

HBA and the story of A MAN

When talking about HBA, most people will quickly find out that the letters HBA match the name of Hassan Bin Ali. Coincidence or not, the letters actually stand for: Horses Best Advantage.

To truly understand the meaning of HBA and also to see why Hassan Bin Ali and Horses Best Advantage are never far apart, we have to start at the beginning. Hassan grew up in the desert, a bedouin boy who spent his days around the camels, often away from home for weeks at a time. Tough conditions for man and animal to survive in. He soon caught the eye of HRH Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum and started working for him in 1973. Sheikh Hamdan had many interests and involved Hassan in many of them. Hassan trained camels, became a rally driver and even invented systems for remote control airplanes. All these activities took him to many exotic parts of the world but his career took another turn when Sheikh Hamdan asked him to become his flatrace manager. A lot of his time evolved around caring and managing the horses and it was here where Hassan found his true love, horses and have spent the rest of his life closely associated with them. Long days, weeks and months spent at racetracks around the globe soon taught Hassan all the ins and outs of horses and horse sport.

In the early nineties the Maktoum family developed a keen interest in the sport of endurance. The centuries long tradition of racing horses in the desert lay a strong foundation for this

modern variety that required the best of both mental and physical strength. They established several endurance training stables and Sheikh Hamdan found Hassan to be the man of his choice, to train his endurance horses.

Even though horses are one of the most beloved symbols of Arab culture, there were still many things to improve on. Hassan soon learned that what he learnt from flat racing was inadequate for the longer distances. Nutrition and training had to be designed for the long run. Besides that, there was no reliable literature available that covered what was going on in the UAE Endurance Sport. Unscientific test figures were being thrown around and little made sense or seemed to be based on actual testing.

In 2003 Hassan met up with Uli, a German scientist based in Dubai. By this time he was not only managing his endurance stable, but also successfully started a business selling horse equipment to serve the UAE market. Hassan's idea is that whatever is not available, he will import or design himself. Together with Uli he started doing blood tests on endurance horses to see if there was anything to improve. They found a selenium deficiency in most of the tested horses which made him wonder about the supplements these horses were given. After all, the manufacturers all advertised high selenium levels on their labels. This was enough to start Hassan on the long journey, many years of testing and eventually the product range Horses Best Advantage; "HBA Endurance Climate Designed Supplements". Starting with the selenium anomaly



ON A MISSION

he contacted different supplement manufacturers from all over the world as well as laboratories and high profile research centers amongst other the Kentucky University. The outcome was astonishing, even though selenium was present in the supplements, tests confirmed that it made hardly any difference in the horses blood, the quantities were too low to provide any benefit to the horse.

Hassan started looking for a company that was willing to work together to design supplements that would 'make the difference' and create Horses Best Advantage. A South African company Healthtech Laboratories was up for the challenge and a long and fruit full relationship was born. As learnt from the selenium anomaly, Healthtech came up with the numbers that were needed to bring all vitamins and electrolyte levels to healthy standards and soon a whole range of HBA products found its way from Healthtech South Africa to Dubai.

The circumstances at Hassan's facility in Dubai are very unique. Combine very large numbers of Endurance Horses, literally hundreds, with world class laboratory and testing equipment and you start to get a better picture of what we are talking about. Ad into the mix years of testing on large numbers and the effect multiplies. Also take into consideration that these horse where actively raced



during the testing and slowly the picture becomes more clear; truly “Endurance Climate Designed Supplements”. Healthtech helped Hassan find the best sources of active ingredients that are most easily absorbed in the horses system and most readily available. Research has shown that even though labels might show the same figures, the origins from which vitamins, amino acids and trace elements are extracted might be completely different and consequently so the results will be different. Hassan's enthusiasm encouraged and inspired others to share their knowledge and experience with him.

Outcomes of testing were closely scrutinized by his laboratory staff and only after he was fully confident that the supplements would provide what they promised, Horses Best Advantage, did he start commercially providing for the UAE market.

No longer were endurance trainers dependent on supplements coming from countries where endurance is far outnumbered by other disciplines as show jumping, dressage or flatracing. The whole range of HBA supplements is Endurance Climate Designed and therefore most suitable for horses that train to cover up to a hundred miles at amazing speeds.

After years of extensive use in the UAE Hassan again sat around the table with Healthtech, this time to make his products available for other endurance enthusiasts around the globe. What would be a better country to start with than South Africa. After all, not only are the products developed and manufactured there, but also there is a big endurance community who could benefit from his products. Fauresmith 2010 was a good opportunity to launch his product range in South Africa and Hassan himself went there to explain more about his products and their use. It had been a good year for his stable, breaking the world record in an average speed of 29.47 km/h in FEI ** 120 and at the same time winning the best conditioned and best team award.

Hassan Bin Ali stands by Horses Best Advantage and will never sit down on his promise to always improve further. Some of the new projects include a super lightweight endurance saddle, bits and improved horse feed. Hassan is always on the look for further developments which can help to give the horse the best advantage and the better look after our dearest companions, always giving their best under the toughest conditions.

When asked what his next step will be, he answers “There must be something no one has looked into yet, let's find out what it is.”

