

'My involvement in young breeders fed my enquiring mind'



Teagasc equine specialist Wendy Conlon caught up with three graduates of the Teagasc/HSI Young Breeders Programme to see how they are getting on with their breeding careers.

The Young Breeders Programme, a joint initiative between Teagasc and Horse Sport Ireland (HSI), began in 2005. Young breeder teams have represented the Irish Sport Horse (ISH) Studbook at the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses Young Breeders World Championships in Denmark (2005), Ireland (2009), France (2011), Sweden (2013), Canada (2017) and Austria (2019).

Though international competition has been an important benchmark for the programme the real wins are for the wider group of 200 plus young people nationwide who in a 'normal' year benefit from participating at the various training days, workshops and events.

The programme aims to educate and assess knowledge relating to conformation, athleticism traits, and in-hand presentation skills. Being welcomed by some of the country's best breeders, training yards, veterinary clinics and shows/events in the company of the young breeder trainers under the guidance and facilitation of Teagasc's equine specialists has provided an environment for open, inclusive, and educational discussions.

Participants do not have to be breeders themselves or even come from an equestrian background. An avid interest, an open mind, and an eagerness to participate and learn is all that is required. For those who are interested in breeding that is encouraged and certainly the knowledge gained should serve to support this endeavour whatever the breeding goal.

David Bourke, David Browne and Melissa Glynn share their personal experiences of participating in the programme and their interests in breeding.

Although COVID-19 has forced the pause button to be pressed on young breeder training on farms since March 2020 and also caused the planned 2020 World Championships in Holland to be postponed, it is hoped that some form of return can be made later in 2021 to on-farm interactions.

Keep informed by following 'ISH Young Breeders' on Facebook or checking in with wendy.conlon@teagasc.ie. Further information can be found at www.teagasc.ie/rural-economy/rural-development/equine/ish-young-breeders-programme/. New participants are always welcome.



David Bourke pictured with Enniskerry Foxtrot at Camphire International

David Bourke

31 years old

David Bourke is based in Enniskerry in Co Wicklow, where he grew up with a love for ponies, while learning and progressing through the Bray Pony Club. For David, horses are his hobby but also a very important aspect of his livelihood. David runs Enniskerry Horse Farm, a livery yard with 22 clients and a complimentary sheep farm (150 breeding ewes). David, who always with his mind on the future, erected an indoor arena earlier this year.

His passion really shines when speaking of his breeding enterprise which began in 2008 when he covered his then pony club and eventing mare, Enniskerry



Tigerlilly (Cult Hero x Garvagh Boy), with French Buffet producing the filly Enniskerry Foxtrot.

2009 was a lucky year for David as he also won team bronze at the Young Breeders World Championships and an outstanding individual fourth place.

In 2010, a full-brother to Foxtrot, Enniskerry Nadal was born. David produced these under saddle, and both have competed at CCI3*-S level.

David's proudest moment was warming up on his home-bred pair in the same arenas as multiple Olympians Andrew Nicholson and Andrew Hoy while reflecting on the journey it had taken to get there.

Talking about his breeding philosophy

David is pragmatic, focused, and very passionate. The ambition is to continually upgrade the quality of horses to ride himself, acknowledging that it is also a lifelong project to continue improving year on year from the beginnings in 2008. There are now three broodmares on the farm.

The ultimate aim, like for many other breeders, is to produce a five-star performer. David is really excited about a three-year-old filly, Enniskerry More Coffee (Vigo D'Arsouilles x Askoll Defi Platiere). He believes she is special and will produce jumpers so hopes to take embryos from her while continuing her education under saddle.

If money was no object David would love to own Killer Queen VDM, who he

feels is "the best jumping mare in the world and still young enough to be in with a possibility of getting her in foal".

"The young breeder journey gave me the confidence and tool kit to objectively assess my stock, stand back and be critical," David says.

Contacts across Europe with young people he met at the World Championships in 2009 have sustained to this day and with some he discusses stallion choices and other topics from time to time.

David has maintained contact over the years with Teagasc, attending many events and continues to be hungry for information and to grasp "every opportunity to share knowledge and interact with others who have a similar passion".

Melissa Glynn

26 years old

Melissa Glynn is from Crannaghmore in Co Roscommon. Born and raised in a farming family, her interest in agriculture started very early. Showing at the agricultural shows, selling at auctions and from the farm gate were part of her early education which included riding and pony camps.

Melissa, a teacher at a primary school in Athlone, is passionate about agriculture, and is "happiest working with animals on the farm" alongside her family. Crannaghmore Stables is home to 10 broodmares breeding for the show rings and eventing. Melissa is involved in the daily care and management, preparing for shows and sales and competing at agricultural shows in normal times.

"It is very much a family affair and everyone has a say when it comes to discussing breeding programmes and decisions relating to the stock," Melissa says.

