

Skógarrönd Newsletter

www.vikinghorse.co.nz

Issue 3



Spring is in the air

We have had a taste of Spring but now it seems to be winter again; rain wind and colder temperatures. Typical weather for this time of the year but we are at least heading towards nicer weather!

While most of New Zealand is totally focused on the Rugby World Cup, we as breeders are looking forward to a new and exciting season as well.

Although we still enjoy all the activities of the World Cup in our area. We went to the fireworks in Auckland on Friday the 9th. We saw the magnificent fireworks in Auckland harbor from aboard the 'Spirit of New Zealand', a very special experience. They organized this as a fund raiser.

We anchored just outside the Prince's Wharf, next to an old steam boat and a Navy vessel. We first watched the opening ceremony in Eden Park via a big screen on deck fol-

lowed by the live fireworks. A once in a life time experience. A completely different experience was returning home...We had no problems taking the train to Auckland, but coming back was slightly different. Saying it was a bit busy is a massive understatement. I have never seen so many people and certainly not in Auckland! We felt like penguins; every now and then we shuffled forward a couple of meters preceded by a big cheer. Most people did not really mind, making jokes and seeing the funny side of it. After all, at one stage we would get home...sooner or later.

At least we were able to watch the complete Tonga-All Blacks match

from screens spread over Down Town Auckland!

Go the All Blacks!

Happy reading and if you would like to have any more info about something in the newsletter, please feel free to contact us. We would love to hear from you!

Jennie

September 2011



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Icelandic's; to cover or not to cover?

Every now and again a discussion comes up on the need of wearing a cover. If people are asking me if Icelandics have to wear a cover in the winter, my answer will be a resounding NO. Icelandic Horses have a very dense, double coat, developed for the conditions faced by horses in Iceland. Of course you have to provide a shelter, but you will find that most of the time they are happy standing out and about in all weather conditions, with their backs turned towards the elements. Back in the Netherlands, we had a nice open stable but we might as well have had it transformed into a sleep-out since the horses hardly ever used it. The only one who made use of it was our horse which suffered from summer eczema, also called sweet itch. He stood inside where the flies could not annoy him, due to plastic flaps closing off the entrance. The only time we used a cover was after riding in the winter. We then used a fleece rug with neck piece until they were dry again. Competition riders stable their horses later in the winter to induce an early shedding of the winter coat and sometimes clip them in such a way that

Icelandic's grow their own cover!

they still had some protection against the elements (hunter clip).

The only time we clipped the horses here when they arrived from Europe in September, see picture below. They had started building up their winter coat while it was summer out here.

Another significant difference with other breeds is that their veins are not very superficial and their skin is thicker than say, thoroughbreds.

Therefore they have much more protection against the cold. Of course you have to provide them with enough energy, usually in the form of roughage like hay, haylage etc. to maintain their body temperature. But that is no difference with other breeds. It is not really natural for horses to wear covers; they love to groom each other and to roll. It is part of their natural behaviour. If it is not absolutely necessary, don't cover your horse, they would love you for this! Really, the climate in New Zealand, even in the South island, is a laugh for the Icelandics. They are born and bred for conditions much more harsh than here! In the winter

most horses in Iceland are turned out on the paddocks and even with the rough grasses there, they manage to become round and fluffy during the winter.

Of course there are exceptions; sometimes older horses are not able to maintain their body temperature and when a horse is trained heavily over the winter it might be necessary to cover them temporarily and or clip them partly.

Our mare Hugför on the picture below, partly clipped after she arrived from Europe in 2007.



Food for thought

It seems to be a struggle for many Icelandic Horse owners to keep their horses in shape. Most of them tend to be in a too good condition over the summer months. Here in New Zealand with the grass growing nearly the whole year round it is even more difficult to keep them in shape. The digestive system of these horses are adapted over the hundreds of years to the harsh conditions in Iceland. Also, their habit of grazing is a bit different from many other breeds. On Iceland there is no need for a well developed flight reaction since there are hardly any natural predators apart from the odd starving Polar Bear looking for a

snack. Therefore they spend way more time grazing the compared to other breeds. Just observe and compare if you have time. As a result their daily intake will be more than average. Combine that with their digestive system which is slightly different they get more than you might think!

This habit and system is based on the conditions in Iceland, but over here it is for them like eating at McDonalds and KFC.... You have to watch out with grazing 24-7. they could be in danger for getting, for example, laminitis! Limited grazing and controlled (hay) feeding would be a better option. Also beware of feeding too much

hard feed, about 1-1.5 kg maximum per day depending on the type of feed.

Try to keep it simple. As long as they receive their required amount of essential vitamins and minerals and omega's (the latter especially when moulting / building up their winter coat) you are sweet. Add more grains for more energy when you are training a lot and that's it. The bulk of their energy should come out of hay/grass!

