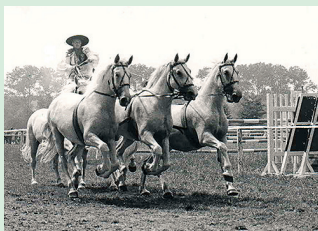




PROMINENT FIGURES OF THE EQUESTRIAN DAYS

There are many prominent figures that have helped organize the Equestrian Days in Kladruby nad Labem over the course of eighty years. In addition to the above-mentioned Ing. Jindřich Steinitz and Dr. Ing. František Lerche, there was also Ing. Jiří David, who was in charge of the sporting and technical execution of the programme; riders and coachmen included Pavel Liebich, Petr Vozáb, Jiří Kocman, Pavel Mack, František Machek and many others. Jaroslav Krejčík was the legendary presenter who was part of the Equestrian Days for thirteen years. Academic painter Emil Kotrba was behind the unmistakable graphic style of posters, invitations and drawings for catalogues for the entire event.



Petr Vozáb



Ing. Jiří David

RECENT PAST AND FUTURE OF EQUESTRIAN DAYS AT THE NATIONAL STUD KLADRUBY NAD LABEM

Equestrian Days were held once every two years, with two consecutive weekend days every two years since 1972. The chronicler of Kladruby nad Labem recorded this change as follows: *The equestrian day organized by the breeding company every other year achieved the highest success in its entire history this year. For the first time ever, it was held two Sundays in a row and was attended by almost the entire diplomatic corps from Prague. The number of paying spectators exceeded 10,000, with the guests' cars flooding the entire square and the adjacent area reserved for parking, bringing in over CZK 100,000.*

In 2016, the national stud switched to a more intimate presentation in the form of the Kladruher Horse Day, which is held annually in late May in the courtyard of the stud farm. However, the Equestrian Day was not cancelled, it just changed from a two-year cycle to a ten-year cycle. This year's Equestrian Day will be held on the 30th of May.



Herd of mares with csikós: J. Hlávka, J. Pelant, J. Mack, Equestrian Day, June 26, 2016



GREAT EQUESTRIAN DAY



KLADRUBY NAD LABEM

Saturday, May 30, 2026

at 1:00 PM



Exhibition Curators: Ing. Jiří Machek, Mgr. Renáta Tetřevová
Photos: archiv NHK

The National Stud at Kladruby nad Labem
Kladruby nad Labem 1



Facebook: nhkladruby
Instagram: narodni_hrebci
www.nhkladruby.cz



EQUESTRIAN DAYS OF THE NATIONAL STUD KLADRUBY NAD LABEM – 80 YEARS (1946–2026)





NATIONAL STUD KLADRUBY NAD LABEM

After World War II in 1945, the National Stud Kladruby nad Labem continued the breeding programme established after 1918, i.e. maintaining breeding of gray Kladruber horses (the black Kladruber herd was abolished in 1932), producing warmblood stallions for the purposes of breeding and warmblood sport horses, or English thoroughbreds, for the purposes of flat and steeplechase races.

In 1950, the stud farm acquired stables in the nearby Kolesa, which it began using for training racehorses.

Ing. Jindřich Steinitz became the first post-war manager, operating in Kladruby until 1948.



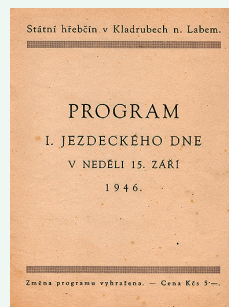
František Lerche:
Herd of mares with foals,
mid-20th century

FIRST EQUESTRIAN DAY AT THE NATIONAL STUD KLADRUBY NAD LABEM

On 15 September 1946, the first ever Equestrian Day was held to introduce Kladruber horses, the breeding work, and the equestrian skills of employees of the national stud to the public. This was a method of presentation introduced at large breeding institutions in Europe between the world wars, and in Bohemia after 1945. The director of the national stud at the time, Ing. Jindřich Steinitz, and future director Dr. Ing. František Lerche, were behind this impressive Kladruby tradition, which has lasted for eighty years, both actively participating in the event programme.

