

= Charolais horse =

The Charolais or Charollais is an extinct breed of warmblood horse from the Charolais region of France surrounding the town of Charolles , now in the Saône @-@ et @-@ Loire department of Burgundy , in eastern central France . Like other French warmbloods , it was the result of crossing local agricultural horses with the Thoroughbred , and was known by the name of the region in which it was bred . The Charolais never had a breed @-@ specific studbook . The Charolais and other French warmblood breeds were fused in 1958 to create the national warmblood studbook for a unified breed , the Selle Français . It was originally used as a multipurpose horse for riding , driving , and agriculture . During the late 19th century , additional Thoroughbred blood was added and a new type emerged that was principally used as a light cavalry mount . It was also used for dressage and show jumping .

= = Characteristics = =

The Charolais breed was small , and most closely physically resembled the Morvan horse , another now @-@ extinct French type . The breed had a short head with small ears and a short , strong neck attached low on the shoulder . The body was short and rounded , with a broad croup and strong legs . They were generally considered to be small and inelegant . They were strong , robust and hardy , the last of these traits especially so before the breeding changes of the 19th century , and were known for their pulling power .

The Charolais was appreciated for its gaits and endurance . It was known for its ability as a cavalry horse , and in 1933 was called a perfect war horse . It was also used for dressage and show jumping , and members of the breed competed in international events in these sports . It was considered to be a better galloper than the Anglo @-@ Norman horse , another French breed .

= = History = =

The original landrace ancestors of the Charolais include the Cheval Bourguignon ( Burgundy Horse ) , which developed from horses bred in the Burgundy region in the Middle Ages . Although small , Burgandy horses were known for their endurance and robustness . They were used for riding and agriculture , and as coach horses . This type , combined with other blood , developed into the Charolais , which belonged to a group of French breeds called demi @-@ sang or " half @-@ bloods " ? crosses between native breeds and Thoroughbreds . Some 19th and early 20th century sources claim that Arabian blood was also added from horses captured from the Saracens after the Battle of Poitiers .

Until the mid @-@ 20th century , the Charolais and other demi @-@ sang breeds , such as the Angevin , the Charentais , the Cheval Limousin and the Vendéen , were generally known by the name of the region in which they existed , and did not have individual breed studbooks . As these horses were not separated by breed type , but instead by geography , there were no significant physical characteristics that distinguished the Charolais from other demi @-@ sang types that developed prior to the mid @-@ 19th century . Charolais horses were primarily raised in what is now the Saône @-@ et @-@ Loire department . The areas of Cluny , Charolles , Blanzay , Paray @-@ le @-@ Monial and Digoin were preferred for breeding , due to the clay @-@ limestone soils that favored the development of the equine skeletal structure .

Multi @-@ purpose types like the Charolais and the Morvan were slowly supplanted in farmers ' favor by draft horses . The Nivernais breed , in particular , was preferred by farmers and threatened the existence of the Charolais . Thus , the original small multi @-@ purpose strain of Charolais gave way to a type of small draft horse that was next crossed with purebred and crossbred Thoroughbreds until , by 1850 , it had become a horse for cavalry purposes . It was thought by some enthusiasts , however , that this outcrossing reduced the quality of the breed , and many missed the old @-@ style Charolais , which had disappeared due to a lack of demand and use . However , others thought that the outcrossings had benefited the Charolais breed : in 1919 , one

author stated that the breeding of the Charolais type was in excellent condition , and a report from the time stated that the favorite horse of King Albert I of Belgium was a Charolais named Titanic .

Like many other French saddle horse types , in 1958 the Charolais was part of a reorganization of French horse breeding . Multiple demi @-@ sang types , including the Charolais , were merged to create a new national breed called the Selle Français , or French Saddle Horse . The Selle Français has been called " one of the finest sport horses today " , and is seen in international competition in show jumping , as well being used for events such as dressage , three @-@ day eventing and racing .