and a dark-blue, heavily gilded shield. All his clothes were of the very finest quality."

time as the other sagas and by a person who took part in the events, so they are authentic. This method of fighting probably did not change between the Viking Age and the Sturlung Age, she says.

Breaking up a battle: "When the Vididalers came and dismounted, they went into the homefield. The Midfirdings ran at them straightway and it came to a fight; both sides were infuriated. Snorri ordered them not to fight, but no one heeded what he said. Thorljot from Breতাlaek went up to Snorri and asked him to separate them; but Snorri said he hadn't enough men for that, what with their folly and their fury. Thorljot reproached Snorri harshly, then ran among the horses, untied them, and drove them in among the men. The Vididalers ran off along the meadow and down over the gravel bank; they caught their horses and rode across the river."

Raids: "They ransacked everything they could get their hands on, tied the shields together in packs, and took all the horses they could catch." ... "They behaved ruthlessly throughout the western district, seizing horses and stores whenever they thought they needed them. At Hvamm they destroyed hay and other

provisions of Thord Sturluson, and killed a nine-year-old ox."

Bringing horses on ships to battle: "[at] Bildsey they found men already there who had bound their horses together and were preparing to move them on shipboard." You can see illustrations of William the Conqueror and his Norman warriors—who are only a few generations removed from being Vikings—transporting horses by ship on the famous Bayeux tapestry.

Battle: "On Wednesday evening, Thord rode to Ulfstadir with all his troop. The Skagafirdings spent the night at Vidimyr but moved early on Thursday morning north from there over Jokulsa and took up a position south of Djupadal-sa on a landslide-hill; there they drew up their troops and had well on towards 700 men. Eystein hviti the Norwegian drew up Brand's forces, and there they awaited Thord and his men. Thord had nearly 500 men and it was a very well equipped force. The Skagafirdings' force turned to face west, assuming Thord would attack from that direction. But Thord and his men rode down along the declivity so that when they leapt from their horses and formed ranks together they stood right

at the edge of the Skagafirdings' flank. Brand and his men turned to face them but their men fell away; there were ancient turf graves between them... Thord attacked the moment they met: first they attacked by hurling stones, then by thrusting at them with spears, and the troops of the Skagafirdings gave way as fast as if a wedge had been driven into them. Haugsnes was the name given to the place above which the battle on the plain was fought. ... Many blows were exchanged at the same time, with sword and spear, and the battle became so furious that none like it has ever occurred in Iceland either in the numbers of men or loss of life."

As these episodes show, horses were necessary for making war, but were not actually ridden into battle—at least not in Iceland.

THE VIKING KIT

As we ride our Icelandic horses in the present, we might take for granted the tack we use, which includes comfortable and well-fitted saddles with stirrups, with safe and sturdy footwear and functional clothing to adapt to the weather. It's easy to imagine that tack and rider apparel during the Viking age might be considered crude.

Personal wealth played a large part in determining one's kit. Nancy mentioned a favorite passage from Eyrbyggja Saga in which three riders in the 900s are described: "Thorleif had bought the best horse he could get, along with an elaborate, painted saddle. He carried an ornamented sword, a gold-inlaid spear, and a dark-blue, heavily gilded shield. All his clothes were of the very finest quality, and it was on this outfit that he'd spent most of his travelling money. Snorri, on the other hand, was wearing a black cloak and was riding a fine black mare. He'd got an old trough-shaped saddle, and his weapons were nothing much to look at. Thorodd's outfit came somewhere in between."

Vikings probably wore their regular clothing to battle. Depending on one's status in the clan, some would have had better protection with armor: chainmail shirts, leather jackets, padded wool jackets, whatever they could afford. A famous group of fighters in Norway wrapped birchbark around their legs as armor. Nancy said that metal helmets were rare

(only two have ever been found, compared to thousands of swords), but the warriors could have worn hard leather caps.

