



# The Origin of the Traits of the Icelandic Horse

The Icelandic Horse has remained isolated and purebred since Iceland's settlement. There are tales of breeding in old times but for a long period the horse was mostly shaped by natural selection and therefore, the history of organized horse breeding in Iceland is short:

The first breeding advisor was hired in 1902, the first breeding association formed in 1904 and the first breeding show took place in 1906. Despite this short period, great progress has been made in the breeding of the Icelandic Horse through the years and it is interesting to see which horses are the main ancestors of our breed today. The reason why certain bloodlines become more influential than others is that they possess certain desirable traits according to the breeding goal. This is true in other livestock breeding as well. Breeders select certain traits and by doing so, select certain individuals and certain

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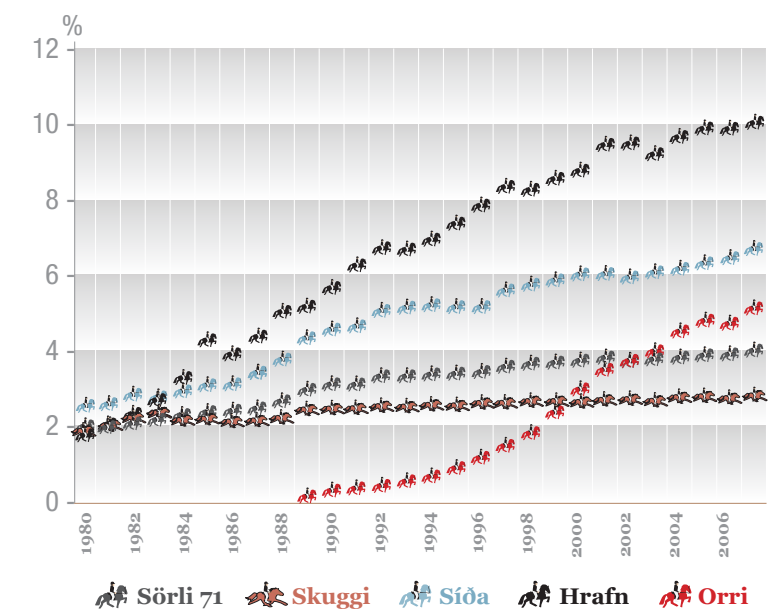
breeding lines. The reason certain breeding horses make it on the list of major forefathers- or mothers is that they have possessed some quality above others, as genetic contribution is closely related to the individual's breeding value.

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When figuring out who these main forefathers- and mothers are the genetic contribution of each registered individual is calculated.

By doing so we find out the percentage of genetic material that can be traced back to the forefathers- and mothers of today's breeding. The study is based on all foals born in Iceland in 2014.

The change in the genetic contribution of some of the main breeding horses, measured in percentages.



A comparison in percentages of the change in genetic contribution by Sörli 71 frá Svaðastöðum and Skuggi 201 frá Bjarnanesi. The graph shows increased emphasis on a lighter body type of horses, beginning just before 1990.

