

## **ASSESSING THE ARABIAN FOAL**

### **1)What are your objectives as a breeder?**

To breed Arabian qualities with good conformation, temperament and the ability to perform. To help preserve a pool of the Crabbet horses to ensure they can be available for outcrossing for other breeders and to other Crabbet breeders to keep these special lines pure.

### **2)What factors influence your breeding decisions?**

A study of the pedigree and knowledge of the horses therein is important as a starting point. However, I believe it is important not to breed just from pedigree and it is necessary to study the horses you are using and their offspring. I do not just use my own stallions, as I feel it is sensible to use outside blood. I also prefer to breed only from the best and preferably mares of successful stallion producing lines. Study successful 'nicking' of bloodlines and individuals. Match stallion and mare for conformation. Action is very important and influences my decisions as I wish to ensure that the horse moves well. Knowledge of the breeding programmes at Worth and Crabbet is of great benefit as I can be confident that the resultant foals all have potential as performance horses in different spheres and have style with elegance and movement which comes from behind not just in front. I find that temperament generally goes with these bloodlines.

### **3)What do you look for in assessing foals?**

General conformation, style, action, presence, head and type, character. "Look at Me" qualities with special emphasis on movement and setting of tail carriage.

### **4)How soon do you think you can judge the youngster**

First impression at a few days old is very important. The head and eye setting and size of the eye can be assessed very quickly. An exceptionally good foal will be impressive up to weaning. Others may go through stages from about a month onwards. However, as a rule, foals should be assessed before a month old and then forgotten until they are over 4 years old! Check legs immediately and note problems early. Most legs

straighten up but it is useful for future breedings to note these points. Action at first outing can give an indication of how good this will be. It should be easily assessed within the first month. However, we did have a foal which didn't carry its tail for 3 months and has no problem now! In other words, you can decide how good a foal is within a week of birth.