One question we often get concerns stirrups. The use of stirrups was already common during the Viking age. Per Nancy, stirrups are found in the Viking warrior graves in Birka, Sweden, dated to the early 900s. They were probably used throughout the Viking Age—either metal stirrups, or ones made of leather and rope—to provide stability when riding, just as we use them today. They did not give the Vikings an advantage, as warriors throughout Europe used stirrups—and none generally fought on horseback at that time.

VIKING ARCHERS

Vikings may have killed people with spears or axes from horseback as they were riding into a town on a raid. There wasn't any jousting or warrior-against-warrior fighting on horseback, though, nor

were the horses trained to kick or rear or attack people. These tactics probably became more prevalent as mainland Europeans developed larger horses for inclusion in battle and the formation of cavalries.

In Nancy's book *The Real Valkyrie*, however, she indicates that archery off horseback was also a Viking practice—at least in the east. The Viking warrior graves she studied from Birka, in Sweden, include not only the bones of horses, with bridles and stirrups, but horn bows of the type used by the Magyars on the plains of Central Europe.

The Archers of Arvak showcase the sensational action of mounted archery on their Icelandic horses, and Chris Marks attests that Icelandics are amazing mounted archery horses. They descend, in part, from Mongolian ponies—need we say more?

Attending a Viking festival is as educational as it is entertaining. We hope to incorporate the Icelandic horse as often

as possible in such festivals. The Archers of Arvak and members of the Sirius Icelandic Horse Club are planning a return engagement at the Fenrir Viking Festival in Eminence, KY this fall, from October 31 to November 2. My wife Eve and I will be presenting our Icelandic horses at the Viking Festival in Farmington, MN on October 4-5 and October 11-12. For information, visit <https://archersofarvak.com/>, <https://www.kyrenfaire.com/viking-fest>, <https://vikingfest.com/>, or reach out to your fellow Icelandic horse enthusiasts. All are more than willing to share their experiences!

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The Real Valkyrie, Nancy Marie Brown (St. Martin's Press, 2021).

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CONTACT

About The Norðrlönd Viking: The North Star Vikings is a Minnesota based Viking Age Reenactment group that focuses on the later Viking Age from about 900 to about 1066. The main goal of the North Star Vikings is to study, research, and portray the daily life and culture of Scandinavians from the late Viking Age. While our main focus is on Scandinavian culture, we welcome any reenactors who are interested in portraying characters from any background from the time period including Rus, Baltic, Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, and more. If you wish to find out more about our group, are interested in joining or are another group just wanting to network, please email us at [\northstarvikings@gmail.com](mailto:northstarvikings@gmail.com).



In the Viking Age not all Scandinavians were raiders, just as in the Jazz Age not everyone was a jazz musician! But everyone had horses: The Icelandic horse was a valuable part of daily life.

REDISCOVERING JOY

by Katie Marquette

I don't know how old I was, probably eight or nine. I know it was snowing and late afternoon. We had arrived at the barn just as a snowstorm rolled in. Plans for any serious riding were called off, but my sister and I still went out to the field to fetch our ponies. We put leadshanks on their halters and rode them bareback down the lane toward the barn, a glimmering light growing increasingly bleary in the falling snow. I remember the smoky, brisk air and the wooly winter coat of my Connemara mare against my ungloved hands as I gripped her thick mane. When we got to the barn we got off and spent the evening brushing the ponies' wet coats to a shine and giving them copious amounts of treats. It is one of my happiest and most vivid memories.

It was also an anomaly. Though I was put on a horse before I was two years old, I very rarely had relaxed occasions at the barn. My mother was an entrepreneur and CEO who had fought hard to have horses in her life. For her, horses were a passion and a joy, but also something to pursue with the same laser-like focus she reserved for her business ventures. When she enrolled me in riding lessons and bought me my own pony, she taught me that horses meant hard work.

As I continued riding into my teens, my time with horses was spent getting up at 3:30 AM to prepare for pony club rallies or in the sweltering sun waiting for my turn in the show jumping ring. I competed my mother's Percheron-thoroughbred mare through the Preliminary level in Eventing and won best conditioned horse at the Waredaca 3-Day Event, a prize hard-earned by sticking to a strict training regime that took up all my after-school hours.

