



Mondays with DAVID ALLAN



A Kodiak colt being shown at Fairyhouse.

Sire-centricity: The virus has spread

READERS of this column may have come across its references to Sire-centricity – the syndrome in which South Africa’s buyers focus on the progeny of only a few stallions, rejecting many others either out of hand or unless the price is the cost of a few months keep.

It is a well-established syndrome although a small number of trainers (who look for “trainer’s horses” and can pick ‘em) are the efficient exceptions who prove the rule. Other trainers may be constrained by what their owners want. Even so, there is little encouragement for breeders going for the right and suitable matings so as to breed winners.

The syndrome is self-perpetuating. Sales companies reject or downgrade the progeny of “unwanted” stallions. This is a mysterious process, given that sales companies exist first and foremost to serve (and earn money from) breeder/vendors. Yes, it is their job to be market makers i.e. market their sales

for all they are worth, and it can be argued that their job is easier if everyone’s favourite sires are well represented, thus also maximising turnover.

UK and Irish yearling sales are in full swing, a little hesitantly. The populations are more or less the same whichever side of the Irish Sea, so when the news spread of Tattersalls dealing with what they believe to be too many foals for sale by rejecting an unheard of number, many of the same comments about the bitter blow to many year-after-year breeders were repeated over and over: “*Sire power seems to be everything*”, “*Sales companies are telling us what stallions to use*”, **(to page 2)**

DAVID ALLAN (from p1)

"There had better not be any worse pages than mine accepted" (standard response: "Oh there will be"); "What the xf#% do I do now for cash flow?"

Overproduction is upon UK and Ireland (again). The writing was on the wall last year. The top end is strong with more major buyers than in the days of only half a dozen, but the rest of it is chancy.

The South Africa syndrome has at its heart a dangerous dearth of racehorse owners and little discernible marketing of the sport (its racing and sales events) to the population at large. The "message" that emerges if at all is overlaid with extraordinary emphasis on betting which is a minority leisure activity. Those who actually race in South Africa, or follow racing if not present, nearly all punt and get deep into exotic bets which are largely unfamiliar in UK and Ireland. UK betting service companies get most of their "exotics" income from South Africa.



TOO many of these Foal Sales Foals being produced, they say.

But the sire-centric virus has spread.

Tattersalls Ireland September Yearling Sales a couple of weeks ago was a good demonstration of "where we are". For the avoidance of doubt, I and our associates love this sale. Yes, food and refreshment on campus is expensive for what it is – the same at many sales; hotels within very easy reach are few, but those few are good and there are modest discounts granted.

The sales buildings and rings work well and the complex is very good for efficient viewing and a generally pleasant, if hard-working atmosphere.

We have been fortunate over the years to buy successfully plenty of times at "Fairyhouse" as the sale is casually known, being sited across the road from that racecourse. The event has one of the few sales races - worth €300,000 and a fun day out if you get there.

Entry of course is entirely optional, four months after purchase then a series of forfeits to pay to stay or to drop out.

We went there this year to buy a colt to add to our successful and sociable Hintlesham Racing team. ICE LORD, a four times winner and multiple placed Ascot and Newmarket specialist (best rating 99) will be joined in a different mix of shareholders by a stunning new son of STARSPANGLED BANNER, European Champion Sprinter for Aidan O'Brien after winning Group 1s in Australia.



DAVID, signing at Fairyhouse.

In a different pattern to that in SA, our colt left County Meath on the evening after the hammer fell, arriving by road-ferry-road in Oxfordshire next morning. Having travelled really well, he had 24 hours off then was lunged to see how he moved and to double check for vices. Now - under two weeks later, he is ridden away at the most basic level.

Soon his new shareholders will gather over mulled wine and mince pies to visit him in pre-training, followed by a pub lunch. He will move to his Newmarket trainer at Christmas/New Year time.

For him, I looked at 116 colts (in Part 1) with a first short list of 16, then 9 after second looks, 4 after some other background checks and before vettings.

Fairyhouse does not have as good a bunch overall as Goffs Orby or Tattersalls 1&2. But even so, Fairyhouse turns heads every year, churning out loads of winners including Hong Kong Group 1s. Dig deeply enough and you should find nuggets.

