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**Assessment of the degree of preparation of Hucul horses
for trials of performance**

Ocena stopnia przygotowania koni huculskich do prób dzielności

Summary. The objective of the study was to assess the degree of preparation of Hucul horses for performance trials during 2009 and 2010. Trials for performance for this breed are regarded as universal and well organized. The field trials of performance consist of conformation ratings and Hucul's path. The minimum score needed to pass the trials is 85 points for mares and 95 for stallions. 222 and 191 horses were registered for the performance trials in 2009 and 2010, respectively. It was observed that mare families of Żyrka, Gurgul, Laliszka and Polanka as well as the male line of Pietrosu were less represented in 2010. In 2010 the stallions were poorly prepared for the trials (as 20% and 13.2% did not pass the trials in 2010 and 2009, respectively) while mares performed better, with 10.2% and 20.1%, respectively. In the assessment of the horse's exterior, in 2009, greater differentiation was observed, which was statistically corroborated. Similar final scores in subsequent years were observed in horses representing the Gurgul stallion line and in the mares representing the families of Polanka, Wołga and Wyderka. Path analysis results show that mares obtained higher scores in 2010.

Key words: Hucul horses, performance test, Hucul path

INTRODUCTION

The Hucul horse is one of the oldest breeds with consolidated genotype bred in Poland [Program hodowli... 2007]. They were primarily used as pack or saddle horses. They easily overcame rough mountain terrains, under heavy load, exhibiting considerable dexterity and resilience [Tomczyk-Wrona 2006]. According to Holländer [1938] the

Hucul breed of horses closely inherit the positive characteristics of conformation, especially low-legs, depth and positive nature, gentleness and toughness, health, perseverance at work and being indiscriminate as regards feed. Although they represent a type that is universally usable, they are however, utilized predominantly in mountains tourism and therapeutic riding [Jackowski 2005, Purzyc 2007, Tomczyk-Wrona 2006].

The Hucul path was proposed as part of the assessment of this breed in the early 1990s of the 20th century. Currently, there are 10–13 championships to measure their usefulness each year. Making performance test mandatory in order to report mares for the Conservation of Genetic Resources Program for Hucul horses has contributed immensely to their huge publicity. They are also a great way to promote the breed and demonstrate its versatility. The increasing popularity of the Hucul breed of horses has resulted in the spread of their breeding beyond their typical mountain terrain, which may pose a threat to specific traits. Uniformity of trials allows for the elimination of individuals not meeting the standards for the breed.

The objective of the study was to assess the degree of preparedness of Hucul horses for performance test having regard to their genealogy during 2009 and 2010.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Material for the studies were the results of trials of performance of Hucul horses obtained in 2009 (13 trials) and 2010 (11 trials). It covered 222 and 191 horses respectively. The age requirements for Hucul horses at start of trials was the completion of 36 months. The basic field tests include their exterior evaluation (maximum of 50 points) and field trial for a maximum of 80 points. The exterior assessments consists of the evaluation of the type, conformation, movement in walk and trot as well as overall impression and preparedness for exhibition. The Hucul trail or path is to be a test of its ability to overcome natural and man-made obstacles, courage, ability, obedience and training of the horse. The competition is conducted over a distance of between 1,500 and 2,000 meters across 16 obstacles. The distance, pace, standard time and the order of tackling obstacles as well as credit points for correctly overcoming various obstacles are provided at the pre-competition technical briefing. Of the 16 barriers 12 are defined and mandatory for each trail while 4 are to be selected from a given list of obstacles. Details of regulations concerning the basic field trials of performance are provided in the Annex to the Program for Breeding Hucul Horses [Program hodowli... 2007]. The obtainable pass mark in the performance test is 85 points for mares and 95 points for stallions for each of the items.

To assess the degree of preparedness for the trials only animals that passed the performance tests during the first or second tests were considered. In order to assess the impact of genealogy on the results of performance trials, the analysis took into account the male's line and female's family. The calculations were performed using the Statistica 9.0 program. Differences among groups were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and LSD post-hoc test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The number of Hucul horses, with regards to male lines, registered for the trials in 2009 and 2010 is summarized in table 1. An approximate number of stallions were entered for both years. Comparisons of families showed clearly that the least represented in 2010 were stallions from the Pietrosu family with 11 entries in 2009 and 4 in 2010. In the case of mares, on the other hand, only the family of Ousor entered a greater number for the trials in 2010. While the stallions were in 2010 less well-prepared for the trials, the mares were better as 13.2% and 20% as well as 20.1% and 10.2% respectively did not pass the trials (tab. 1).

