

Equestrian Complex of the President of Turkmenistan



Divine horses, equine aristocrats, fabled steeds and effulgent diamonds - such flowery epithets have been lavished upon that unique equine breed - the Akhal-Teke. Prized by Alexander the Great, Darius the Great, Genghis Khan, Roman emperors, Marco Polo, and many others, the Akhal-Tekes have served people for over 3,000 years. These are one of the most beautiful, elegant and proud horses in the world. Its endurance and resistance to heat are second to none. The Akhal-Tekes come from the Kara-Kum Desert in Turkmenistan. It is a place for the toughest people and equines. The Turkmens would never have survived without the Akhal-Teke, and vice versa. Turkmens were the first desert people to produce a horse ideal for the tough desert conditions. Akhal-Teke horses are thought to be one of the oldest surviving horse breeds. Today's Akhal-Teke is a race, sports and endurance horse, and a riveting circus performer. The Akhal-Teke takes its name from a Turmen tribe Teke living in the Akhal oasis.

The Turkmen horse-breeders have been perfecting the appearance and muscular system of the thoroughbred racers for ages in concordance with traditions and customs of their ancestors. Traditions of selection and feeding, reproduction and training of horses were handed over from generation to generation. A Turkmen has never separated himself from a horse. A horse was a family member; it was cherished and valued higher than one's own life. A profile of Yanardag, a stallion known for its beautiful appearance and great racing qualities, is in the center of the State Emblem of Turkmenistan.



Today, there are 17 lines of Akhal-Teke breed that originate from renowned stallions. All these lines are represented in the Equestrian Complex of the President. The Complex is the largest in Central Asia with the total area of 56 hectares. It consists of a modern hippodrome with 5,000 seats, an arena for horse exhibitions, training rooms for jockeys, a big pool for horses, and 6 spacious stables where 300 horses can be kept at the same time. The Complex is very proud of its laboratory that provides DNA analysis. Also, there is a veterinary laboratory that regularly checks health conditions of the horses and

provide veterinary services including surgery, X-ray and ultrasound scanning.

Since 1992, every last Sunday of April is celebrated as the Day of Turkmen Horse. The Akhal-Teke horses were promulgated as the national heritage of Turkmen people. There are currently about 3,500 Akhal-Tekes in the world, mostly in Turkmenistan and Russia, although they are also found throughout Europe, Australia and North America.

Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, President of Turkmenistan pays a special attention to the Akhal-Teke horse breeding in the country seeing it as a part of Turkmen's cultural heritage and from the perspectives of preserving the breed from extinction. He is the author of the book "Akhal-Teke Horses – Our Pride and Glory". Mr. Berdymuhamedov is often seen riding a horse for sporting reasons and while making tours to inspect tree plantation campaigns on the Kopet-Dag mountains' foothills.