

IDHSNA Herd: A Snapshot of Statistics and Trends

There are many benefits associated with being a member of the IDHSNA. Members receive the Blarney yearbook, discounted registration and inspection fees and may participate in award programs. The most important benefit of membership, however, is perhaps one least considered when deciding to renew or become a new IDHSNA member. That benefit is, providing support for the large, ongoing task of recording and verifying information on the ID and IDSH herds in North America!

The IDHSNA herd database is an electronic database that was originally input from paper records accumulated during the first decade of the Society's operation. The database has been continuously updated and maintained since that time. All the information breeders and owners provide during the registration of their horses is entered in appropriate fields in the database for safe keeping. Both hard and electronic copies of the paper files used for input are stored in an off-site repository for backup purposes. The IDHSNA database currently contains detailed information on over 2,200 horses registered with the Society, and well over another 5,000 horses found in the back-breeding of our IDHSNA-registered herd. Aside from our precious horses themselves, this accumulation of data and knowledge is the greatest asset of the IDHSNA.

As the Society begins 2020, let us take stock of where the registered herd is in terms of numbers, productivity, age distribution, and gender. In the absence of hard data IDHSNA members are left to base breeding decisions on assumptions, hearsay, and their own, perhaps geographically-limited, experience. Hopefully, the data presented in this article will begin to provide a basis for a shared understanding of the general characteristic of our herd and where future challenges and opportunities may lie.

THE IDHSNA HERD IS ROUGHLY ¼ PUREBRED ID AND ¾ ID SPORTHORSES

As of the start of 2020, there were 2,051 IDs and IDSHs registered with the IDHSNA who had not been reported as either deceased or exported. Of these 2,051 horses currently on the Society's books, 572 are purebred IDs and 1,479 are ID sporthorses (Table 1). Of our 572 registered purebreds, roughly 60% are inspected and approved. This percentage is substantially higher than for the sporthorse herd where roughly 31% of registered horses are inspected and approved. In the case of both purebreds and sporthorses, there are a number of registered horses that either are too young to be inspected yet or are geldings which would not contribute to the breeding herd even if inspected. These factors, among others, reduce the overall percentage of inspected horses in the herd.

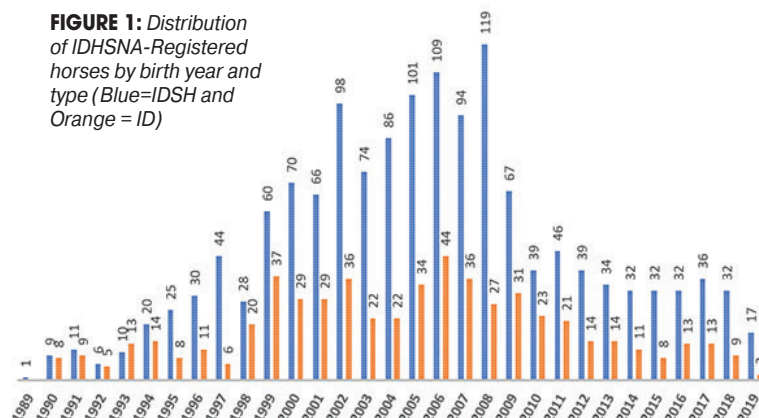
Table 1. IDHSNA Registered Purebred and Sporthorse Herd*

IDHSNA REG STATUS	GELDINGS	MARES	STALLIONS	TOTAL
ID	76	115	104	295
Class 1	8	27	19	54
Class 2	0	5	3	8
Class 3	0	0	0	0
Uninspected	68	83	82	233
RID	61	188	28	277
IDSH	420	463	186	1069
IDSH-1/8	3	5	2	10
IDSH-COP	12	17	4	33
RIDSH	79	240	23	342
AID	0	7	0	7
SID	0	18	0	18
TOTAL	651	1053	347	2051

* Horses with completed registrations as of 12-31-2019. Numbers exclude registered horses reported as either deceased or exported.