Table 1. Hucul horses that under-went the performance trials with regards to male lines
Tabela 1. Konie huculskie poddane próbom dzielności z uwzględnieniem linii męskich

Male lines Linia męska	2009						2010					
	stallions ogiere			mares klacze			stallions ogiere			mares klacze		
	n	not included nie zaliczyły		n	not included nie zaliczyły		n	not included nie zaliczyły		n	not included nie zaliczyły	
		n	%		n	%		n	%		n	%
Goral	8	-	-	37	6	16.2	9	1	11.1	30	1	3.3
Pietrosu	11	3	27.3	30	3	10.0	4	-	-	29	2	6.9
Hrobny	10	-	-	49	12	24.5	10	3*	30.0	44	8	18.2
Gurgul	3	2*	50.0	40	11	27.5	3	1	33.3	23	3	13.0
Ousor	3	2*	50.0	14	2	14.3	5	1	20.0	19	2	10.5
Polan	-	-	-	4	1	25.0	1	-	-	7	-	-
Prislop	2	-	-	3	-	-	3	1	33.3	2	-	-
Obce	1	-	-	7	2	28.6	-	-	-	2	-	-
Together Razem	38	7*	13.2	184	37	20.1	35	7	20.0	156	16	10.2

* 2 stallions did not approach in 2009 year for Hucul path; in 2010 year stallion Picasso (males Hrobny) it started twice and it has not included

* 2 ogiere w 2009 r. nie przystępowały do ścieżki huculskiej; w 2010 r. ogier Picasso (ród Hrobego) startował dwa razy i nie zaliczył

Table 2 summarizes the number of Hucul horses entered for the gallantry trials in 2009 and 2010 taking into account their membership of female lines. It is clearly shown that fewer individuals were entered in 2010 with lesser representation being from the mares of Żyrka, Gurgul, Laliszka and Polanka families.

Results of plate assessment for Hucul horses representing male lines are summarized in table 3. The average score for conformation for horses that passed the first trial was 38.39 ±2.02 points, while for the second it was 39.09 ±2.05 points. Greater variation in scores for exterior assessment were demonstrated among horses tested during the first trial ($P \leq 0.01$).

According to Budzyńska *et al.* [2003], during the 2002 championships in Rudawka Rymanowska the plate rating and results of trails depended significantly on the origins of the father. High results were obtained by individuals from the Gurgul line during the trials.

Table 2. Hucul horses that under-went the performance trials with regards to females line
Tabela 2. Konie huculskie poddane próbom dzielności z uwzględnieniem rodzin żeńskich

Female lines Rodzina żeńska	2009						2010					
	stallions ogiere			mares klacze			stallions ogiere			mares klacze		
	n	not included nie zaliczyły		n	not included nie zaliczyły		n	not included nie zaliczyły		n	not included nie zaliczyły	
		n	%		n	%		n	%		n	%
Agatka	-	-	-	8	5	62.5	-	-	-	9	2	22.2
Bajkałka	3*	-	-	10	4	40.0	2	-	-	12	3	25.0
Czeremcha	1	-	-	4	-	-	2	-	-	6	-	-
Gurgul	1	-	-	10	-	-	2	-	-	6	-	-
Góralka nowosądecka	4	-	-	9	1	11.1	1	-	-	13	1	7.7
Laliszka	5	1	20.0	16	2	12.5	1	1	100.0	6	1	16.7
Nakoneczna	2	-	-	3	-	-	2	1	50.0	2	-	-
Polanka	10	-	-	47	7	14.9	7	2	28.6	27	3	11.1
Wołga	4	1	25.0	10	4	40.0	7	2	28.6	14	-	-
Wrona	2	1	50.0	9	2	22.2	1	-	-	9	-	-
Wyderka	3	1	33.3	26	4	15.4	4	-	-	31	3	9.7
Reda	-	-	-	3	1	33.3	2	-	-	2	-	-
Sroczka	1*	-	-	11	4	36.4	2	1	50.0	11	1	9.1
Żyrka	-	-	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-
Obca	2	1	50.0	14	3	21.4	1	-	-	6	2	33.3
Together – Razem	38	5	13.2	184	37	20.1	35	7	20.0	156	16	10.2

