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# Famous Breeding Horses Throughout the Years

Written by  
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If you look at most of our horses today, you will find that many of them probably have some of the horses listed below in their bloodlines. These horses left a big mark and impression on Icelandic horse breeding, and have helped shape the Icelandic horse as we know it today. Several of them have produced honor stallions and honor mares. I thought it was interesting to write a little bit about some of these horses to understand what they produced, and why they left their mark.

There are some honor stallions that I didn't list (although they obviously made big impressions) as well as other great horses, because there were just too many to list here, like Gáski frá Hofsstöðum, Angi frá Laugarvatni, Stígandi frá Sauðárkróki, Oddur frá Selfossi, Óður frá Brún, Andvari frá Ey, Galsi frá Sauðárkróki, and many more. A complete list of honor stallions is in the 2010 StudBook.

There are many great horses that are repeatedly used nowadays, and their offspring are looking promising. Going back in their bloodlines, at some point in their breeding, you will most likely see many of these great horses.

## 1940–1950

### Lýsingur 409 frá Voðmúlastöðum IS1947184420

Although Lýsingur only had 131 offspring, he has left his mark on Icelandic horse breeding.

Lýsingur was born in 1947 and was a very impressive horse for his time. He was one of the first stallions to show very high leg lift – something very unusual for his time. His movements were not just high, but had a great moment of suspension. His son Stjarni frá Svignaskarði, also known as “Súper-Stjarni,” really impressed with his amazing high lifting tölt. The famous breeding farm, Vatnsleysa, repeatedly used Lýsingur in their breeding. All of their horses go back to him, including the famous stallion Glampi frá Vatnsleysu. This high leg lift has been a strong genetic trait and is seen in all of Vatnsleysu's horses.

## 1951–1960

### Síða frá Sauðárkróki IS1952257001

Síða was a great breeding mare and her influence on Icelandic horse breeding was enormous. She received honor prize for offspring in 1974, and provided the breeding foundation for the breeding of Sveinn Guðmundsson from Sauðárkróki. Nearly all of his horses descend from Síða. She was the mother of famous Sörli frá Sauðárkróki, who became one of the most influential stallions in Iceland. Síða had 11 offspring, of which eight were judged and five received first prize. Her dam was Ragnars-Brúnka, a closely in-bred mare, who was Sveinn's foundation mare. Two of Síða's daughters and one granddaughter have also won honors awards for offspring.

Sveinn Guðmundsson of Sauðárkrókur is said to have been (and still is with his son, Guðmundur) one of the most influential breeders in Iceland. His horses have helped produce many of today's great horses. His horses gained a wonderful reputation for having great character, willingness, strong gaits, and good looks.

### Hörður frá Kolkuósi IS1957158589

Hörður was a very tall, strong horse with great legs, good proportions, a beautiful proud neck, and a strong old-fashioned raven's nose. His gaits were all good, but his pace was exceptional. Hörður produced many beautiful, solid horses with strong character, great stamina and good gaits. Hörður is strongly inbred and is one of the foundation stallions of the Kolkuós horses. He had 629 offspring and brought Kolkuós blood to many lines and improved the stock. Many of the horses at Vatnsleysa go back to Hörður, and they still have strong Kolkuós influence in their breeding.

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Right: Hrafn frá Holtsmúla  
Photo: Eiríkur Jónsson

Below right: Ófeigur frá Flugumýri  
Photo: Eiríkur Jónsson

The mare, Lydía frá Vatnsleysu, who won the tölt finals at Landsmót, goes back to Hörður twice on her mother's side, and the famous stallion Feykir frá Hafsteinsstöðum goes back to him on his sire's side. The stallion Týr vom Rappenhof had Hörður in his pedigree four times. He was a tall, elegant stallion that combined the Hörður qualities in combination with more elegant modern features. He was a 4-gaited superstar that had very strong gait separation, huge movements, and fluid tölt. He won the 4-gait and tölt competition at the '93 World Championship in Holland, and went on to become one of the most influential stallions throughout Europe.