There is also a calf to beef enterprise alongside the equine. Melissa bought her first mare in 2016, a Connemara pony, aiming to cover her with resident Knightsbridge Prince (Rathlacken Cascade x Castle Squire). In 2018, Melissa purchased Stuck in a Moment (TIH ISH) (Near Dock x Clonakilty Hero) born 2015, and winner of the 2017 Traditional Irish Horse Association (TIHA) Limerick Lady Championships. "I purchased her planning to show with a foal at foot," Melissa explains.

Melissa covered her with DS Are You With Me (Corrado I x Contender) producing the 2020 filly Crannaghmore I Am With You. This filly placed second in a strong class of 35 foals at the Breeders Select Foal Sales Eventing Performance Foal Class hosted by the Mayo Roscommon Breeders Group with comments of "good type of foal, shows lots of blood and step" and 'suitable for eventing'.

Melissa says she has ambition to purchase a filly from a proven dam line, from which to produce three-year-olds for the eventing market.

Having started breeding herself, Melissa came across the Young Breeders Programme which appealed to her given "the opportunity to visit exceptional farms around the country, learn from trainers such as Jack Doyle, Tiernan Gill, Andrew Hughes and Philip Scott who have so much experi-



ence, and getting to see a variety of high quality horses".

At the 2019 National Young Breeders competition, Melissa placed second among the seniors, progressing to selections for the World Championships.

Being new to the programme she said this was a very proud day, saying: "I love the interaction of the training days, and discussing the assessment of each horse with trainers and other trainees. Through the combination of learning about linear profiling and the one to 10 scale used for young breeder competition, while justifying the reason behind the scores, has really benefited my critical thinking and trained me to assess each horse I look at carefully."

"The practical experience of showing in-hand was really beneficial," she adds.

Melissa has made new friends across the country through the programme and says: "I am so grateful for the network of connections with trainers and other contributors, including farm hosts."

Melissa continues to evolve her thinking on breeding and takes every opportunity to talk with and learn from other breeders and industry professionals.

She is missing the on-farm training days, but remarks: "I am learning so much from the Let's Talk Equine webinar series and thoroughly enjoy being able to stay connected while still getting the jobs done at home."

Melissa Glynn pictured with Currantarmuid Black Tie by Silvano (KWPN) out of April Moonshadow (ISH)

"I love the interaction of the training days, and discussing the assessment of each horse with trainers and other trainees"

David Browne

20 years old

David Browne grew up in Castledermot, Co Kildare, where he started riding at the local riding school at eight years of age.

Despite not coming from a horsey background his parents have supported him 100% in what has become a family interest. David is in his third year studying veterinary medicine at UCD.

David has two broodmares, with the objective to breed 1.40m and upward showjumpers that "are rideable, athletic and will have long, successful sport careers".

He first participated in the young breeders programme in 2016 with a desire to "improve knowledge and meet new people".

He was selected to partake as a junior team member at the 2017 Young Breeder World Championships in Spruce Meadows Canada, which in his words was "an unforgettable experience" at which he was the highest placed Irish competitor.

GUIDANCE

"I knew very little about conformation or athleticism assessment before participating in the programme and learned an awful lot from the many horses assessed on training and competition days with the guidance and feedback from trainers and judges," David says.

The friendships which evolved are also very important to him, as David is very much a people person.

Spurred on by his success in the young breeder programme, David bought his first broodmare in 2017, Huntstown (Loughehoe Guy x Clover Hill), a half-sister to the approved stallion Yeats (Cruising x Clover Hill). David crossed her with Cornet Obolensky to produce a colt in 2018.

By the end of 2018 another broodmare You Two Delilia (Warren-

stown You Two x Furisto) was purchased. David then opted to seek guidance from Andrew Hughes. Having discussed aspirations for the breeding programme, available funds, and critically assessing the two mares it was decided to sell both and start again.

"My involvement in young breeders fed my enquiring mind, while also giving me the confidence to ask questions and look for guidance"

At the end of 2019 David purchased a four year old mare, MHS Twenty Eight (Quidam Junior I x Diamond Serpent). She is a half-sister to MHS Cardenta, World Silver Medallist of the six year olds at Lanaken in 2019 and out of a half-sister to MHS Washington competing at 1.60m with Laura Renwick. All going to plan MHS Twenty Eight will produce a foal by Hos d'O (Dollar de la Pierre x Cumano) in 2021.

David is also very excited about Perigirl Hero Z (Perigieux x Diamant de Semilly x For Pleasure) a 2019 filly he purchased as a yearling from Luc Henry.

"She has everything I look for in a mare, very blood, outstanding presence and super genetics. She is from the Usha Van't Roosakker family and hopefully she will be lucky for me."

"My involvement in young breeders fed my enquiring mind, while also giving me the confidence to ask questions and look for guidance."

"I am very grateful for all the time given by Andrew to advising, opening up other doors and encouraging me. For me, it is all about the mare now," David says.

If money was no object David would love to own Ratina Z, who is his idea of a perfect broodmare.



David Browne
jumpinaction.net



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The Irish Field's stallion supplement
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