

= Dølehest =

The Dole Gudbrandsdal , Dølehest or Dole is a draft- and harness @-@ type horse from Norway . The Dole Trotter is alternately considered a subtype of the Dole Gudbrandsdal and a separate breed ; it is also considered a part of the Coldblood trotter type . The Dole Gudbrandsdal is a small draft horse , known for its pulling power and agility , while the Dole Trotter is a smaller , faster horse used for harness racing ; the two types are commonly interbred . Both types are strictly critiqued before entry into the studbook , which has over time resulted in an improvement in the breed type . The Dole is originally from the Gudbrandsdal Valley , and is probably descended in part from the Friesian horse . Over time the breed has had Thoroughbred , Arabian and other blood added in , especially during the creation of the Dole Trotter in the 19th century . The first studbook was created in 1941 , and the current breed association formed in 1947 . Although originally used mainly as a pack horse , today the heavier Dole type is used mainly for agricultural purposes . The Dole Gudbrandsdal been crossed with other breeds to develop horses for harness racing and riding .

= = Breed characteristics = =

The Dole horses generally stand 14 @.@ 1 to 15 @.@ 3 hands ( 57 to 63 inches , 145 to 160 cm ) hands high , weigh 1 @,@ 190 to 1 @,@ 390 pounds ( 540 to 630 kg ) , and are usually bay , brown or black , with gray , palomino , chestnut and dun occurring less frequently . White markings may occur on the head and legs , especially on the trotter type . The head is heavy with a straight profile , the neck rather short and muscular , the withers moderately pronounced and broad , the chest wide and deep , and the shoulder strong , muscular and sloping . The back is long and the croup broad , muscular and slightly sloping . The legs are short but sturdy and well @-@ muscled , with broad , solid joints and tough hooves . At one point in the breed 's history it was prone to weak legs and low fertility , but these problems have since been corrected . Dole horses closely resemble the British Fell and Dales ponies , which developed from the same ancestral stock .

When presented for grading and studbook inspection , the heavy @-@ type Dole Gudbrandsdals are tested for pulling power and trotting . In the lighter type , x @-@ rays showing the knee and lower legs to be free of defects must be presented , and stallions must have satisfactory results on the track before they may be used for breeding . However , three @-@ year @-@ old stallions may be issued temporary licenses before they begin their racing career if their conformation , breeding , and trotting ability are considered acceptable . Trotting @-@ type mares with proper conformation that are not fast enough during grading may be registered as draft @-@ type Doles . These strict and organized standards have improved the quality of the Dole breed over the past few decades . Although the Dole horse is one of the smallest draft breeds , it shows great pulling power , and is also hardy and agile . They are especially known for their excellent trots , as is shown by the lighter sub @-@ type of the breed . During the late 20th century , interbreeding between the two types became quite common ; due to this , the breed became much more uniform in type , with fewer differences between the trotter and draft sections .

= = Breed history = =

The Dole is thought to have originated in the Gudbrandsdal , an inland valley in the county of Oppland . It is likely that the Dole is in part a descendant of the Friesian , as the two breeds are similar in conformation , and the Frisian people were known traders in the area between 400 and 800 AD . There was also equine movement between western Norway and northern England during the 9th century through the mid @-@ 11th century ; this extended period of trade between these areas likely influenced the strong resemblance between the Dole , Friesian , Fell Pony and Dale Pony breeds .

Two stallions , named Odin and Mazarin , had a large influence on the development of the Dole breed . Odin ( son of Partisan ) , was a stallion of Thoroughbred ( some sources say Norfolk Trotter ) breeding , imported to Norway in 1834 . Odin was said to cost ? 257 at the time and to have been

bred to over 100 mares in his first four years in Norway . All Dole Trotter horses today contain Odin bloodlines . Mazarin was an Arabian imported to Norway in 1934 . In 1849 , another influential stallion was foaled , named Veikle Balder 4 ; he was a grandson of Odin and is considered the foundation stallion of the heavier Dole type . A stallion named Brimen 825 was used by breeders to maintain and improve some horses of the heavier Dole type for draft uses .

In the 19th century , harness racing began to rise in popularity in Norway and breeders looked to create a horse suitable for that sport . The Dole Trotter , a smaller , lighter , faster variation of the draft @-@ type Dole Gudbrandsdal , was then developed . Infusions of Thoroughbred blood , as well as that of various trotting and heavy draft breeds , was used to create this new type . The Dole Trotter was especially influenced between 1840 and 1860 by two other stallions , Toftebrun and Dovre ( an Arabian ) ; the latter is the foundation stallion of the Dole Trotter type . The two types are commonly interbred , especially since 1960 .

In 1872 , the Dole Gudbrandsdal was split into two types - a class for heavier agriculture and driving horses and a class for lighter racing and riding horses . In 1875 , the Norwegian Trotting Association was formed by enthusiasts of the second type . In 1902 , the first Dole Gudbrandsdal stud book was published , containing stallions from both types born between 1846 and 1892 . In 1903 , the Norwegian Trotting Association split their registration between purebred Norwegian trotters and trotting crosses . At the same time , standards for entry were tightened and the first inspection committee was created . In 1965 , the Norwegian or Dole Trotter studbook was taken over by the Norwegian Trotting Association , as part of the new Coldblood trotter program approved by the Norwegian Ministry for Agriculture . The Dole Trotter studbook is still coordinated with the original Dole Gudbrandsdal registry , and horses have to meet many of the same standards . The Dole Trotter is alternately considered a subtype of the Dole Gudbrandsdal and a separate breed .

Interest in the Dole Gudbrandsdal continued through World War II , and the horses were used heavily during Norway 's occupation by Germany . Breed numbers and interest diminished after the war as increasing mechanization reduced demand for draft animals ; however , a breeding center was established in 1962 to help maintain population numbers . In 1947 , the National Dølehorse Association was formed to promote and preserve the breed . As of 2002 , there are approximately 4 @, @ 000 registered Dole Gudbrandsdals , with around 175 new foals registered annually .

= = Uses = =

When originally developed , Dole Gudbrandsdals were used as pack horses on overland trade routes across Norway , the main one of which connected Oslo with the North Sea and ran through the Gudbrandsdal Valley . The Dole Gudbrandsdal is used mainly for heavy draft and agricultural work , as well as timber hauling , while the lighter Dole Trotter is used mainly for harness racing . The Dole Gudbrandsdal was an influential breed in the formation of the North Swedish Horse , and the two breeds are very similar in conformation . When the Dole and North Swedish breeds are crossed , they produce a lighter @-@ weight horse with more forward gaits that is often used for harness racing . The Dole Gudbrandsdal has also been crossed with Swedish Warmbloods to produce riding @-@ type horses , and it has been theorized that Dole / Thoroughbred crosses may produce nice hunter horses .