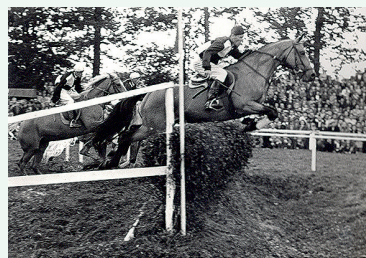
The Kladruby nad Labem memorial book records the event as follows: *On 15 September, an equestrian day was held here in the enclosure behind the gate next to the Paddock. Senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture from the horse breeding department, officials of the district national committee from Pardubice, many guests, and a large audience were present. The ceremony was opened by Ing. Fr. Lerche.*

The programme included a demonstration of the stud's breeding horses, namely: breeding stallions and a herd of dams, while the gray Kladruber horses enjoyed the most attention. There was also a 1,200 m gallop race for young horses, and a 4,500 m hunting ride. The demonstration of a turnout of Kladruber stallions, impeccably controlled by Václav Krejčík, was a great success. There was even a demonstration of an obstacle course. The programme was followed by a dance at the state inn.



BEGINNING OF A TRADITION

The first Equestrian Day had such a positive response from the public that other equestrian days followed at two-year intervals, their popularity growing rapidly. In 1954, 5,500 spectators attended the event, with 7,000 spectators in 1956. The programme also grew over the years, becoming more diverse and offering viewers an attractive spectacle, although the primary goal was not to provide an entertaining show, but to present breeding and the honest, hard work of the employees. In the 1950s and 1960s, dynamic competitions in the form of horseback hunting and obstacle races were particularly popular. The 'Cena Koles' was a regularly held 2,400-m race over wicker obstacles for three-year-old and older horses, and there was also the 3,200-m Kladrubská Steeplechase for four-year-old and older horses. Another interesting event was horseback hunting on dun horses, intended for young horses from a special herd originating from the Kinsky breed.



Hunting race of dun horses,
Equestrian Day, September 14,
1958

PRESENTATION OF GRAY KLADRUBER HORSES

The public learned about the breeding of gray Kladruber horses through several performances, which became a permanent fixture of the equestrian days' programme.

The opening ceremony included a demonstration of breeding stallions, followed by performances by horn blowers, carriage rides, and demonstrations of various types of harness. From the eighth Equestrian Day on, stud farm employees began to present multi turnout, initially with a 6 horses, and each subsequent year at least one horse was added. This continued until 1979, when Jiří Kocman demonstrated a 20 horses in hand. After this, 'only' 16 horses turnout were demonstrated, with the exception of 2008, when Petr Vozáb demonstrated a 22 horses in hand.



Demonstration of 16 horses in hand,
J. Kocman, Equestrian Day, July 10
and 17, 1977



Trumpeters on Kladruber gray mares,
Equestrian Day, July 10 and 17 1983



EQUESTRIAN VAULTING

All the Equestrian Days included a performance by young children. In 1946, children of local employees, as well as children from Kladruby nad Labem, gathered around the local Sokol club at the time and demonstrated their equestrian and gymnastic skills on the brown pony Pepíček, who was later replaced by Shetland pony Ferda. After the secondary agricultural school was established in 1952, the Kladruby children were joined by apprentices, who later also demonstrated pushball matches.



Children's performance with pony
Šotek, led by F. Machek, Equestrian
Day, July 1 and 8, 1979



Pushball match performed by students
of the High school of horse breeding
and riding Kladruby nad Labem,
Equestrian Day, June 26, 2016

UNCHANGED PROGRAMME ITEMS



Quadrille, Equestrian Day, July 10 and 17, 1983

The programmes and choreographies at Equestrian Days were constantly changing and developing. Sport horses, racehorses, and Kladruber horses had various performances. However, there are some points that spectators have come to expect, remaining unchanged. These include an emotional demonstration of a herd of breeding mares with csikós horse herders, graceful quadrille rides and a pas de deux, dynamic jumping demonstrations and adrenaline-pumping Hungarian post, which were even performed three at a time in the 1970s and 1980s, one consisting of five chestnut mares, the second of brown mares and the third of Kladruber gray mares.



Hungarian post, M. Starczewski,
Equestrian Day, 1970s