

BREEDING STATISTICS 2020-21

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Normally, this article used to appear at the start of a new winter season in November. For one reason or another, it missed its usual slot. On the principle that it is better to be late than never, it is being written now, albeit in an abridged form.

Champion Stud Farm

Rank	Stud Farm	Starters	Winners	Wins	Stakes	Points
1	Usha/Mehra	168	65	103	Rs.8,06,74,551	620
2	Poonawalla Group	275	111	164	Rs.7,94,70,529	563
3	Nanoli	148	44	71	Rs.4,78,94,646	269
4	Sohna	170	48	69	Rs.3,30,67,256	252
5	Dashmesh Group	148	43	78	Rs.3,92,77,525	187

All the Champions are decided on the basis of stakes won but for the Champion Stud Farm title, a formula approved by the Turf Authorities of India is used. That formula gives different weightages to races won -- black-type races getting a precedence over ordinary races -- and awards points. Usha Stud not only garnered most points but also amassed the highest stakes. Usha Stud finished on the top rung after seven years, displacing the Poonawalla Group which had won the title consecutively for the three preceding years. The two nurseries are the dominant forces in the country and both of them have been in the top five for the last ten years. No other stud farm can claim that credit. Usha Stud's feat is all the more creditable since its success was achieved with much smaller numbers. We are already almost half-way through the next year and Usha Stud has grabbed a runaway lead; the chasing duo of Poonawalla Farms and Nanoli Stud have many lengths to make up.

Champion Sire

Rank	Sire (Stud)	Starters	Winners	Wins	Stakes	Ae Index
1	Multidimensional[IRE] (Usha)	90	43	76	Rs.6,42,10,514	3.24
2	Leitir Mor[IRE] (Poonawalla)	60	42	75	Rs.4,21,33,498	3.19
3	Win Legend[JPN] (Dashmesh)	102	44	65	Rs.3,29,54,179	1.47
4	Kingda Ka[AUS] (Nanoli)	70	27	41	Rs.2,81,91,342	1.83
5	Air Support[USA] (Kunigal)	99	24	36	Rs.2,46,76,122	1.13

Multidimensional's first crop raced in 2012-13 and he finished that year as the Champion Freshman Sire. Since then, he has bagged four overall Champion Sire crowns and is undoubtedly the best stallion in the country. He was only a short-head behind Air Support, Champion Sire in 2019-20. With both War Hammer and Impavid not racing after the Indian Derby and Consigliori losing form, Air Support slipped to the fifth spot. Leitir Mor had a good year and climbed a place to finish as the runner-up. Unfortunately, he has very few foals born from 2018 to 2021 and hence has little chance of figuring high in the table for some time. Win Legend is a solid performer who continues his presence in higher echelons while Kingda Ka made places to oust Phoenix Tower from the Top Five.

There are two other Champion Sire tables which have more to do with 'quantity' than 'quality'.

Champion Sire (Winners).

1. Win Legend[JPN] (44) 2. Multidimensional[IRE] (43) 3. Leitir Mor[IRE] & Phoenix Tower[USA] (42) 5. Excellent Art[GB] (33).

A blanket finish between the first four -- shd, shd, dht ! It also provided Win Legend with his first Champion accolade.

Champion Sire (Wins)

1. Multidimensional[IRE] (76) 2. Leitir Mor[IRE] (75) 3. Win Legend[JPN] (65) 4. Phoenix Tower[USA] (57) 5. Green Coast[GB] (44).

This was a first ever win for Multidimensional[IRE] in the 'quantity' category and he secured it by just a shd. Phoenix Tower, winner of both the 'quantity' categories for the last three years, had an off year. Green Coast -- now no more -- made it to the Top Five for the first time. It is always nice to see unfashionable stallions make the cut.

Champion Maternal Grandsire

1. Placerville[USA] 2. China Visit[USA] 3. Razeen[USA] 4. Alnasr Alwasheek[GB] 5. Glory of Dancer[GB]

This table was the private preserve of Placerville and Razeen with the two stallions finishing in the top two spots for twelve consecutive years. The sequence was broken in 2018-19 when Placerville finished third to Razeen and barn mate Alnasr Alwasheek. This year, China Visit has split Placerville and Razeen. China Visit fell short of Usha Stud's high standards as a sire but is making up as a damsire. This is Glory of Dancer's first Top Five finish.

Leading Family

1. Schiaparelli 2. Pretty Polly 3. Simon's Shoes 4. Ruddy Light 5. Lady Susan When one talks of the success that the Poonawalla Group has achieved over the years, credit is often given to Malvado[CAN], Riyahi[IRE] and Placerville[USA]. While the contribution of those three stallions has been substantial, the cornerstone of the edifice has been the Schiaparelli family. Charenzaccio[FR] and her daughter Schiaparelli[HOL], tracing back to Lord Derby's Schiaparelli, landed in India in the early 1980s. Over the last three decades, the Schiaparelli family has finished on top fourteen times and this year's triumph was its fifth in succession. The Schiaparelli family (Forest Flame, etc) won narrowly from the Pretty Polly family (Immortality, etc). Simon's Shoes family is often in the Top Five but Ruddy Light (Miracle, etc) and Lady Susan (Born Queen, etc), however, are new names among the toppers.

Champion Freshman Sire

Rank	Sire (Stud)	Starters	Winners	Wins	Stakes
1	Ampere[FR] (Equus)	22	4	6	Rs.40,19,911
2	Roderic O'Connor (Poonawalla)	22	4	4	Rs.20,06,415
3	Be Safe (Sans Craintes)	12	3	3	Rs.17,00,531
4	Perfect Stride (Yeravada)	7	0	0	Rs.1,12,000
5	Tale of A Champion (Sarvang)	6	0	0	Rs.6,535

With 55 foals in his first crop, Roderic O'Connor, a son of Galileo, a Gr.1 Classic winner in Ireland and a Champion Sire in Brazil, was expected to run away with the top prize. Why he did not do so is perplexing. Subsequently, A Star Is Born and Kamilah have won Classics and his second crop has started better. The jury is out on him.

Ampere, like Roderic O'Connor a son of Galileo, is the default Champion Freshman Sire but with an AE Index of 0.79 he, too, needs more from his second crop. His "gets" like Chopin, Painted Apache and Third Avenue suggest that he can be a more than useful stallion.

Indian Derby winner Be Safe was also disappointing though his runners have shown a better level of performance in recent months. He finished only third but has a higher AE Index than Roderic O'Connor. Perfect Stride and Tale of a Champion, both imported stallions, were still to get off the mark when the year ended. Perfect Stride has since had three winners since but Tale of a Champion, a beautifully bred horse, is still looking for his first.

PAST THE POST

The racing year 2020-21 was affected by Covid enforced stoppages. It is possible that the truncated season was not conducive to the normal development of the 2018 crop and allowances must be made for that. Another aspect which comes to mind is that with the lesser number of races being during the year, the final tallies are much below the normal. For instance, when Multidimensional won his previous title in 2018-19, his progeny had won stakes in excess of Rs. 10 crore while, in the same year, the progeny of Phoenix Tower had won 110 races. This perspective needs to be borne in mind while looking at this year's tables.