I loved our horses, but it wasn't often that horses meant "relaxation" or "joy" to me. In college, I was on the IHSA Team, but found my interest in equestrian sports fading. This lack of interest only increased when my mother died of cancer when I was 22. After her passing, I lived a busy city life, pursuing graduate studies in Washington, DC.



Tango, aka Tangó frá Pverholtum, at the heart of Katie Marquette's family in his new home in Maryland.

THE URGE TO RIDE

Years passed and when I moved back near our family's farm, I started feeling the urge to ride again. I purchased a nervous, but gentle-hearted thoroughbred with a brilliant chrome coat and a stellar jump named Ketch. I immediately entered training mode. I don't think I had him a week before we were off cross country schooling and competing in eventing. Looking back, I can see he wasn't the sort of horse to thrive with an intensely competitive schedule. I developed a very close relationship with him, but he would end up needing colic surgery a few years after I bought him, essentially entering an early retirement. I regret that I didn't take into account more the personality of the horse in front of me, but I see that I simply did not know how to ride in a way that didn't involve intense competition or training regimens.

With Ketch living a more relaxed

life, I discovered fox hunting and leased a bold little Welsh pony who took me first flight, and I found, maybe for the first time, the joy of horses. My heart will always skip a beat hearing the sound of baying hounds or the huntsman's horn. Hunting brought a thrill and genuine delight into my life, and I spent a few blissful years up at dawn following the hounds. I am forever grateful to the horses who saw me safely over hedges and through vast countryside on those early, foggy mornings.

But when I became a mother, hunting became very difficult. A nursing baby and long days out in the hunt field simply did not mix. Another baby came along, and I found myself in an increasingly existential quandary about the role horses should play in my life. My husband and I had bought a little farm and most of the time I was just resentful of the barn chores when I was already so tired from

the busy life of a young parent.

It was around this time that I did a podcast interview with Nancy Marie Brown, writer and Icelandic horse enthusiast (and editor of this magazine!). Although the interview was focused on her latest book, I snuck in some questions about Icelandic horses near the end. She told me what great family horses they were and how anyone, from beginners to lifelong equestrians, could enjoy one. She painted an image of a shaggy, confident horse that loved trail riding and the open air.

LET'S TANGO

It wasn't until a year later that I found myself remembering that conversation and googling "Icelandic horses for sale" on a whim. That whim turned into a near obsession. I watched every Icelandic horse documentary on YouTube, learned about Icelandic history, and pored over the sagas. Half my mind was always in Iceland, a place I had never been, but which had somehow completely captured my imagination.

And so when I sent Icelandic horse trainer Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir a message about possibly finding me a horse, I was shocked when she responded very quickly: "I have the perfect horse for you."

Some grainy videos arrived over text of a shaggy bay gelding with big strong hooves and kind eyes. His name was Tango and I was absolutely smitten. Still in my Icelandic-induced dreamstate, I booked a trip to Vermont to try him out after his month acclimating to his new life in America. My first time tölting was the day I met Tango for the first time. And ac-

tually, he was the very first Icelandic horse I had ever met. The strange, wonderful rocking gait came naturally to him, and so by extension, to me. He didn't have a flashy tölt, but a steady one. I had never felt such a smooth, effortless gait on a horse. I was relaxed. I was happy!

Tango arrived in our barn right in the middle of a heat wave. I thought how far he had come from his native country of grey, open skies and vast barren rocks. It was an adjustment for him, but he was stoic and patient. By the fall he was quite at ease, and I was hacking him out in the wide fields, watching the fog roll in over the pond in the early morning. My favorite time to ride has always been the colder months, and I was thrilled that my new partner was not remotely deterred by wind, rain, or snow. We went on trail rides all through the winter, Tango's shaggy coat and thick mane buttressing any bouts of bad weather.

He and Ketch are good friends, often grooming each other in the field, and he is a good sport with our kids' sassy Shetland pony. He is opinionated about working in the heat (I don't care for it either, frankly) and he has his lazy, stubborn days, but he has ultimately been incredibly safe, kind, and patient. I don't hesitate to put my kids on his back in his stall, or to take him out on a solo hack, even if it's been a week since his last ride.

