

# Broodmare Selection

---

**Dr. Chantal Spleiss – July 2019**

I found that it is easier to sell a broodmare than a well-broke riding mare! This concerns me... not only because people who actually ride get fewer and fewer but also the skill level of the riders is decreasing. The market therefore shifts towards breeding animals versus using animals and this will impact selection over time.

For now though there are many excellent broodmares on the market at very reasonable prices. How do you choose the one that will produce skilled and marketable offspring?

## PROVEN VS UNPROVEN

---

Often proven mares (LTE or PE) are way less affordable than unproven mares. If the mare is not proven, find out why and stay away from mares with conformation and lameness issues that are not caused by an obvious accident. Then do your homework and look deeper into the produce ability of her female family. I explain in my book the importance of gender-specific selection pathways (which explains the colt & filly factor); this is certainly an important consideration when choosing a broodmare!

## CONFORMATION AND MOVEMENT

---

Always remember: you ride the horse - not the paper! Make sure the mare has a balanced conformation and decent movement for your discipline. There are so many things to consider when breeding that correcting conformation should definitely not be on top of your list! She doesn't need to be perfect, but balanced and no major faults. A good mover is not only pretty but often is also more functional and therefore easier to train in regards to physical aspects.

## DISPOSITION AND SELECTION

---

This is very hard to judge unless you trained the broodmare and/or have a good insight into her trainability (under saddle). Her first few foals will show what she passes on especially if she was bred to a stallion that you already know how he produces or to a range of different stallions. Trainability is a major factor in today's show business as the trainers don't spend time with a horse that is slower to pick up things and many owners don't spend the extra money to give that horse an honest chance. For the broodmare owner this is the highest risk: if none of the first few foals perform, your return on investment or financial gain will be decreased. By the time you have the experience of what a mare produces, some 5 to 8 years have passed... and she already has a handful of foals on the ground. If the foals stand up to your breeding goals and expectations, you sure can be happy and make her a cornerstone of your breeding program. If not, do move her on! Somebody else might look at her pedigree differently, make a totally different breeding choice and hit the jackpot. There is always that chance you give the mare and somebody else! If a broodmare though produces foals with major issues, your only choice is to

cull her and sell her as riding horse (if past injuries allow) or pasture ornament. You will lose money in such a case but you stay honest and truly try to better the breed!

## SUMMARY

---

Breeders are broodmare owners and as such that special part of the equine community that needs the most knowledge and experience to produce skilled offspring that is in demand. The breeders also are responsible for selection! This is a huge responsibility that requires courage, a big heart and the ability to take a financial loss to ensure the mare's (and breed's) welfare.