REGISTRATION OF HORSES BORN SINCE 2012 HAVE LARGELY STABILIZED AFTER A DRAMATIC DROP IN REGISTRATIONS IN 2009 AND 2010

(Figure 1) plots the number of IDs and IDSHs registered with the IDHSNA by the birth year of the horses and shows that registration of horses born since 2012 has remained relatively steady for both IDs and IDSHs. The graph shows the birth year of the horses, but not necessarily the year they were registered with the society. Therefore, the numbers in the chart for a particular year do not represent the total number of horses registered by the Society in that year. Not all horses are registered in the birth year; some horses may be registered in subsequent years.



The size, diversity, and productivity of the IDHSNA's Purebred mare herd is the subject of much discussion and concern on social media. Purebred mares are the crown jewel of our society. IDHSNA members have gone to tremendous effort and expense to import and breed these lovely animals.

(Table 2) shows the size and inspection status of the IDHSNA purebred ID mare herd by the birth year. Taking into consideration that horses born in 2016-18 have not generally been eligible for inspection yet, overall about 75% of our purebred mares have been inspected and passed. Due to the sporadic nature of the locations of IDHSNA inspections, percentages of inspected horses for a particular birth year tend to stabilize as the years pass and more opportunities for inspection in more places are presented.

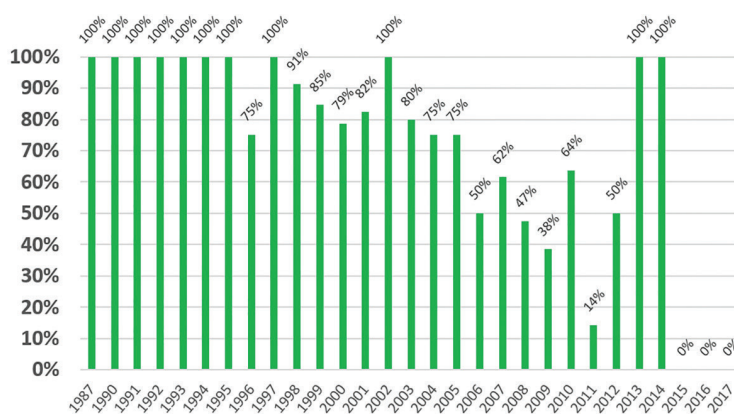
(Figure 2) shows the percentage of inspected and approved purebred mares in the IDHSNA herd by birth year.

Table 2. Inspection Status of Purebred ID Mares registered with the IDHSNA, by birth year

Birth Year	INSPECTED		Total	% APPROVED
	NO	YES		
1987	0	1	1	100%
1990	0	8	8	100%
1991	0	6	6	100%
1992	0	4	4	100%
1993	0	9	9	100%
1994	0	9	9	100%
1995	0	5	5	100%
1996	0	8	8	100%
1997	1	3	4	75%
1998	0	9	9	100%
1999	2	21	23	91%
2000	2	11	13	85%
2001	3	11	14	79%
2002	3	14	17	82%
2003	0	13	13	100%
2004	2	8	10	80%
2005	5	15	20	75%
2006	5	15	20	75%
2007	8	8	16	50%
2008	5	8	13	62%
2009	10	9	19	47%
2010	8	5	13	38%
2011	4	7	11	64%
2012	6	1	7	14%
2013	5	5	10	50%
2014	0	4	4	100%
2015	0	3	3	100%
2016*	5	0	5	0%
2017*	4	0	4	0%
2018*	5	0	5	0%
TOTAL	83	220	303	73%

* Mares born in 2016-18 were generally too young to go through inspection at as of 2019.

FIGURE 2: Percent of Purebred ID Mares Registered with the IDHSNA that have been APPROVED: by year of birth.