The Kolkuós line is still richly represented in the breeding at Hólar and Hafsteinsstöðum.

### 1961–1970

#### Sörli frá Sauðárkróki IS1964157001

Sörli, born in 1964, was the first to receive honor stallion. He sired 1,192 offspring, and many of his daughters became some of the best mares in Iceland. He had very easy fluid movements with impressive gait abilities for his time. Everything about Sörli was easy and available. He had a lovely character and great willingness. Sörli was not considered beautiful, and had a course head, but his gaits were so fluid, and his character so friendly and courageous, that he became very popular and was used a lot. His genetic stability was great, contributing to his offspring sharing many of his features. Perhaps his offspring are most known for their easy trainability and great willingness, which are invaluable traits in horse breeding. His offspring were predominantly 5-gaited, with good leg action and fluid, roomy, clear gaits. Many Sörli sons were used for breeding. His son Blossi frá Sauðárkróki was the sire of famous Hervar frá Sauðárkróki, who is the sire of Otur frá Sauðárkróki, who is the sire of the famous Orri frá Þúfu. So we see the bloodlines going straight back to Sörli.

#### Þáttur frá Kirkjubæ IS1967186102

Þáttur was the foundation stallion of the Kirkjubær horses, and most mares there are his descendants. Þáttur was naturally talented, showing all gaits in the first days of being



started. He was a refined horse, although his conformation was not perfect. But his offspring have an unusually elegant conformation, with a thin neck and a light body. These features have been maintained in the stock. Their gaits are correct, wide and beautiful, producing talented, good looking, mostly 5-gaited riding horses.

Many of his sons have been used in breeding, among them honor stallion Stígandi frá Sauðárkróki. His daughter Rauðhetta frá Kirkjubæ scored the highest marks any breeding horse had ever received (8.81) at the 1994 Landsmót. She was 15 years old! His daughter Þrá frá Hólum became one of the best breeding mares in Iceland, and her daughters and descendants are the basis for the strong breeding at Hólar today. Honor stallion Angi frá Laugarvatni goes back to Þáttur through his sire. Angi produced horses with great legs, and some incredible mares that have gone on to produce many first prize horses. Þáttur became an honor stallion in 1982.

#### Hrafn frá Holtsmúla IS1968157460

Hrafn might be the strongest of all breeding horses today. People still talk about this horse, and he has gone down in history as maybe the most important breeding horse. In Hrafn, two basic stock types have been united: Svaðastaðir and Hornafjörður. Hrafn's influence on Icelandic breeding was enormous, and

will last for many years to come. Hrafn sired 1,121 horses, many of them great competition horses. He produced an incredible amount of first prize stallions. There are so many famous horses out of Hrafn, it would be too long to list all of them here. Many of his daughters were great and became very good breeding mares, which are still sought after today. His daughter, Hervör frá Sauðárkróki, received first prize for offspring and was the dam of honor stallion Hervar frá Sauðárkróki. His son, Pokki frá Garði, received honors awards in 1994, and Kolfinnur frá Kjarnholtum I in 2000.

Hrafn was good looking and magnificent, with rather slim hindquarters. He was built rather long and less stocky than most horses were at his time, having more of the modern look we see in horses today. He was what Icelanders call a gæðingur with wide movements, good willingness and leg action. His offspring are elegant and beautiful, lightly built, have incredible gaits, and a charming character. Many of them have gone on to produce great horses.

In 1982, he was awarded honor stallion. Many people were surprised by Hrafn's career, because he just showed up at Holtsmúli, who's breeding wasn't famous. He had great genetic stability, even though there was no inbreeding in his pedigree. An example of Hrafn's strength: at the 1994 Landsmót at Hella,



17 stallions and 25 mares that were Hrafn's descendants earned the right to participate. Today, Hrafn has the biggest share of genes of the Icelandic stock.