SAFE AND WILD

I also have learned to take things slow when needed. When his winter coat was shedding out and itching was at a premium, I opted for hand walks out



Katie and Tango enjoying a snowy moment of being both safe and wild.

in the fields instead. I loved those times together, his little nose always snuffling my pockets for a treat. He is bold and charming, not remotely spooky, and very brave. He is the perfect size at 14 hands—accessible to my children and easy for me to hop on and off during hacks out. Even my 6'2" husband can sit on him. I love to show him off to anyone who wants to meet a truly unique horse, and he is an excellent ambassador for the breed. He is truly the all-around horse Nancy promised Icelandics could be.

I have no competition schedules and no training regimens other than what keeps us both in good health. I respect his moods, and he respects mine. And though I am an incredible novice in this new world of Icelandic horses, I am eager to learn and so grateful for the patient teacher I have found in my horse.

There was a moment this past winter, coming back in from a ride. The snow had started falling thick and steady and suddenly I was back to being a little girl again, safe and warm on my shaggy pony. I realized in that moment that it was that very simple moment as a child, riding my pony bareback, that had been nagging at me through all those years of riding and competing. It wasn't about the shows or the ribbons or even the thrill of the hunt field. It was that feeling of freedom, simultaneously safe and wild on the back of a horse in a storm. And here I had it again, all thanks to the incredible Icelandic horse.



Tango, Katie says, "is bold and charming, not remotely spooky, and very brave," as well as being a patient teacher.

GET AHEAD OF SUMMER ECZEMA

by Ellen Lichtenstein

Every spring, Icelandic horse owners across the US hold their breath and cross their fingers, hoping to not discover their recently imported horse has developed an itchy allergic reaction known as sweet itch or summer eczema (SE). Until recently, importing a horse from Iceland was like rolling the dice on SE, with no way to know if your horse would be one of the nearly 55% of imports that develop it.

But what if you didn't have to wait and wonder? What if a simple blood test could tell you if your horse would develop SE three to four weeks before clinical symptoms emerge? This dream is now reality, thanks to Bettina Wagner's research team at Cornell University.

If you're new to the world of Icelandic horses, you may have missed what all the summer eczema fuss is about. This condition, which can occur in any breed of horse but is particularly common in imported Icelandic horses, is an allergic reaction triggered by the saliva of *Culicoides* midges—tiny biting flies often called no-see-ums.

These microscopic pests don't exist in Iceland, so imported horses never had a chance to build up an immune tolerance when they were younger. Subsequently, when they arrive in North America and get inundated with *Culicoides* midge bites, their reaction can be severe. The allergic reaction most commonly shows up during an imported horse's second summer season, and it can get worse over time. Affected horses experience intense itching, hair loss, and painful skin lesions, primarily along the mane, tail, and belly. With no cure available, management focuses on reducing exposure to the midges and treating symptoms.

THE NEW TEST

Traditional allergy tests work by identifying what a horse is already reacting to. That's useful for confirming a diagnosis, but not helpful for preventing the onset of symptoms. The new blood test operates on an entirely different principle: It predicts future allergic reactions before any symptoms appear using blood markers in horses that will react to *Culicoides* midges, even if they haven't shown clinical allergy yet.

It is completely different from an allergy test, Bettina explains. "It's actually a marker

that comes up before the allergy develops." The test identifies specific immune cell populations that surge in the bloodstream three to four weeks before a horse shows any clinical signs of summer eczema.

The discovery happened somewhat by accident. While studying immune cells in horse blood for other research, Bettina's team noticed unusual cells appearing in allergic horses during summer months. The researchers noticed that this unusual cell population only appeared in the horses in their herd that they already knew suffered from SE. Further investigation revealed these cells didn't just show up in horses that were already showing signs of SE, but also in those that would come to develop SE a few weeks later.