As any breeder knows, getting a purebred ID mare through inspection (or importing an inspected mare) is only the first step to the goal of having that mare produce offspring to help grow and diversify the IDHSNA purebred herd. Special recognition should be given to those mares (and owners!) who successfully, and substantially, add to the IDHSNA ID herd through their breeding programs. (Table 3) shows the 35 highest producing ID mares (as listed as the Dams of registered offspring in the IDHSNA database) by the number of purebred offspring produced and registered. These 35 mares produced approximately 1/3 of the purebred horses registered with IDHSNA. It is important to note that in addition to these 35 mares, there are another 334 different purebred mares in the Society's records listed as the dams of between one and four purebred ID offspring. Therefore, the society has 369 different ID mares as dams of the 692 (both living and deceased) purebred horses that have been registered with our society. These mares represent a broad diversity of bloodlines and have provided a strong foundation for a diverse and robust IDHSNA breeding herd.

(Table 4) shows the ranking of the highest producing ID and IDSH stallions represented in the IDHSNA database. Stallions with at least 15 registered offspring are shown in the table. These 35 stallions are predominantly Purebred IDs with 4 IDSH stallions included.

TRENDS IN INBREEDING COEFFICIENTS FOR PUREBRED IDHSNA-REGISTERED HORSES

There is broad diversity of both mares and stallions producing purebred offspring for the IDHSNA herd. Reviewing the population of purebred IDs relative to the standard measure of genetic diversity—inbreeding coefficients—fully one-half of our purebreds have an inbreeding level below 0.9%.

In terms of trends in the levels of inbreeding over time, a simple linear regression of inbreeding level (coefficient) explained by the age of the horses does show an upward trend over time in the coefficients. While this trend is highly statistically significant (at the 99% level of confidence), the absolute size of the change year-to-year is quite small. The interpretation of this trend from our current purebred herd is that at the current rate of change the average inbreeding coefficient for the herd would increase by 1%

roughly every 40 years. Because the trend is statistically significant this is something for breeders to be aware of, but the size and speed of the trend is not particularly alarming.

Table 3. Purebred ID Mares producing five or more Purebred Offspring in the IDHSNA Registry*

PUREBRED ID MARE	Birth Year	Deceased (D)	Reg. Pure ID Offspring	Reg. SHorse Offspring	Total IDHS-NA-Reg Offspring
Hawklands Silver Rose	1998		12		12
Roma Blue Hawk	1994		10		10
Ballybeg Pride	1994	D	9		9
Knockaderry Pearl	1999	D	9		9
Loguestown Classic	1998		8		8
Prescott's Magnolia	2003		8		8
Ballyhehan Beauty	1994	D	7		7
Bonnie Belle Supreme	1991	D	7		7
Di Lady	1992	D	7		7
Ginger's Beauty	1999		7		7
Gloster Hill	1990	D	7		7
Joyfull	1997	D	7		7
Moorpark Girl	1999		7		7
Sumas Keepsake	1985	D	7		7
Winmaur Over the Top	1995		7		7
Winmaur Bright Olive	1993		6	1	7
Ardvarnock Gem	1998		6		6
Graceland Pride	1995	D	6		6
M.F.F. Rivi Era Girl	2003		6		6
Manu Forti's Lady Heathcliffe	2002		5	1	6
Mountain Dove	1991	D	5	1	6
Tess's Golden Heather	1993		5	1	6
Amber Maid	1993		5		5
Cappah Lass	1996		5		5
Dandelion Moxie	2000		5		5
Kerryoak Lady Dawn	1991	D	5		5
Lionwood Waterwitch	2001		5		5
Loughleigh Lady	1994		5		5
Mac's Colmerin	1990	D	5		5
Opium Poppy	1988	D	5		5
Pearl Drop	1996		5		5
Rhyds Sea Diamond	2000		5		5

* For a complete list of mares producing purebred offspring, see the IDHSNA website.

2020 AND BEYOND: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The IDHSNA and its members are caretakers of a rare and wonderful breed of horses—the purebred Irish Draught. This purebred herd, in turn, provides the genetic stock for crosses that are the wonderful and multi-talented ID sporthorses.

