

SELECTING A STALLION FOR YOUR MARE

By Steven A. Sansone



In the next few days Thoroughbred breeding sheds throughout the United States officially open. The uninitiated might think that this coordinates with Valentine's Day. A mere coincidence. Rather because a mare's gestation period is typically eleven months and ten days, breeders prefer that the foals are born in the months of January through May. This is a major undertaking of time, resources, and money. What should a mare owner who wants to breed his mare consider? After breeding mares of my own and mating selections for many clients for many years following are a few tips that I would like to share with you.

1. Establish a goal. Dependent upon your breed and discipline decide what you envision the prospective foal to be. Do you want to breed for the commercial/sales market, racing? Upon a goal being established, following are steps for mare owner to deliberate in selecting a stallion.

2. Determine your budget. Stud fees within the industry are wide ranging. Make sure your Mare is worthy of the stallion and his stud fee. Be careful not to over or under breed. Consider the Median Sales record and the racetrack success of the stallions under consideration

3. Stallion Service Contracts are varied. Most farms will consider a variety of Stallion Service Contracts. Following are agreements that may be available.

1. *Foal Share.* This is where both the owner of the Stallion and the Mare owner partner on the foal. Own party provides the Mare and the other provides the Stallion. No money is exchanged for the breeding. Details of ownership position, sale, and performance to be decided upon by the parties.

2. *Co Breed*. Like the Foal Share no money is exchanged. Parties provide the Stallion and the Mare. In this contract the owner of the foal is owned 100% by the owner of the Mare. The owner of the Stallion is listed as a joint breeder. This is relevant in para-mutual states where there are Breeders' Awards to Breeders of record.
3. *Stands and Nurses*. the most popular contract within the Thoroughbred industry. A Mare owner submits the pedigree and produce record of the mare for approval by the Manager of the Stallion. If approved and the Mare is bred and conceives the stud fee is due and payable when the foal "stands and nurses."
4. *No Guarantee*. In this contract the Mare owner receives a significant discount. It can be as high as 35%. However, purchaser must pay the fee upon execution of the contract. Just as it is titled, no guarantee of a foal and no refund if the Mare does not have a live foal.

4. Evaluate your Mare. Assess the Mare's conformation strengths and weakness. For example, if she is shallow in the hip, consider stallions that possess strong hips. Research what mating's of successful horses have crossed well with your Mare's pedigree. If it is a Maiden Mare or a new, first year Stallion research what relatives have produced.

5. Evaluate the Stallion. Assess the stallion's strengths and weakness. Review both his sire line and female family. Does he come from a sire producing lineage? Do you like his conformation, his performance record? Was the Stallion sound? If, he has offspring is he stamping his foals, duplicating his strengths, or is the Stallion mare dominate? In other words, do his foals resemble their dams? Does his pedigree cross well with your Mare's?

Assuming your desire is to produce an exceptional individual, you want to breed to eliminate undesired traits and go to the strengths. It is important that you not breed extremes such as a 15.2 hand Mare to a 17.0 hand Stallion. Rarely will the mating of extremes result in a to like." This is where the parents are similar in conformation. No extremes.

This is an overview as there are many other things to consider when planning a mating. Feel free to contact me for more information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Steven A. Sansone has conducted mating's for over 300 mares and is President of Long Grove Bloodstock LLC. One of the recent successes is the current 3 year-old stakes winning filly, LAOBANONAPRAYER. She is her sire's, Laoban, third leading runner. In 5 starts she has Two Wins, Twice Second, and Once Third. Her wins were in the New York Stallion Fifth Avenue S. & Maid of the Mist S. Her earnings to date are \$252,400.00. You can reach Steven for expert services at info@theequineexpert.com.