

## **B8.1 General breeding goals**

### ***Health, Fertility, Longevity***

The official breeding goal is to breed a healthy, fertile and durable horse – a robust Icelandic horse.

### ***Colours***

The official breeding goal is to preserve all possible varieties of coat colour within the breed. It still should be kept in mind that some colour variations are correlated with genetic or physical defects that should be avoided.

### ***Size***

The official breeding goal gives room for substantial variation in size. Most Icelandic horses are in the range of 135 – 146 cm at the withers when measured with a rod, a preferred height at withers is at least 138 cm.

### ***The roles of the horse***

The aim is to breed a riding horse that has varied roles and is suitable for different types of riders. The use of the horse is first and foremost aimed at its qualities as a riding horse as it is used for general leisure riding, travelling and for various types of competitions.

## **B8.2 Specific breeding goals**

### ***B8.2.1 The character of the horse***

The aim is a character that enables the horse to be used for different roles with a special emphasis on a calm, friendly and cooperative character. The horse is supposed to be courageous and reliable, both when handling and when ridden. The breeding goal encompasses more types of horses with regards to willingness and sensitivity; from sensitive and willing horses to calmer types, but always with an emphasis on willingness to perform.

### ***B8.2.2 Conformation in general***

The conformation should be functional and promote the health and durability of the horse where carrying ability, natural gaiting ability and the capacity to move under a rider in balance and correct body function are paramount. The conformation should also be characterized by beauty and attractive appearance with an emphasis on strength and muscularity.

### ***B8.2.3 Conformation in detail***

The breeding goal within each trait is described in the scores of 9.5 – 10, the traits are: head, neck withers and shoulders, back and group, proportions, quality of legs, correctness of legs, hooves and mane and tail.

### **Head**

A very beautiful, light and finely chiselled head, thin ears, well set and not too open. A large, open and alert eye with a neat bone structure around it. The jaws are light, and the nose profile is straight, nostrils are flared, and the mouth is appropriately long.

### **Neck, withers and shoulders**

Very well shaped neck which is supple, well raised and high set. The neck has a long and arched topline, it is well separated from the shoulders and very slender. The neck is thin at the throat and the connection between the head and the neck is very supple. The withers are high and long, and the shoulders are long and sloping.

### **Back and croup**

The back has great carrying ability; the front part of the back is high, and the lowest point of the back is in the middle, the back is broad and very well-muscled. The loins are short, broad and well-muscled and the connection between the loins and the croup is supple. The croup is long, adequately sloping and even in form, the croup and the thighs are very well muscled.

### **Proportions**

Impressive overall appearance. The horse is robust and well balanced; the front, middle and hind sections are equal, the horse is very up-hill, well-muscled and adequately wide in the chest. The horse has long legs and a cylindrical, even and rather light trunk. The length of the horse is created by long shoulders, appropriately long back and a long croup, its length is greater than the height at the croup (reference: difference of 4-6 cm).

### **Quality of legs**

Correct position of the front- and hind legs in profile; the front legs are positioned to the front, they have a straight, vertical alignment from the middle of the forearm to the pasterns, which are appropriately long and sloping, the hind legs are positioned under the horse in such a way that there is a straight, vertical line from the buttocks to the hock and along the cannon bone. The joints in the hind leg are adequately angled. Dry, very strong tendons and good separation between the tendons and the bone, strong joints. The front legs are muscular, and the legs have good feathers.

### **Correctness of legs**

Totally correct legs: the front legs are absolutely straight when standing still and they move in a straight line, with adequate space between them. The hind legs should be straight as well, turning out slightly and move in a straight line, with adequate space between them that increases with higher speed.

### **Hooves**

Very strong, sound and correctly shaped hooves. The hoof wall is thick, strong and even. The coronet is wide and there is adequate difference in the width of the coronet and hoof. The heels are thick, strong and adequately long with solid bars and the angle of the heels is correct. The heel bulbs are even and thick. The sole is thick, concave and symmetrical. The frog is even and healthy.

### **Mane and tail**

The forelock, mane and tail improve the horse's gracefulness. The forelock, the mane and the tail are thick. The forelock extends clearly below the horse's eyes, the mane is long on both sides and the tail is down to the pasterns. The growth of the mane is even from the poll and to the withers.

#### ***B8.2.4 Ridden abilities/gaits in general***

The aim is to breed a quality gaited horse that has a natural ability to carry a rider in balance, self-carriage and is beautiful when ridden, a horse that is agile, sure-footed and with good stamina – a true Icelandic gæðingur.