Protection and growth of a genetically diverse and healthy purebred herd is the goal of any rare breed organization. One challenge facing the IDHSNA going forward is encouraging the breeding and registration of purebred IDs. Figure 3 shows the numbers of fillies and colts/geldings registered with the IDHSNA by their birth year from 2013 to 2018. These registrations range from a low of eight horses to a high of 15. These levels of breeding/registration are not high enough to fully replace aging and dying horses currently in our registry. Solutions to low ID breeding and registration is likely multifaceted. Solutions might include the Society encouraging the registration of IDs currently in NA but not registered, publicizing and celebrating the purebred ID births and registrations that do occur, providing clear and supportive information and resources for breeders, and considering policies like Purebred Amnesty which opens up the approved breeding herd to more horses.

An associated potential challenge regarding our purebred ID herd is one that bears more study. While our purebred herd comes from a large and diverse population of purebred mares and stallions (as reflected in our relatively low inbreeding coefficients), some of those sires and dams are disproportionately represented in the herd. For instance, the six stallions producing the greatest number of purebred offspring are sires to fully one-quarter of our purebred herd. The 10 highest producing purebred sires produced one-third of our purebred herd. Most of these highly productive purebred stallions are now either retired or deceased, but their impact lives on through their progeny and their progeny's progeny. In the future the Society might consider conducting research into herd relatedness to further explore this topic.

Recently there have been several Purebred IDs imported into the United States from Ireland and Great Britain. Clearly there is unmet demand for purebreds in this country. The purebred ID is nearly unique among breeds as being well-suited to the largest single horse-buyer market segment--owner-amateurs competing at the lower levels in a broad variety of disciplines. One challenge for breeders and the Society is continuing to spread the message that Purebred IDs of the same quality as found in Ireland are bred and sold in NA—generally for less money, given the costs associated with importation.

Table 4. Highest Producing ID and IDSH Stallions in the IDHSNA Registry**

STALLION	Birth Year	Deceased (D) or Ex-ported (E)	Purebred Female offspring	Purebred Male Offspring	Sporthorse Female Offspring	Sporthorse Male Off-spring	Total IDHSNA-Registered Offspring
Bridon Beale Street	2000	D	2	3	55	39	99
Touch of the Blues	1987		24	26	22	27	99
Mountain Pearl	1989	E,D	11	16	34	32	93
It's the Luck of the Irish	1996	D	3	3	35	25	66
Snowford Bellman	1990	D	11	10	17	21	59
Happy Ending	1988	D	6	4	22	22	54
Glenlara	1987	D	12	13	13	14	52
Rockrimmon Silver Diamond	1994	E	13	12	10	14	49
O'Leary's Irish Diamond	1994	D	2	9	16	21	48
Brandenburg's Windstar*	1994	D			21	25	46
Banks Fee Daniel	1987	D	4	4	13	19	40
Huntingfield Proud Tim	1993	D	5	16	12	7	40
Bridon Belfrey	2001		9	8	14	4	35
Foxglen Himself	1991		6	4	11	10	31
KEC Double Diamond	1996	D	6	7	11	7	31
The Pride of Gloster	1993	D	9	5	9	8	31
Braveheart	2000		4	7	7	10	28
Hangon Johnny	1988	D	4	2	13	8	27
Snowford O'Donnell	1991		4	1	14	8	27
Coronea Loughine*	1985	D			12	14	26
Flagmount King	1981	D	6	5	6	8	25
Harkaway Lionhawk	2001	E	10	8	3	4	25
Flag of Diamonds	2000		1	3	10	10	24
Silver Galtee*	1996	D			12	12	24
Irish Rover	1993		1	1	9	11	22
The King of Hearts	1994	D	1		8	12	21
Cradilo	1993		2		8	10	20
PL Diamond Hill	2004				10	10	20
Winmaur Sargeant Pepper	1996	E	2	8	5	5	20
Dandelion Diamond Rebel	2001		3	2	9	5	19
Rhyd's Sea Quest	1994	D	5	1	2	10	18
Kildalton Gold	1985	D	4	5	3	5	17
Corrcullen	1996	D	2	6	6	2	16
Cruising*	1985	D			5	10	15
Grey Macha	1981	D	1	3	4	7	15