* 2 stallions did not approach in 2009 year for Hucul path

* 2 ogiere w 2009 roku nie przystępowały do ścieżki huculskiej

Results of the basic trials of performance for male lines are summarized in table 4. Stallions that passed at the first attempt obtained only slightly higher final results than mares (stallions 110.53 ± 7.01 points; mares 108.10 ± 9.79 points). The highest score for performance trials in 2009 was obtained by members of the Pietrosu line while for 2010 it was for Ousor line ($112,53 \pm 6,74$ points). High final scores for the 2010 championships were obtained by stallions representing both Hroby (113.65 ± 7.78 points) and Goral (113.50 ± 5.69 points) lines. Differences between individuals representing male lines were statistically significant.

According to Cywińska [2000] competitions testing the utility traits of participating horses had greatest influence the results of the championships. Higher results for field rally were obtained by mares in the studies earlier mentioned.

Results of the plate assessment as regards female families are summarized in table 5. Mares from Bajkałka and Nakoneczna were rated over 40 points in 2009. Differences between individuals representing the various families were statistically significant.

Results of the basic performance trials for Hucul horses having regards to their families are summarized in table 6. In analyzing the scores obtained by horses representing the various families it was observed that higher final results were achieved in 2010 by mares representing Czeremcha and Żyrka families. In addition, mares representing these families the basic gallantry trials at the first attempt in 2009 and 2010. Favourable results were also demonstrated during the first trials by horses in the Góralka nowosądecka family in 2010. Statistically significant differences were confirmed amongst individuals that passed the gallantry trials at the first attempt.

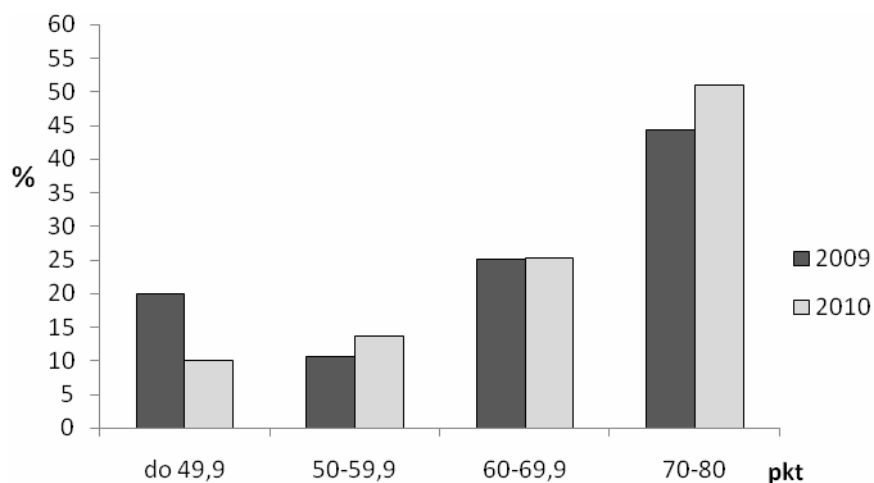


Fig. 1. Scores for Hucul path by mares during 2009 and 2010
Ryc. 1. Punktacja w ścieżce huculskiej klaczy w 2009 i 2010 r.

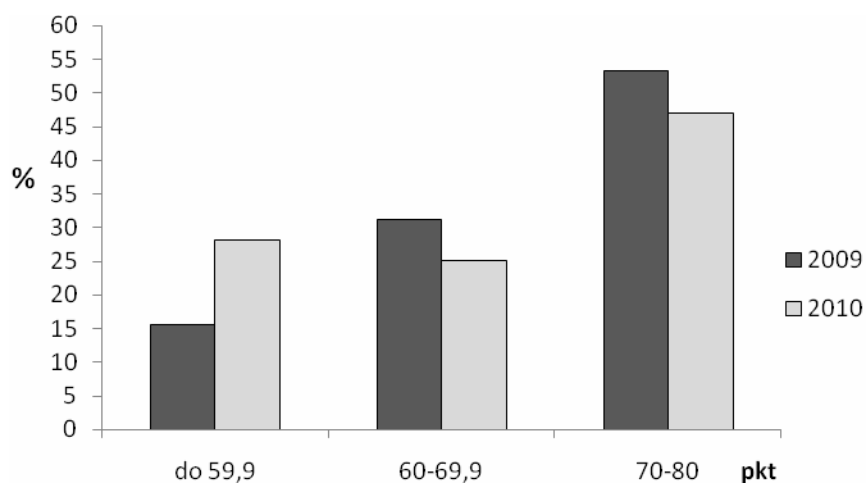


Fig. 2. Scores for Hucul path by stallions during 2009 and 2010
Ryc. 2. Punktacja w ścieżce huculskiej ogierów w 2009 i 2010 r.

