

“Can you send us a photograph”, they always ask...

Easier said than done.

When you are a breeder and want to sell your foal, dealers or potential buyers often ask: “Can you send us a photograph, if I like it I will come over”. Every breeder must have heard this at least once and often you send the photograph and hear nothing about it anymore. But sometimes that photograph can make the difference, when the client is really impressed by what he or she sees and decide to come over to look at the foal ‘live’, or in exceptional cases even by the foal ‘off photograph’.

It is not the Holy Gospel, but we will try to give a brief description of a few points that are important when you photograph a foal.

Do not hurry, you only have one chance to make a good first impression.

It has become a reflex, the foal is only a few hours old and the first pictures go via websites, Facebook and other such channels all around the world. But often it is better to have a little patience until the foal has suckled and is standing solidly and self-assured on its legs before showing it to the world. Why would you try to sell



On this photograph you see a fine colt, on the left a photograph of the foal when it is 2 days old, on the right the same foal precisely 1 month later. Photograph 1 will not yet persuade many buyers, but photograph 2 will definitely bring buyers to your door.

immediately on the first day? Those that start first are often finished last.

Angle and perspective

The angle from which you take a picture of your foal is very important. A shot from a standing foal is best taken from a 90° angle, which best shows the proportions. A photograph taken from a slanting angle can obscure many things about the shape of the foal, especially the length of neck and back.

The pose of the photographer himself is also important. Professional photographers often use a telescopic lens for photographing a foal and move a sufficient distance away to photograph the foal from the right perspective. When you do not have such a lens, this is need not be a

problem. A simple trick is to sit on your haunches (frog perspective) and not to photograph the foal from above but to keep the lens at his level.

Standing or in action

Same as with the angle from which you shoot, also the choice between photographing a standing foal or a foal in action can influence perception. A photograph of a standing foal often offers the purest view of a foal. A photograph of a foal in action can obscure many minor flaws, especially where the correctness of the bones is concerned. On a photograph of a foal with an extremely light-footed trot you can not ascertain that his bones are correct.

Note well, a foal in action does not necessarily look





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more attractive than a standing foal. Often very young foals photographed at the trot show something that looks like a slight under-neck, whereas this is not visible when the foal is standing and the grown up foal will still turn out handsome and correct.

When we decide to shoot a standing foal, several things are of great importance.

- **Head:** have someone attract the attention of the foal so that it will look straight ahead with its ears pricked. With pricked ears a horse looks more alert and fresh. When the foal is looking into the lens, its neck will seem shorter.
- **Legs:** make sure that the foal is standing on all four legs. A foal that does not stand on its four legs but in rest position does not show well. It is also important that you can see all four legs entirely on the photograph. When the foal is standing absolutely square, you can not assess it well. The legs closest to the photographer should stand wide, so that the foal is standing 'open'. When these legs are placed closer together, the foal will seem shorter.
- **Background:** Look for a neutral and attractive background. These are only details but a buyer will be more charmed by a foal in a well kept field than between nettles and thistles.

Time of day

The time of day at which a foal is photographed is of influence. Foals that have been stabled up for the night and just come outside, will look fresh and alert. A foal that has been playing in the field all day on a hot summer's day will not offer a quality picture in the evening.



On the left a photograph of the kind we often receive, on the right you see the same foal, 10 minutes later, this time attention was paid to background, position of the foal and perspective.

Patience

Taking your time to shoot a good picture can make a lot of money. You only need one good photograph to convince your potential buyer to come and see your foal.

Advice: sit on you haunches and aim the camera to the foal. Wait until it starts sucking and then draw its attention. A foal that has just been suckling and then suddenly looks up will almost always produce a good picture. You need to worry less about the background, because the background is the mare herself.

Sun, shadow

It may seem odd and against our nature but sun is often a disadvantage when taking pictures. A shadow on the neck of your foal will make it seem shorter than it really is. A photograph taken against the sun may produce a dark and unclear subject. That is why it is better to do a photo-shoot when it is a little cloudy. If you must take pictures in sunlight, make sure the sun is at your back or side. Do not look into the sun when taking a photograph and watch out for shadows which can give a false effect.

Lay-out

The right lay-out of the photographs is important for the entire picture; too much grass below or too much air above can make the foal look smaller. Make sure that all of the foal is on the photograph. It is a shame of your good photograph, when the ears are not on it, no can you assess a foal when its hooves are not visible.