The result this year was that the market for good colts was actually very strong. Sire-centricity created the greatest competition for lots by NoNayNever, followed by Camacho, Kodiak and Showcasing. Dandy Man had a good year so they wanted him. Starspangled only had three in the sale, partly a function of his reduced fertility early on – now much better. Then he had three at Goffs Orby, selling for €300,000, €180,000 and €105,000.

Otherwise there was a poor clearance rate at Fairyhouse due to reverse sire-centricity and unwanted less precocious sorts.



Our new colt by Starspangledbanner out of Snow Scene by Singspiel - looks like his Dad!

DAVID ALLAN (cont..)

Overall figures were €3,000 down both average and median. Part 2 was overproduction writ horribly large, in spite of many overseas buyers. We sold one lovely, well sired but very late foaled filly in Part 1 for modest money. Irish mates bought the drinks and said "Look on the bright side – you could have been selling in Part 2".

In both South Africa and UK/Ireland, the filly market is generally weak and the likely-to-be-3 year old filly market is woeful. But what do people want to carry their colours?

WINX represents her gender pretty well. Her pedigree is no better than many Fairyhouse pages. Then four of the six Group 1 winners at newly re-opened Longchamp yesterday were fillies, one costing €15,000, well below the Fairyhouse median.

ENABLE (f. by Nathaniel) and SEA OF CLASS (f. by Sea the Stars) are "great" in the first instance and "a great in the making" in the second. Both trained in Newmarket, gallop watchers will have a feast if they spot these wonderful racehorses.

Aside from a vote for fillies, yesterday was a vote against sire-centricity. The two 2 year old Group 1s were won by a filly by Style Vendome and a colt by Raven's Pass. Neither, in the crass generalisations of the bloodstock market, is "wanted".

The other Group 1 sires on the day were Dutch Art, Fastnet Rock and Dubawi. Frankel sired the winner of the Group 1 on Saturday over a race distance of 3,600 metres. Score another one for the stayers. - **tt.**

A milestone up for JJVV



TRAINER Johan Janse Van Vuuren saddled his 250th winner, Mademoiselle, at Greyville last Friday.

YOUNG WINNING BROODMARE WITH BLACK TYPE THROUGH HER 1ST AND 2ND DAMS
 in foal to Vercingetorix
FOR SALE
 or
TO BE KEPT IN RETURN FOR PROMOTIONAL/DIGITAL/WEBSITE SERVICES FOR THE FARM
 with a percentage of the foal inside
 or
TO ENTER INTO A MARE SHARE UNDER OUR SPECIAL FORMULA
 starting with the sale of the Vercingetorix due to be foaled soon



Secret Plan winning



Secret Plan with her first foal, an Elusive Fort colt

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LOVE To Boogie clung gamely to her lead under a strong ride from Bernard Fayd'Herbe. (Wayne Marks).

A feature double for BSA, Fayd'Herbe

DURBANVILLE proved a wonderful stamping ground for Bloodstock South Africa and jockey Bernard Fayd'Herbe on Saturday. BSA-sold thoroughbreds won both of Saturday's graded features, with Rainbow Bridge landing the G3 World Sports Betting Matchem Stakes and Love To Boogie lifting the spoils in the same day's G3 World Sports Betting Diana Stakes. Fayd'Herbe booted both of them home.

Four-year-old Rainbow Bridge made it four wins from as many outings when defying a wide trip to win Saturday's Matchem Stakes for trainer Eric Sands and owner Chis Gerber. Storming home up the outside, the unbeaten rising star triumphed by a length and a quarter over New Caledonia, leaving the likes of graded stakes winners Our Mate Art, Tap O' Noth and Horizon in his wake.

Rainbow Bridge, a R300 000 buy from the 2016

National Yearling Sale, stamped himself a leading prospect for both this season's G1 L'Ormarins Queen's Plate and G1 Sun Met with his authoritative win.

Fayd'Herbe told Turf Talk: "Rainbow Bridge has a big action so I kept him away from horses coming into the straight. He quickened beautifully when I asked him and won well, though he was tired late, he needed the run. **(cont on page 9)**