### **Náttfari frá Ytra-Dalsgerði** **IS1970165740**

Náttfari was a Sörli frá Sauðárkróki son. He was already amazingly talented at age four. He was a powerful horse with a strong temperament. His phenomenal gaits scored him a 9.08 for rideability in 1978, and he was the first horse to score a perfect 10 for pace.

What made his gait ability so unusual was that all of his gaits were well separated. He had very high movements, wonderfully clear beat tölt as well as amazing pace.

Náttfari had 713 offspring. Many of today's best pace horses trace back to him. His offspring were not especially good looking and often had heavy characters, but he passed on his great gaits, especially his pace. Náttfari's offspring proved themselves in competitions, often making it into the finals.

Náttfari received honor stallion in 1986. He is the sire of honor stallion Stígur frá Kjartansstöðum, and the famous stallion, Baldur frá Bakka, who recently passed away in Hawaii.

## **1971–1980**

### **Gustur frá Sauðárkróki** **IS1973157005**

Gustur was a stallion that never even made first prize. Regardless, he was used a lot by the Sauðárkróki breeders and received first prize for offspring. He had 435 offspring. He is behind many of our horses today, and has produced many horses with higher scores than himself. The honor mare Krafla frá Sauðárkróki and the famous stallion, Kveikur frá Miðsitju, are both by him.

Gustur had strong bloodlines on both sides. He was a son of Sörli frá Sauðárkróki, and his mother, Flugla, received first prize for offspring. She was a daughter of the famous mare, Ragnars-Brúnka frá Sauðárkróki, one of the foundation mares of Sveinn Guðmundsson.

### **Ófeigur frá Flugumýri** **IS1974158602**

Ófeigur drew a lot of attention for his extremely elegant and unique movements in tölt. He had enormous willingness and was an impressive horse, but he was not very pretty. He had a sparse mane and tail, and a course head, but good ear position. He was the product of

a brother-sister mating, making him extremely inbred. He was used considerably, however, and has proven his genetic stability by producing enchanting riding horses.

Ófeigur is often remembered for his unique dun color, which he always passed on, often with a coarse head. But he was also a stallion that gave his offspring great tölt with a lot of leg action. At his time he was one of the few stallions that had high and wide movements, like today's best horses have. Ófeigur is still a very influential stallion in many of today's bloodlines, and has produced many outstanding 4 and 5-gaited horses. Many stallions by him have been used at stud, and are in great demand. He is the sire of honor stallions Galsi frá Sauðárkróki and Keilir frá Miðsitju, as well as honor mare Ósk frá Brún.

Ófeigur had 814 offspring and received his honor award in 1990.

### **Hervar frá Sauðárkróki** **IS1976157003**

Hervar goes back to Sörli frá Sauðárkróki and Hrafn frá Holtsmúla. The foundation mares, Síða frá Sauðárkróki and Ragnars-Brúnka frá Sauðárkróki, are on both sides of his pedigree, making him inbred. Hervar was a handsome, proud horse with a beautiful neck. He was very willing and had great tölt. Hervar had 926 offspring, and many of today's horses go back to him. He produced great pleasure horses that were well built, strong, with good tölt and pace. Many of his offspring are good looking, strong, and some have big, deep-set ears. He did not really produce high leg lift, but exceptionally good gaits. Hervar received honors award in 1990. It was believed that honor stallion, Kjarval frá Sauðárkróki, was a Hervar son, but recent DNA testing has refuted this. Kjarval's sire has yet to be determined.

### **Adam frá Meðalfelli** **IS1979125040**

Adam was a first prize stallion who strongly influenced breeding. He was a son of the famous Hrafn frá Holtsmúla, who was one of the most influential breeding horses that Iceland has ever produced. Adam was an incredible riding horse with beautiful, well-balanced, fluid gaits,

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and a wonderful character. He passed on these gaits and temperament to his offspring.