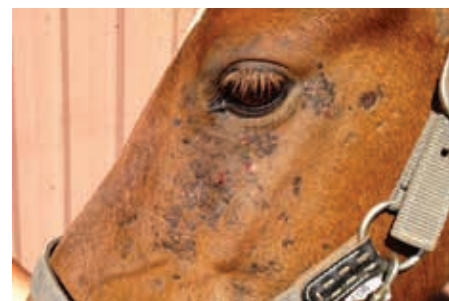
There is no reliable and effective way to treat a horse once SE appears. There are a variety of dietary supplements, topical ointments, and other treatments available, but many horses still suffer all summer long, year after year. It's not "just an allergy," as SE can have serious consequences for horses, from intense itching to secondary infections that enter through broken skin.

Having a test easily available to predict the onset of SE before symptoms appear is a game changer for horse owners looking to prevent their horses' suffering. Once identified, the allergic horse can be provided with greater fly protection, moved to a different climate for the summer, or given other enhanced management protocols and environmental changes to reduce their overall exposure to *Culicoides* midges.

WHO SHOULD TEST?

Since the test requires only a simple blood draw, it might be tempting for all Icelandic horse owners to run out and have it done. But that's not actually necessary or helpful. According to Bettina, the test offers the greatest value for horses at higher risk of developing SE, and it has to be performed at the right time and under the right set of circumstances to be most valuable.

Recently imported Icelandic horses are at the highest risk of developing SE in their second summer; however, they can develop it earlier or later. Horses that were originally imported to a dry, low-insect area of the US but then moved to a more humid region



The face of summer eczema. A new blood test from Cornell can identify horses that are susceptible.

could also benefit from testing.

The horse needs some level of exposure to the *Culicoides* midges for the markers to appear in the test, so you need to time the testing just right: late enough that some exposure has occurred, but not so late that symptoms are present. Ideally, the blood sample should be taken from the horses a week to 10 days after the midges start to appear in the spring, or anytime afterward.

The blood biomarkers are also detectable when the very first allergy signs show up in the horse. So, if there is any doubt whether it is SE or some other non-allergic condition that causes skin irritation or itching, the test can be used to rule out or confirm this specific allergy. If your horse develops allergy-like symptoms and you want to find out if it's SE, ask your vet to draw blood before starting any kind of treatment such as steroids, as those will mask the immune cells that must show up in the test.

Annual testing isn't required, since horses with the markers will develop SE and those without it will not. However, in older horses which often experience changes in their immune tolerance, retesting can be helpful to identify age-dependent changes.

As of this publication, the timing isn't ideal for SE testing. The good news is, you can truly get ahead of summer eczema in the spring of 2026 by preparing now.

RESOURCES

Bettina Wagner is a professor of immunology in Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine. Learn more about her work at <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/research/bettina-wagner>. If you're interested in getting your horse tested, contact her by email at bw73@cornell.edu.



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As the Chair of the fundraising committee, I want to express my deep gratitude to the committee members who devoted their personal time, energy, and skills to make this auction happen. Mackenzie Durbin is our tech person extraordinaire. She immediately stepped up to set up all social media posts, marketing, and team meetings. I marveled at her talent and accuracy. And, hey, if anyone out there is looking for someone to manage their marketing on social media, Lady Mac is your gal! Next, I want to send a big shout out to Carole Niclasse. She acted as my right hand, organizing items, reaching out for donations, and creating the editorials for all the offerings. She researched how to navigate this whole new territory of fundraising and set us on the right track. Every time I asked either Mackenzie or Carole, "Can you do this?", they responded positively and took on a heavier load. And I'm not forgetting about Jeny Feldner. She helped with the National Team survey and securing our best auction items. Lastly, I want to send a thank you to Dora Becker, for swooping in with her content creation and social media management skills. This is what community is all about. Riders helping riders where we are all united in our love and passion for the Icelandic horse.