* IDSH stallions

** For a complete list of ID and IDSH Stallions represented in the IDHSNA herd, see the IDHSNA website.

Figure 3. Purebred IDs Registered with the IDHSNA: by Birth Year

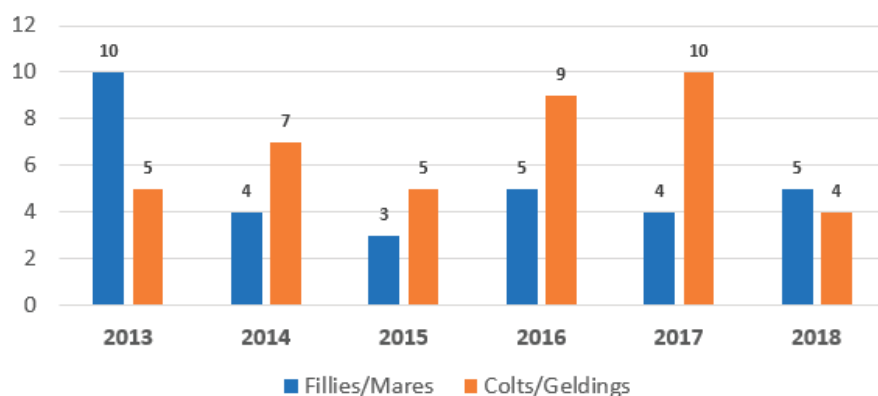


Table 5. Values and Trends in Inbreeding Coefficient for Purebred ID Herd

INBREEDING STATISTIC	VALUE
Average Inbreeding Coefficient for IDHSNA-registered IDs	1.38%
Median inbreeding coefficient (one-half of horses are greater than this value and one-half are lower)	0.9%
Minimum inbreeding coefficient	0.0%
Maximum inbreeding coefficient	8.5%

Overall, this snapshot shows a picture of a herd that is strong and diverse with no clear indication of genetic narrowing. While current levels of purebred registrations are concerning, the Society has the structure and tools to address this challenge going forward.

If you enjoyed this article on the state of the breed, and made it this far, we respectfully request you take a moment to review the horses you own on the herd list at the back of this magazine. If your horse is incorrectly recorded, for example, gelded, deceased or exported, please email the registrar at IDHSNA@hotmail.com with the particulars. Thank you for your assistance!



Rest In Peace KEC ELEGENCE, aka "NILES" ~ 1997-2019



It is with a very heavy heart that I lost my IDSH Niles to complications from melanoma which led to colic. Niles was my 1st Irish horse and he made me totally fall in love with the breed! He was the horse of a lifetime that I miss everyday... Niles had so much humor and personality and was loved by all who knew him. Niles whinnied every time he heard my voice!! The morning he passed, I heard him whinny when I let out my dogs and I knew right away he was in distress. I immediately called the vet as I knew it was time for him to leave me and be pain free, it all happened in less than an hour and he was gone... He had his quirks but was just amazing! Niles was bred at KEC in Ireland. He was by Senang Hati, TB out of Scrahan Diamond, RID, his registered name was KEC Elegence. He sure did resemble his name. Elegant he sure was with his gleaming white tail and mane to

his dappled grey body and was an athletic gentle giant at 17hands. He started as a 4'6" jumper which I had no interest in pursuing but he was a brilliant mover and we competed in dressage and I won my 1st Blues with him!! He brought a smile to my whole body while riding him with such power yet light as a feather! I had so many firsts with him- blue ribbons, hunter paces, just plain fun!! I did a Lendon Gray clinic at the Cox's farm in Pennsylvania and we had a wonderful time and met many friends of the Irish community. Michelle Robbins was my partner there on her Gem! He was always playful, funny and just ate up attention! You could never leave anything he could reach near his stall as it would become a toy! My daughter rode him when she was 5 years old and that big ham took care of her and never put a foot out of place like he just knew! My husband who isn't a rider tacked him up with her and took him to the ring. I was at a concert when she called me after the fact and told me and I almost had a heart attack as he could be a lot of horse but she loved him and he knew it! I could go on and on about him and the love I have for him.... He was a once in a lifetime horse that I had the joy of having for 16 years. Rest easy my boy, until we meet again - I LOVE YOU!! ~Ann Conway