Grooming Icelandic Horses

Is grooming Icelandic Horses that different from other breeds? No, actually not. A good brush also stimulates the blood circulation and acts like a sort of massage before working. There are however some small differences which I will discuss here. In the previous article, I wrote about their winter coat. Their coat is much more developed than any other breed here in New Zealand, apart from probably the Shetland Pony which has a similar coat. Despite the mild conditions here in New Zealand, the Icey's grow a similar coat here as in they do in Iceland. It will probably take many generations before this will change, if ever. That means our horses will transform into cuddly bears during the winter. Lovely when you have a wet winter like last winter, when they are covered from top to toe in mud.....

There are many ways to groom your horse and get rid of the mud quickly and efficiently. There are various types of brushes on the market, shown in the picture. I like to use a smaller size round metal curry comb (second from left). They are for sale at the Saddlery Warehouse for about \$8.00. They are ideal for the Icelandics. They are widely used in Europe and the USA and I was very pleased to be able to buy a comb like that over here. Think about cleaning them with the average brush...it will take you hours if you ever get



them clean anyway. It is common sense to be careful when using it on parts of the body where bones are close to the skin.

These combs are also indispensable when horses start losing their winter coat. Hairs every where!

The birds love these hairs and many birds at our place now have very soft and comfy nests. Back in Holland the birds used to help themselves; they sat on the horses and just pulled the hairs out. I have not seen a bird do that over here yet. The birds probably have to get used to our hairy horses.

At the end of the moulting season you probably will have brushed off a good big bag full of hairs. Maybe you could sell it for duvets.....

Horses for sale

At Skógarrönd we might have a horse for sale that's right for you. We try to match our horses with the right owner.

We do not start them before they are 4 years of age because at Skógarrönd we like our young horses to be able to grow up relatively undisturbed and in a mixed herd. This is more natural for the horse, as the older ones will teach them manners and they are able to play a lot. These horses will have more respect for you and are very eager to please you once you have established yourself as the leader.

Horses younger than 4 years are only sold under the condition that they either have to come back to us for starting under the saddle or we will guide you through the whole process if you decide it to do it yourself. Nothing is more fantastic than to be the first person ever to mount your own young horse!



Eiðfaxi (advertisement)

Eiðfaxi is THE international magazine for anyone interested in the Icelandic Horse. Whether you are a breeder, trainer, competition– or leisure rider, there are interesting articles catering for all; training, breeding, trekking and many more. Very useful information, especially for us

down under and far away from where it all happens!!

Eiðfaxi also offers an online subscription. Visit their website for

EIÐFAXI

more information: www.eidfaxi.is

For a subscription on Eiðfaxi magazine, email isf@eidfaxi.is or ingibjörg@eidfaxi.is

Breeding at Skógarrönd: the natural way

Þótti is a pure bred 5-gaited totally black stallion. Imported in 2003 from the Netherlands, he presents very good bloodlines from famous Icelandic stallions like Hrafn frá Holtsmúla and Sörli frá Sauðarkróki.

One of the highest assessed four gaited stallions, Trúr frá Wetsinghe (see also www.trur.de) is his half brother. Their mother, Hrefna von Wiesenhof has showed she is a really good broodmare and produced several highly assessed stallions. Þótti's father is the friendly Pruður frá Wetsinghe. Pruður is praised for his high movements and supple back, which he consequently passes on to his offspring. Recently several of Pruður's daughters received awards for their confirmation and offspring.

You can imagine we are very proud to offer you Þótti for service!

Þótti's offspring in New Zealand already shows he passes on his steady four beat tölt, high movement and easy going character.

In combination with our imported mare Hugför frá Kopavógi (grand daughter to Hrafn frá Holtsmúla), he has produced

three great foals; the 1 year old Áki and the 1 year old filly Brynja. And now the colt Dvalinn. Áki is a five gaiter with expressive and supple movements, Brynja is a supple four gaiter with high leg movements. Dvalinn will most likely develop into a five gaited horse.

At Skógarrönd we prefer to do the serving the natural way; in the herd. The stallion is perfectly able to sort out the

right time and moment for serving. Þótti will not interfere with a mare when she is not ready to receive. If for some reason you are not able to bring your mare to our stallion, we offer the possibility of AI. Occasionally our stallion will be available for service elsewhere in New Zealand.

If you are interested in Þótti's services or would like to know more about our breeding, please [contact](#) us for more information.



At your service Þótti frá Wetsinghe, All Black 5-gaited pure bred Icelandic Horse Stallion

Lifland (advertisement)

The web shop of Lifland in Iceland has a good selection of gear and gifts related to Icelandic Horses. Check out their website www.lifland.is with an interesting range of products.



News from Iceland

As we in NZ had to deal with floods due to rainfall, Iceland had its share of floods as well. Read below a report from Gudrun Katrín Jóhannsdóttir how Iceland manages the traffic. Also some news on the Landsmót. Thanks for the updates Katrín!

“The weather has been acting a bit strange this summer. The spring was very cold and it only started getting warmer in July. Since we have had higher temperatures we have however had no rain so between the cold and the drought farmers are producing much less hay than in an average year. Some farmers will have to buy hay to be sure to be able to feed their animals through the winter. Not to mention the farmers affected by the ash from the recent Grimsvotn eruption. Some of them will not be able to produce any hay from their land because of ash. We have a government run fund that helps farmers deal with the results of nature’s destruction so they do not have to carry all the loss themselves.