- Marisa Shaw

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icelandics17@gmail.com
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loribleo@gmail.com
www.fourwindsicelandics.com

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Neil and Ebba Meehan
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ebbameehan@me.com
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Dewitt, Michigan 48820
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kristinahorses3@yahoo.com
www.chippewaacres.com

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Aslan's Country Icelandics
Kydee K. Sheetz
5380 Ugstad Junction Road
Proctor, Minnesota 55810
(218) 349-2209
acicelandics@yahoo.com

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pillan_e@yahoo.com

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<http://toltfarm.com/>

NEW YORK

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Sand Meadow Farm
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Caeli Cavanagh and Alexandra Venable
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www.alfadans.com

Five-Gait Farm Icelandic
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Eugene, Oregon 97402
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fivegaitfarmicelandics@gmail.com
fivegaitfarm.com

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Black Creek Farm
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blackcreekfarm.us

Country Skies Equestrian
Erin Lastinger
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Pelion, South Carolina 29123
(803) 542-3263
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VERMONT

Lunar Hill Icelandic
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www.lunarhillicelandics.com

VIRGINIA

Montaire Icelandic Horses
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<https://www.montaire.org/>

WASHINGTON

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www.Avondaleicelandics.com and <https://www.facebook.com/Avondaleicelandics>

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www.valkyrieicelandic.com

Vinur Farm
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Trout Lake, Washington 98650
(360) 601-9656
vinurfarm@gmail.com
www.vinurfarm.com

WEST VIRGINIA

Icelandic Thunder
Denise & James Taylor
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Philippi, West Virginia 26416
(304) 457-4238
icywoman@msn.com
icelandicthunder.com

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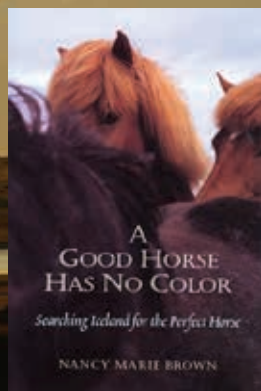
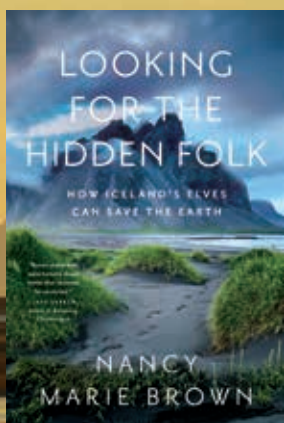
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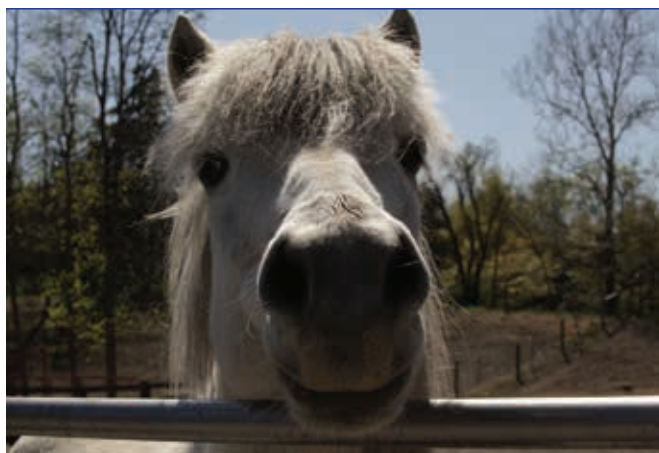
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Svartigaldur from Beat N' Branch Icelandics

Svartigaldur US2020105620

First Prize Assessed Parents

F.: IS2007188906 - Hrókur frá Efstá-Dal II
M.: US2010204585 - Kvika from Four Winds

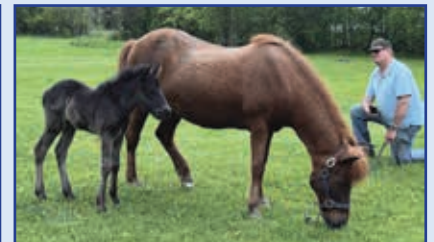
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June 2025 Breeding Assessment

Svartigaldur as a 5 year old scored
8.22 Confirmation 7.97 without pace

He will be assessed in 2026

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