Table 3. Results of the assessment of conformation of Hucul horses with regards to male lines (pis)
Tabela 3. Wyniki oceny pokroju koni huculskich z uwzględnieniem linii męskich (pkt)

Male lines Linia męska	2009												2010											
	they have included during first test zaliczyli podczas pierwszej próby						stallions ogiere						they have included during first test zaliczyli podczas pierwszej próby											
	total ogółem			mares klacze			stallions ogiere			total ogółem			mares klacze			stallions ogiere								
	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD						
Pietrosu	21	38.84 ^{aA}	1.92	17	39.10	1.84	4	37.75	2.09	31	38.62	1.75	27	38.80 ^b	1.80	4	37.42	0.77						
Hroby	37	38.78 ^{bB}	1.85	29	38.81	1.78	8	38.66	2.19	29	38.76 ^a	1.70	24	38.71	1.82	5	39.00	1.09						
Goral	33	38.39 ^{dC}	2.27	27	38.62	2.36	6	37.39	1.60	31	38.48	2.45	27	38.70	2.30	4	37.00	3.32						
Gurgul	26	38.14 ^{eD}	1.89	25	38.16	1.92	1	37.67	0.0	20	37.63 ^a	1.95	20	37.63 ^{ab}	1.95	-	-	-						
Ousor	11	38.73 ^{fE}	1.30	10	38.73	1.37	1	38.67	0.0	15	38.88	1.41	11	39.12 ^a	1.48	4	38.21	1.09						
Prislop	5	35.40 ^{ghdef} ABCDE	1.92	3	35.11	2.52	2	35.63	1.18	4	37.71	3.70	2	38.75	2.71	2	36.66	5.42						
Polan	1	34.00	0.0	1	34.00	0.0	-	-	-	8	38.48	1.38	7	38.14	1.08	1	40.83	0.0						
Obcy	6	37.99 ^c	1.23	5	37.99	1.38	1	38.00	0.0	2	39.16	0.94	2	39.16	0.94	-	-	-						
Razem	140	38.39	2.02	117	38.49	2.04	23	37.85	1.86	140	38.48	1.96	120	38.56	1.91	20	37.98	2.23						
Together																								
Male lines Linia męska	2009												2010											
	they have included during second test zaliczyli podczas drugiej próby						stallions ogiere						they have included during second test zaliczyli podczas drugiej próby											
	total ogółem			mares klacze			stallions ogiere			total ogółem			mares klacze			stallions ogiere								
	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD						
Pietrosu	14	39.02	1.96	10	38.97	1.82	4	39.17	2.57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Hroby	10	38.03 ^{ab}	1.77	8	38.78	0.88	2	36.67	4.24	14	40.13 ^a	2.03	12	40.22	2.19	2	39.55	0.31						
Goral	6	40.61 ^{ac}	2.05	4	41.50 ^a	1.91	2	38.83	0.71	6	38.83	0.98	2	39.00	1.17	4	38.75	1.06						
Gurgul	4	39.75	0.99	4	39.75	0.99	-	-	-	2	37.00 ^a	1.88	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Ousor	2	41.33 ^{bd}	0.94	2	41.33 ^b	0.94	-	-	-	6	38.92	2.22	6	38.92	2.22	-	-	-						
Prislop	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Polan	2	36.66 ^{cd}	1.89	2	36.66 ^{ab}	1.89	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Obcy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Together	38	39.09	2.05	30	39.26	1.89	8	38.46	2.59	28	39.37	2.01	20	39.71	2.14	8	38.51	1.41						
Razem																								

Values in the same columns with the same letters differ statistically significantly, small letters at $P \leq 0.05$; capitals at $P \leq 0.01$
Wartości w kolumnach oznaczone tymi samymi literami różnią się istotnie, małymi $P \leq 0,05$, dużymi $P \leq 0,01$

continued Table 5. Results of the assessment of conformation of Hucul horses with regards to female lines (pts)
 cd. Tabeli 5. Wyniki oceny pokroju koni huculskich z uwzględnieniem rodzin żeńskich (pkt)

