

# The Australian Friesian Horse Society Information Pack



Lyckle 'B' – Australia's FIRST Friesian

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# The Australian Friesian Horse Society

## Introduction

Established in 1983 by a small group of Friesian enthusiasts, the Australian Friesian Horse Society (AFHS) is the only Studbook in Australia recognised by the FPS ('Friesch Paarden Stamboek' – Dutch Studbook). The FPS is the oldest and second largest Studbook in the Netherlands and at this point (2004/2005) has around 41,000 purebred Friesian horses registered. Both the FPS and AFHS are members of the World Friesian Horse Organisation (WFHO) which controls all Friesian Horse Societies/Associations worldwide.

The AFHS will only register and recognise purebred Friesians of established parentage and can also assist and advise with importation, purchasing and breeding of Friesian horses. We are also the main point of contact for the FPS and act on behalf of our members to ensure the lines of communication between the Netherlands and Australia remain open. In a country where not everyone speaks fluent Dutch, this is a very important thing to have!!



Xander – Ster

## Breed History

The Friesian Horse originated in the province of Friesland, in The Netherlands (see map below) – hence it's nickname "The Black Pearl of Friesland". These 'Black Pearls' can trace their history back as far as 150AD where Roman historians have made mention of Friesian cavalry in Britannia, on the border between Scotland and England. William the Conqueror used horses bearing a remarkable resemblance to Friesians during the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and many early illustrations of knights on tournament and battle fields show them mounted aboard their trusty Friesians.



It is thought that the Friesian horse, like many other European breeds, was influenced by the Arabian and Andalusian stallions during the Crusades, and then again during the 80-year War. The Friesian's slightly concave nasal bone, gracefully arched neck and it's high stepping, powerful trot provide fair support to this theory. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Friesian horse could be found alongside the Spanish horses in the *haute école* (High School) of riding but later on during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, use of the Friesian became limited mainly to in and around Friesland itself. The main reason for this is thought to be the decline of nobility through Europe after the French Revolution.

In rural Friesland toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Friesian had predominantly become a horse for the wealthier farmer, who would not only use the horses to work the fields, but would also harness them to their gigs to take the family to Church on Sundays. Their wonderful ability to bond with the family and children made them ideal for this role, and their strong work ethic and willingness to please made them fantastic work horses.

It was a terrible blow for the breed when the larger, heavier breeds started to outperform them in the field and their superior price soon put them out of reach of many. Farmers and breeders alike then started outcrossing them in an attempt to reinstate waning interest in the breed, but this was to their detriment as the partbreds began to far outnumber the purebreds.

It was at this time that around 100 Friesian lovers got together and founded an association to stave off what seemed to be an unavoidable demise of the breed altogether. Their objective – to apply a well considered breeding and rearing policy for the remaining purebred colts that displayed sufficient quality breathed new life into the breeding efforts – and so the breed was saved!

Friesian blood has been used to improve many other breeds over the years – and can be found in the likes of the New Forest, Dale and Fell Ponies, the Morgan, Kladruber, Standardbred, Orlov Trotter and the Shire (just to name a few!)

## Description



**Maurits Friso**

The Friesian Horse is always jet black with a long, flowing mane and tail. He carries his noble head on a crested neck. His action is flamboyant and eye-catching and he can be driven, ridden or jumped and can work the land, or is at home in a circus pleasing crowds. He is one of the most versatile breeds of the world!

The Friesian is an harmoniously and evenly built horse with a noble head, bright, intelligent eyes and ideally small, inward pointing ears. The neck should be not too short, it should be slightly crested and flow comfortably into a strong back that ends in a croup that is neither too short nor too slanted. The shoulder should be powerful and not excessively sloping, ribs should be well arched with broad loins, legs should be strong with a well developed upper arm and good length of cannon, and feet should be strong and broad.

The gaits should be smooth, regular and elegant and should be accentuated by sufficient growth of hair on the lower leg, a nice crest and a long tail. In short, the horse should have an overall appearance of being proud and luxuriant. The height at 3 years of 1.60m (15.3hh) is ideal, but anything between 1.50m (14.3hh) and 1.70m (16.3hh) is considered "normal" once fully grown.



## The FPS – ‘Het Friesch Paarden Stamboek’

Since 1879, the Friesian Horse has been registered by the Royal Society *Het Friesch Paarden Stamboek (FPS)*. It is the oldest horse Studbook in the Netherlands and there are different registers within it for foals, mares, stallions and geldings. The young foals were originally tattooed under the tongue for permanent identification and then branded at 3 years of age (if of sufficient quality to enter the adult studbook), but both these practices have now ceased with the introduction of microchipping and DNA recording.

