

Equine News Q&A

Q: *I breed warmbloods for use as show hunters and foxhunters. How much can I expect them to grow during their first year of life, and how does this growth compare to that of Thoroughbreds?*

EN: Mature body size is genetically predetermined, but growth rate can be influenced by a number of factors: environment, nutrition and management. Optimal growth rate results in a desirable body size at a specific age with the least amount of developmental problems. Managing growth in horses becomes a balance between producing an athlete for a particular purpose without creating skeletal problems that will reduce a horse's longevity.

Kentucky Equine Research has performed extensive studies on the growth of Thoroughbred foals, recording weight and height information regularly. We compared the information from these studies with the data collected from researchers that measured body weight and withers height in over 600 Hanoverian foals from birth to seven months of age.

The Hanoverian foals were slightly heavier at birth. They grew more slowly than their Thoroughbred peers for the first three months and remained slightly smaller until five months of age. By seven months of age, however, the Hanoverian and Thoroughbred foals were nearly identical in weight and height.



PHOTO CREDIT | MARK LLEWELLYN

Data collected on Thoroughbreds and Hanoverians reveal similar growth rates by seven months of age

In terms of percentage of mature weight and height, it is necessary to make the assumptions that an average adult Thoroughbred weighs approximately 570 kg (1140 lb) and stands 165 cm (16.1 hands), while an average adult Hanoverian might be closer to 650 kg (1430 lb) in weight and only slightly taller (167 cm; 16.1 3/4 hands). At seven months of age, therefore, Hanoverians have attained about 41% of their adult body weight and 83% of their adult withers height. 🏠



**Reprint Courtesy of
Kentucky Equine Research, Inc.**

3910 Delaney Ferry Road
Versailles, KY 40383
Phone: 859-873-1988
Fax: 859-873-3781
Order Department: 888-873-1988
www.ker.com
info@ker.com