Some of Adam's daughters went on to become exceptional breeding mares, and are still strongly sought after today. The famous mare Álfadís frá Selfossi, who has been throwing some exceptional offspring, is his daughter. You will find Adam behind many breeding horses today, including the famous Orri, whose mother was an Adam daughter. Although Adam never made honor prize, he is often seen in the pedigree of honor prize breeding horses.

### **Terna frá Kirkjubæ** **IS1974286107**

Terna had the same sire as Þáttur frá Kirkjubæ. She had 12 offspring of which eight were judged, and five received first prize. She sired many great stallions that have gone on to be important breeding horses. Her son, Stígur frá Kjartansstöðum, won honors awards in 1994. Some of the other famous stallions she produced include Töfri and Trostan frá Kjartansstöðum. Töfri has been one of the influential stallions used in Blesastaðir's breeding, he has gone on to produce incredible tölt with high leg action.

### **Glókolla frá Kjarnholtum I** **IS1974288560**

Glókolla was the foundation mare of the Kjarnholtum horses. She had 15 offspring of which seven were first prize, and two received honor prize. Eight of her 15 offspring have, in turn, produced first prize horses. Her four best offspring were Kolbrá, Kolfinnur, Kolgrímur, and Kormákur frá Kjarnholtum I. Her son Kolfinnur went on to become honor stallion in 2000. He produced powerful horses with enormous movements. About 60 of his offspring reached first prize.

### **Krafla frá Sauðárkróki** **IS1977257141**

Krafla was a steady and strong mare. She was by Gustur frá Sauðárkróki and out of famous mare Perla frá Reykjum, who received first prize for offspring. Krafla was of great importance to Icelandic horse breeding, producing wonderful offspring. She had 14 foals of which 13 were judged six received first prize, and two became honor stallions. Krafla is the dam of honor stallions Kraflar frá Sauðárkróki and Keilir frá Miðsitju. She herself received honor mare in 1998.

### **Glíma frá Laugarvatni** **IS1978288840**

This mare has considerably contributed to the Icelandic stock. She is a good example of the southern stock in the stock today. Glíma was a good-looking mare with very good riding qualities. The horses from Laugarvatn were noticed for their excellent leg shape, which they have passed on to their offspring. Glíma mainly produced stallions that were handsome, versatile, and elegant with beautiful mane and tail. Of her 11 offspring, eight were judged and five received first prize. In 1996, Glíma was awarded honor mare.

### **Prá frá Hólum** **IS1978258301**

Prá was an exceptional mare who not only produced great offspring, but was also an incredible riding horse. As a four year old she scored 8.50 for conformation and 8.45 for riding ability – a truly amazing feat. Prá was by honor stallion Þáttur frá Kirkjubæ, and her

dam was a pure-bred Kolkuós mare. Prá had 15 offspring, of which 12 were judged and nine received first prize. Prá predominantly produced daughters, and all the mares out of Prá that have judged offspring produced first prize horses. Most of the mares today at Hólar are daughters or descendants of Prá. Even though most of Prá's daughters are still at Hólar, some have been sold, and they are in great demand. Prá received honor prize for offspring in 2000.

### **1981–1990**

### **Orri frá Þúfu** **IS1986186055**

No doubt that Orri will go down as one of the greatest breeding stallions. He has consistently produced outstanding horses with great tölt. He will also be remembered for passing on his thick neck, and not always great conformation, but the quality of riding horse is so good that those features become secondary. Orri's sire,





Below left: Hervar frá Sauðárkróki  
Photo provided by Sauðárkróki family

Right: Orri frá Þúfu  
Photo: Eiríkur Jónsson

Otur frá Sauðárkróki, never made honor stallion, but sired many good horses. Otur was a son of Hervar, going back to Hrafn, Sörli and Síða. Orri's mother only had one offspring and was a daughter of famous Adam, also going back to Hrafn.