In short, the primary aim of the FPS is to promote the Friesian and to breed horses with fine exteriors, yet maintain the typical racial features that are capable of high performances in both sports (show-driving, driving, and dressage under saddle) and recreation. The only way this can be done is by careful selection within the breed itself. Whilst maintaining breed traits and “fine exteriors” is important, each horse is also judged on movement (60%) and conformation (40%), and it is a final mark on each of these (in combination with breed traits) that finally determines the horse’s place in the FPS register.

The breeding of Friesian horses has a relatively narrow basis with only three main bloodlines – Tetman, Age (pronounced ‘Arkuh’) and Ritske. Every single Friesian alive today WORLDWIDE can trace their bloodlines back to these three stallions.

In Australia, the Age line was available through Lyckle ‘B’ (WA) until his passing in 2000 at 25, the Ritske line through Maurits Friso (WA) until his passing in 2003 at 27, and through Iepe Tj (QLD) and his son Reitse (WA) whilst the Tetman line first became available through Geert W (SA) and is now also available via Age B (Vic). The Stallions mentioned here are those that have / had breeding permits, but all lines are available through mares and offspring, not just the stallions.



**Lyckle ‘B’ – Age Line**



**Iepe Tj – Ritske Line**



**Age B – Tetman Line**

## The Friesian in Australia

Friesian horses can be found in most of the larger countries throughout the world, but here in Australia, the first one did not set hoof on Australian soil until 1977. He was a stallion by the name of Lyckle 'B' (now dec.) and was imported by Jenny Secreve of Lyckle B Stud in WA. Lyckle was soon joined by another stallion, Maurits Friso (now dec) and four mares, also imported from Holland to WA – to Friso Stud owned by Di Hill. The two stallions were shown extensively in both ridden events and harness, and it wasn't long before the two black beauties became well known on the WA show circuit.

It was not until 1994 that a colt, Iepe Tj and a filly, Hester fan Bokkum arrived and secured a sound breeding future for the Friesian horse in Australia. Iepe was imported by Black Minx Stud (Carina Jefferson) in Victoria and Hester by Lyckle 'B' Stud (Jenny Secreve), but it was Iepe who would soon have the greatest impact on Friesian breeding in Australia. As the first new bloodline in nearly 20 years, Iepe's arrival heralded the start of a whole new generation of foals as mare owners did whatever they could to get their mares to Victoria.

New Year's Day in 1997 saw the arrival of Geert 'W', a stallion imported by Friesian Wood in SA (Andrew and Rachel Wood) and not long after that, beautiful mares started arriving, beginning with Isis (Ster) from the US, and closely followed by Ulrika, Sanne C and Krystine S from the Netherlands. Ulrika and Sanne were also privileged enough to be awarded 'Ster' at their first Keuring here in Australia in 2000. Since then, Australia has seen many new imports – more and more mares are arriving each year and enriching the now steadily growing bloodlines. These mares, along with our own quality Australian-bred mares are producing top class progeny using our own imported stallions and frozen semen from the very best Studbook stallions from around the world.



**Isis - Ster**



**Ulrika - Ster**



**Sanne 'C' - Ster**



**Krystine 'S'**

## Frozen semen

Frozen semen from FPS Studbook Stallions is available in Australia to AFHS/FPS registered mares. A large choice of stallions is now available including:

**Feitse 293 Preferent**

**Tsjerk 328**

**Ludse 305**

**Tsjalke 397**

**Bente 412**





**Remmelt 323**

**Fabe 348**

**Lammert 260**

**Tonke 391**

**Tije 401**

		
<b>Feitse 293 Preferent</b>	<b>Tsjerk 328</b>	<b>Ludse 305</b>
		
	<b>Tsjalke 397</b>	
<small>(Photos courtesy Hengsten Houdenj Toonen)</small>		

So far, Australia has had varying success with frozen semen, with the number of colts born outweighing the fillies – but it's great to see some very good, strong, quality bloodlines hitting the ground here and increasing the Friesian gene pool.

The FPS judges were impressed with the increase in quality of our horses here even in the three years between their first and second visits (2000 and 2003 respectively). Many of our own high-class Australian bred mares have successfully conceived with frozen semen and the resultant progeny are very, very promising. It's an exciting future for the Friesian horse 'Down Under' !!