The main goal with regards to the gaiting ability is that the gaits have correct beat and body function, the horse is moving freely in an even rhythm. The gaits should moreover possess suppleness, lightness, long strides and speed capacity.

The horse should be able to move in correct body form in every gait with ease. The movements should be free and without constraint. The horse should have the ability for collection as well as lengthening of the strides with increased propulsion in faster tempos. Acceleration in the gaits should be based more on the lengthening of the strides than increased stride frequency. Important aspects of correct body form under rider which the conformation should facilitate are: The topline is long and relaxed and there is carriage in the back and hind quarters. The horse can easily coil the loins and use the hind legs as well for carrying as for propulsion. The horse can easily lift the back and the base of an arched neck that is extended forward with the poll as the highest point. The head-carriage is relaxed and unconstrained with the nose line in front of the vertical. The movement runs fluently through the horse with elasticity in the back that is created by the carrying ability and propulsion of the hind legs and a relaxed topline.

The roundness of the topline and the raising of the neck varies between tempos, gaits and the degree of collection. When the horse is ridden in collection at slower tempos the topline is more arched, the loins are more coiled, and the front part of the horse is higher compared to the hind. The strides are shorter and slower, and the stance phase of the hind legs is longer than the stance phase of the front legs which have high, light and free movements. Here, collection goes together with suppleness and fluent movements. When the horse increases the speed, it lengthens the strides, the stance phase of the front and hind legs becomes more even, and it extends the head and neck forward with a strong and relaxed topline.

#### ***B8.2.5 Ridden abilities/gaits in detail***

The breeding goal within each trait is described in the scores of 9.5 – 10, the traits are: tölt, trot, pace, gallop, canter, rideability, general impression and walk.

### **Tölt**

The tölt has a clear and even four-beat rhythm, is very comfortable, supple, with long strides and high and wide movements. The horse is in balance, with very light and elastic movements which run fluently through the body. The horse is up-hill, with a well raised neck, long and supple topline, a carrying elastic back and active and supple hindquarters. The horse maintains the quality of the tölt in all tempos, from slow up to fast speed.

### **Slow tölt**

The tölt is clear-beated, very supple, with long strides, high and wide movements and an even rhythm. The horse is in good balance and self-carriage, with light and elastic movements that run fluently through the body. The horse is up-hill with good back bearing and a long topline, the neck is arched and well raised, and the hindquarters are engaged.

### **Trot**

The trot is two-beated, well balanced and secure with an even rhythm. The horse has long strides and high, light, very elastic movements and good suspension. The horse is up-hill with a long topline and good back bearing. The movements run fluently through the horse's body and it maintains the quality of the trot from slow up to fast speed.

### **Pace**

Clear-beated, secure pace with long strides and elegant movements, excellent speed. The pace is in excellent balance, has good suspension and lightness with correct body function. The topline is long and there is carriage in the back, the horse extends the head and neck forward. (Reference: the horse goes the 100 meters in less than 8 sec.).

### **Gallop**

Good beat, very supple gallop with good suspension, elasticity and fluent movements. The horse moves in uphill balance with high and light movements and reaches fast speed, hindquarters are engaged and the hindlegs are reaching far under the horse. The horse stretches out in long and round strides. There is carriage in the back and the topline is long and supple.

### **Canter**

Three-beated, very supple canter with long strides and good suspension. The movements are fluent and elastic. The horse is moving in excellent balance with light movements and pushes itself well upwards and forwards in an effortless and elegant way. The topline is arched and the horse is uphill; the hindquarters are engaged with carrying hindlegs so that the movements in front are high and light.

### **Rideability**

The horse is very co-operative, positive and willing to perform. It is alert and responsive to the aids, courageous and relaxed in all gaits. The horse is always light on the reins and the topline is very supple. The horse is in complete mental balance and performs in all gaits with minimum aids from the rider.

### **General impression**

The horse is very impressive and elegant when ridden; with correct body function in every gait, well raised and well balanced with a long and supple topline. The horse moves freely and fluently without restraint, light on the reins and supple in the body. All gaits are characterized by lightness and elasticity as well as high and wide movements.

### **Walk**

The walk has an even four-beat rhythm, well balanced and steady, with long strides. The movements are graceful and energetic, yet the horse is resting in every step. The horse is averagely raised, the topline is long, elastic and rounded with good back bearing. There is good engagement of the hindquarters and a fluent and unconstrained movement is running through the horse's body, from the forelock to the tail.