



Lusitano Stud Relies on Intacol

Portuguese Team Member integral to success

PHOTOGRAPHS | XAVIER DE LIMA

The well-bred mares raised by Xavier de Lima are often retained for breeding purposes. Many of the mares, such as these shown, are trained to drive.

Since its inception 20 years ago, Kentucky Equine Research (KER) has been committed to excellence in equine nutrition on an international scale. The company's Team Members, a group of feed manufacturers with the same fierce commitment to quality as KER, span the globe, manufacturing and distributing feed in six continents.

KER has maintained a powerful presence in Europe since its fledging days, and each Team Member on the European roster continues to grow year after year, increasing KER's global presence.

Intacol SA, a KER Team Member with headquarters in Portugal, recently added one of the world's most influential Lusitano breeding farms to its list of clients. Xavier de Lima, the second largest Lusitano breeding establish-

ment in the world, is now a client of the Portuguese company.

The Xavier de Lima family has been specializing in Lusitano breeding since the stud's foundation in 1962. It is currently the largest Lusitano breeding operation in Europe. The Interagro Lusitano Stud in Brazil maintains a larger population of Lusitanos. However, Xavier de Lima's sizable herd includes 366 mares registered in the stud book, and more than 650 horses in total.

Longtime farm manager Cesar Pitta assumes the technical responsibility of reinforcing Xavier de Lima's main objective to breed Lusitano horses capable of competing against the modern European breeds, while retaining the breed's well-known characteristics which are such a differentiating factor in this most noble breed of horses.

The introduction of KER-formulated feeds combined with Intacol's knowledge of the local environment has already produced positive results, with significant competition results and a healthy herd of well-grown foals this season.

Horses bred and reared at Xavier de Lima stud have been successfully exported throughout Europe and Latin America. They are used in all types of sporting activities and are in high demand for breeding. The stud mares are trained for carriage driving and are retained on the farm as breeding stock.



palomino, black, and dun horses within Xavier de Lima's herd.

Inspection by the stud book committee of the Associação Portuguesa do Cavallo Puro Sangue Lusitano (Portuguese Lusitano Breed Association) occurs annually and grades

horses on their quality. A scale of 0 to 100 is used. Xavier de Lima's high-quality breeding stock regularly scores over 75 points, and the stud is regarded throughout Europe as producers of superior-quality breeding stock.

Although members of the breed are traditionally gray or bay, the more uncommon palomino, black, dun, and buckskin colors are highly

One of the most high-profile recognitions for the Xavier de Lima stud was obtained in 2003 by Que-Denário, a gray stallion based in Sweden with dressage rider Nina Karlsson. Que-Denário obtained the highest quality score of the 56 stallions in the assessment and was subsequently authorized as a "breed improver" for Lusitano horses in Sweden.

Intacol began working with KER a few years ago. "When we first decided we wanted to work with an equine nutrition consultation company, we decided to choose the best. We selected KER. Now, three years after making that choice, we would not have picked differently," said Carlos Relvas, administrator (manager) of Intacol. "KER has helped Intacol change from a horse feed manufacturer

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sought after. The stud is attentive to market requirements and has endeavored to breed animals of different colors while maintaining high standards of quality, and one will commonly observe a significant proportion of

to a real partner for our clients. We take care of nutrition, and they handle the genetic improvement, day-to-day work, and pleasure of horse ownership.”

One facet of KER that drew the Portuguese company to KER was its world-renowned research program. “Research is what differentiates truly innovative companies from other consultants. KER provides us with the most recent research findings, and these findings are applied to our products.”

As in other parts of the world, the cost of feeding horses in Portugal and surrounding areas is escalating. Like other KER Team Members, Intacol is facing the challenge head-on. “We are experiencing a crisis in the animal feed market. We truly believe that the answer to any crisis is quality, and that means offering our customers the best feed possible.”

THE LUSITANO HORSE

The Lusitano derives its name from the word “lusitania” which in Latin means Portugal, the breed’s country of origin. The Lusitano originated in Iberia, a region in southwest Europe which includes Portugal, Spain, Andorra, and Gibraltar. Although the use of the Iberian horse is known since the wars in the 1100s, improvements in the breed are a part of history’s course. The Lusitano horse has historical links to the military, bullfighting, and the classical training methods of the “haute école,”

and with the progressive requirement of speed and elasticity in order to be more adapted to field battle, improvements were of extreme importance for military success.

Today, Lusitanos are also recognized for their ability to perform well in a variety of modern-day equestrian disciplines. The genetic background of the Lusitano stems from the



Sorraia (another Portuguese breed), Barb, and Arab. The Lusitano is highly prized in Portugal and is especially valued as the mount of Portuguese bullfighters. Portugal is an active bullfighting country where bulls are not killed, and Lusitanos are used due to their agility,

speed, and extremely calm temperament. Lusitanos are growing in popularity throughout Europe and America and are increasingly used for pleasure riding and top-level dressage.

One of the most defining characteristics of the Lusitano horse is the well-defined head. The Lusitano has a medium-length, narrow head with a relatively unpronounced lower jaw and long cheek. Breed members possess a slightly convex profile and an upward-curving forehead with large, elliptical eyes. The ears are of average length and are delicate, narrow, and expressive. Another typical feature is the sloping croup and low-set tail, which should appear as a perfect square when stopped in a lateral view. 