## Explanation of the Studbooks

**Studbook** – this is colloquially known as the ‘Main’ studbook and horses must be 3 years and over and have two Studbook parents to be eligible for entry. The Studbook is further divided up by predicates or awards for excellence ie – Ster, Model, Preferent and Prestatie or ‘Performance Mother’ (for mares whose offspring are excelling in the sporting disciplines). The only way a stallion can gain entrance to this Studbook is to pass stringent testing including semen analysis, x-rays, performance exams (both ridden and harness) and be judged and graded on his manners, behaviour, temperament, ability and willingness to learn. Once he has passed all of these, only then can he be granted the privileged status of “Studbook” and he is given his new name and 3 digit Studbook number. Even then his status is not assured, as his offspring must then pass the progeny test before his rating is considered permanent.

**Foalbook** – this is the register for all Friesian foals of two Studbook parents prior to their testing and entry into the Main Studbook at 3 years of age. Horses that fail the entry judging remain in the Foalbook for life (this is most stallions as less than 1% will become Approved as sires!)

**B-Book 1 Studbook** – this is the adult Studbook for all Friesians who have been sired by *either* a Studbook stallion and a mare from either of the B-Books or by a licensed Foalbook stallion and a mare of any status. B-Book 1 horses are judged exactly the same as Main Studbook horses and are eligible for the same predicates. An interesting point to note is that our two highest ranking *Australian bred* (ie NOT imported) horses are both B-Book 1 and one has been awarded Ster, the other a 1<sup>st</sup> premie and Overall National Keuring Champion! B-Book 1 does not necessarily indicate lesser quality, and in the past has been all Australia has been able to offer prior to being able to import Main Studbook horses and frozen semen.

An important fact about B-Book 1 is that the offspring of horses registered in it are eligible to be “upgraded” to Main Studbook after 3 generations of breeding to Approved Studbook stallions. Naturally, this does depend on the quality of the horses themselves and the opinions of the FPS judging panel.

**B-Book 1 Foalbook** - is the register for all Friesian foals sired by either a Studbook stallion and a mare from either of the B-Books or by a licensed Foalbook stallion and a mare of any status. Foals are judged for entry into the Studbook at 3 years of age and as with Main Foalbook, those not considered good enough will remain in the Foalbook for life.

**B-Book 2** – is the register for all Friesians whose sire is not licensed, nor in the Studbook and from any mare, *regardless* of status. The FPS will not judge B-Book 2 horses, and thus they are not eligible for increases in status, nor for predicates.

For more information regarding the AFHS, please do not hesitate to visit our website at [www.horsetalk.co.nz/friesian/](http://www.horsetalk.co.nz/friesian/) or contact us via email – [afhs@hotmail.com](mailto:afhs@hotmail.com)

## **FAQ's – some answers to the most commonly asked questions about Friesian Horses**

### **1. Where does the Friesian horse come from?**

Friesian horses originated in a province of The Netherlands called Friesland.

### **2. What do Friesian horses look like?**

Friesian horses are always black with feathering on their lower legs, luxurious long manes and thick, long tails. With a noble and expressive head, these horses create a stir wherever they go! Friesian stallions should be at least 1.60m by the age of four, and mares a minimum of 1.50m.

### **3. What can I use a Friesian horse for?**

Friesians are a *very* versatile breed. They can be used for dressage, are very successful at driving, or may even be used for light farm work, or pleasure riding! Friesians love to be around people and are always eager to please – you can do basically anything with them.

### **4. Where can I see a Friesian horse?**

If you contact the AFHS, they can put you in touch with breeders in your area.

### **5. How much is a Friesian horse going to cost?**

Although rare in Australia (around 110 in total!), the Friesian horse is in high demand. Whilst they usually cost more than your average riding horse, prices vary depending on bloodlines, age and training. Fillies are usually higher priced than colts and geldings, and Main Foalbook and Studbook horses are usually more expensive than those from the B-Books. The majority are sold for over \$10,000 and this can increase to up to \$20,000 or more consistent with bloodlines and training.

### **6. Where can I get a Friesian horse?**

Unfortunately, the AFHS cannot recommend breeders to you, but if you join the Society, most breeders advertise in our newsletter when they have stock for sale, or you can contact us via email ([afhs@hotmail.com](mailto:afhs@hotmail.com)) for breeders in your area.

### **7. Is crossbreeding allowed?**

Under no circumstances will crossbreeding be recognised or condoned by the AFHS. Members are advised to refer to the Rules and Regulations to ensure they understand the AFHS stance on this issue.