In July there was a flash flood from under the glacier Myrdalsjokull in the south of Iceland. There is geothermal activity under the glacier that melts the ice causing the water to break from under the icecap and down to sea. The flood rushed down the sands below and swept away a 130 meter long bridge on

highway 1. This meant that smaller cars had to go all the way around Iceland to get to the villages east of the river. Bigger 4x4 vehicles could go up to the highlands and drive north of Myrdalsjokull and come down east of the glacier. This route is however only passable on a 4x4 as it has bad roads and you have to ride through many rivers.



Two days later the Icelandic Road Administration had started moving people and cars over the river on big vehicles and were able to move about 400 cars a day over the river. In a record time of seven days a new bridge was built and the damage to tourism east of the river was minimal.

Myrdalsjokull icecap covers the volcano Katla (this flood came from another geothermal area under the glacier though) and is situated next to Eyjafjallajokull glacier which erupted last year. The mountain pass between the glaciers (Fimmvorduhals) is the site of the first eruption last year, before the Eyjafjallajokull eruption. There is rising volcanic and seismic activity in the area and Katla is already due to erupt. We are however hoping that she will stay quiet as Katla is one of Iceland’s biggest volcanoes (over 30km in diameter) and usually her eruptions are very big. In the past she has erupted with an average interval of about 50 years (30 – 80 years) but her last eruption was in 1918. The biggest risk to human lives in the Katla eruptions is flash flooding from the melting ice. It rushes down the sands carrying blocks of ice bigger than houses and destroys everything in its path.

The Landsmót was great. Lifland had a big sales stand and we are very happy with the results. As expected, there were less visitors than usual as the tournament was moved from 2010 to 2011 due to the horse flu in 2010. The first few days of Landsmót were very cold and it must not have been very nice to stay in a tent when the temperatures during the night almost went down to 0°C. From Thursday on to Sunday the weather changed dramatically and we had up to 20°C during the day. With the warmth came a lot more visitors.

Landsmót was streamed live on the internet so that the people sitting at home could buy a subscription to watch everything that was happening at Vindheimamelar. This was a success and will hopefully be continued on future Landsmót tournaments. Many people that were sitting at home watching the live stream decided to pack their bags and drive to Landsmót when they saw the great horses, nice weather and great atmosphere on the competition grounds.

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We are on the web;
www.vikinghorse.co.nz

Skógarrönd Ltd is dedicated to the Icelandic Horse. We are breeding and selling quality horses on a small scale, promoting the breed Down Under, selling tack, training DVD's and books related to Icelandic Horses.

If you have any questions regarding the Icelandic Horse, do not hesitate to contact us; we are happy to answer all your questions regarding the breed and training! You are welcome to visit our herd. Please feel free to [contact us](#) for further information or make an appointment for a visit. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Training

A couple of weekends ago I had the opportunity to train six Icelandic horses for 3 days and coach the people who work with them.

The horses were all very different, young and older, 4 and 5 gaited, laterals and trotters. The first day I sorted out what kind of approach they needed, which I started to work on the following day. It is great to see that the approach I worked out had really good results. One of the horses mainly wanted to go faster and faster. I only used my seat/weight to let him softly walk into the reins. I also made him use his mind all the time so that he simply had no time for racing; I walked labyrinths and did many transitions from walk to halt and back again. He responded very well. On the third day I was even able to have a short session of trot/tölt with him without any racing! I worked with the lateral horses on collection, suppleness and bending. For the young one this was still difficult, but you just take one step at the time and try to trot them into collection if they are able to do so. Going sideways helps them to loosen their backs as well. Then there was one horse who was not trained in the gaits yet but who showed a lateral movement. With this one I practised doing short strides of tölt, to avoid him falling into trot since he does not yet have the strength to manage the tölt for more than a couple of steps. This you build up very slowly and avoids them mixing up their trot and tölt. An older horse tended to bend too deep, thereby avoiding the bit aids. I put a lot of emphasis on riding him towards the bit with him, via transitions (walk <->tölt backing-> tölt etc).

For every horse I used a double joint snaffle bit. I try to keep it as simple as possible, for the ones who play a lot with the bit I use one with D-rings. These bits are heavier and therefore ly more quiet in the mouth. For the others I use one with round rings, all with a bridle with dropped noseband.

Coaching

From this season onwards I will start coaching at a local Pony Club. This will also help me to achieve the last part of the ESNZ coaching course I am doing and gives me more experience with the way how the Pony Clubs are organised and how they approach coaching here in NZ. In the mean time I have done my D and C-level coaching for the NZPC. I will be available for individual as well as group coaching for Icelandic Horse riders around New Zealand.

Benni's Harmony (advertisement)

At Skógarrönd we sell the high quality Stubben range of Icelandic saddles and bridles: Benni's Harmony especially designed for the Icelandic Horse.

New: bits and Icelandic stirrups.
Please [contact us](#) for more information



Benni's

HARMONY