At age three, Orri drew attention for his great movements and pleasant character. When Orri was 14 and won honors awards for offspring, he had 56 offspring with a score of 8.0 or higher, and by now well over 100 offspring have scored 8.0 and higher. His offspring are exceptionally good 4-gaiters, but some have good pace. Orri's offspring develop early and show high leg action, wide movements, and great character. Three of his sons have received honors awards: Þorri frá Þúfu, Andvari frá Ey I, and Sær frá Bakkakoti, all stallions that have produced outstanding horses. His influence will be seen for a long time, and many superb offspring will continue to show up.

### **Gustur frá Hóli** **IS1988165895**

Gustur is not just an incredible breeding horse, but also a wonderful riding horse with great temperament. He produced many great 5-gaited horses with incredibly nice temperaments and character. He goes back to Hrafn frá Holtsmúla and Hörður frá Kolkuósi on his mother's side. Gustur by of honor stallion Gáski frá Hofsstöðum, who had extreme leg lift with a light, dancing quality to his gaits.

Gustur was used a lot in recent years, because his offspring were so nicely balanced with good five gaits, very fluid loose movements, and great temperaments. Of his many judged offspring, the majority are first prize. Many of the top scoring horses at every Landsmót are Gustur's descendants. Some of his famous offspring include Kraftur frá Bringu, Glotti frá Sveinatungu, Klettur frá Hvammi, and Kaspar frá Kommu. Gustur was awarded honor stallion in 2002.

### **Ósk frá Brún** **IS1981265031**

Ósk is a daughter of honor stallion, Ófeigur frá Flugumýri. She produced horses with great pace, willingness, and good tölt. Her offspring were often not that beautiful, but were superb riding horses very much like her sire, Ófeigur. Ósk had 14 offspring of which 11 were judged



and seven were first prize. She is the dam of honor stallion Óður frá Brún, who is the sire of Töfri frá Kjartansstöðum as well as Aron frá Strandarhöfði – who will probably receive honor stallion this summer. Ósk was awarded honor mare in 2000.

## **1991–2000**

### **Keilir frá Miðsitju** **IS1994158700**

Keilir is a very elegant, good-looking horse, that passed on his looks and wonderful gaits. He has both a beautiful conformation as well as incredible five gaits. Keilir is a product of two outstanding breeding horses: his sire is honor stallion, Ófeigur frá Flugumýri, and his dam is the honor mare, Krafla frá Sauðárkróki. She is by Gustur frá Sauðárkróki, who is by Sörli frá Sauðárkróki.

Keilir produced many first prize, 5-gaited horses with good conformation. There is a long list of outstanding horses out of Keilir. He is the sire of some of the highly judged horses from Auðsholtshjáleiga, as well as the famous stallion, Álfasteinn frá Selfossi. In 2006, he received honor stallion. He was sold and exported to Denmark in 2007. In 1997, Angi frá Laugarvatn was the only other honor stallion sold and exported from Iceland. He was also exported to Denmark.

### **Álfadís frá Selfossi** **IS1996287660**

Although Álfadís is a fairly young mare, I felt it necessary to mention her. She probably isn't in the bloodlines of our horses yet, but she is an exceptional mare that has produced exceptional offspring. Álfadís is a daughter of famous Adam frá Meðalfelli. Her mother is a daughter of honor stallion, Kolfinnur frá Kjarnholtum I, going back to Hrafn. Álfadís has had 10 offspring of which four were assessed first prize. She herself scored 8.66 for ridden abilities as a four year old! She is the mother of the famous stallions Álfur frá Selfossi and Álfasteinn frá Selfossi, who have both gone on to produce outstanding offspring. She is no doubt one of the best breeding mares in Iceland today. Her offspring have not only had great riding abilities, but have good conformation as well. She repeatedly seems to produce outstanding foals, and it is likely that she will make honor mare in the future. ●