Female lines Rodziny żeńskie	2009												2010											
	zaliczyły podczas drugiej próby they have included during second test						zaliczyły podczas drugiej próby they have included during second test						zaliczyły podczas drugiej próby they have included during second test											
	total ogółem		mares klacze		stallions ogierzy		total ogółem		mares klacze		stallions ogierzy		total ogółem		mares klacze		stallions ogierzy							
	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD						
Agatka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	41.25	0.35	2	41.25	0.35	-						
Bajkałka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	38.25	1.30	-	-	2	38.25						
Czeremcha	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Gurgul	4	41.50 ^{abcdeA} AB	1.91	4	41.50 ^{abcdeA}	1.91	-	-	4	40.67	1.41	2	40.67	1.41	2	40.67	1.41	-						
Góralka	6	39.83 ^a	1.42	4	39.08 ^e	0.92	2	41.33	0.94	2	40.75	0.11	2	40.75	0.11	2	40.75	0.11						
nowosądecka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Laliszka	6	40.33 ^{ef}	1.43	6	40.33 ^{bbB}	1.43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Nakoneczna	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	39.00	1.17	2	39.00	1.17	-						
Polanka	10	38.13 ^{efB}	2.12	4	39.08 ^d	1.87	6	37.50	2.20	8	38.10	1.87	6	38.47	1.88	2	37.00	1.88						
Wolga	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	39.55	0.31	2	39.55	0.31	2						
Wrona	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	40.33	1.65	2	40.33	1.65	-						
Wyderka	6	37.61 ^{abcA}	1.32	6	37.61 ^{ab} AB	1.32	-	-	-	6	39.64	2.97	4	39.83	3.79	2	39.25	0.82						
Reda	2	38.83	3.53	2	38.83	3.53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Srocza	2	39.00	0.47	2	39.00	0.47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Żyrka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Obca	2	37.83 ^d	0.23	2	37.83	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Together	38	39.09	2.05	30	39.26	1.89	8	38.46	2.59	28	39.37	2.01	20	39.71	2.14	8	38.51	1.41						
Razem																								

Values in the same columns with the same letters differ statistically significantly, small letters at $P \leq 0.05$, capitals at $P \leq 0.01$
 Wartości w kolumnach oznaczone tymi samymi literami różnią się istotnie, małymi $P \leq 0.05$, dużymi $P \leq 0.01$

continued Table 6. Results of basic performance trials for Hucul horses with regards to female lines (pts)
 cd. Tabeli 6. Wyniki zasadniczej próby dzielności koni huculskich z uwzględnieniem rodzin żeńskich (pkt)

Female Lines Rodziny żeńskie	2009										2010									
	they have included during second test zaliczyły podczas drugiej próby					stallions ogierzy					they have included during second test zaliczyły podczas drugiej próby					stallions ogierzy				
	total ogółem		mares klacze		stallions ogierzy		total ogółem		mares klacze		stallions ogierzy		total ogółem		mares klacze		stallions ogierzy			
	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD	n	\bar{x}	SD		
Agatka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	112.00	0.0	2	112.00	0.0	-	-	
Bajkałka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	92.62	9.13	-	-	-	2	92.62	
Czeremcha	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Gurgul	4	100.83	17.95	4	100.83	17.95	-	-	-	-	-	2	80.92	54.80	2	80.92	54.80	-	-	
Góralka	6	97.75	20.89	4	100.08	22.34	2	93.08	24.87	-	-	2	96.50	29.94	2	96.50	29.94	-	-	
nowosądecka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Laliszka	6	112.50	5.63	6	112.50	5.63	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Nakoneczna	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	99.08	0.0	2	99.08	0.0	-	-	
Polanka	10	96.52	17.95	4	95.96	26.29	6	96.97	11.21	-	-	8	95.58	11.07	6	94.69	12.57	2	99.17	
Wolga	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	100.05	20.82	-	-	-	2	100.05	
Wrona	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	110.00	0.0	2	110.00	0.0	-	-	
Wyderka	6	81.43	42.98	6	81.43	42.98	-	-	-	-	6	101.48	23.57	4	96.50	26.17	2	116.42	0.0	
Reda	2	86.20	12.90	2	86.20	12.90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Stoczka	2	94.00	16.50	2	94.00	16.50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Zyrka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Obca	2	84.08	14.02	2	84.05	14.02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Together	38	94.72	22.64	30	94.40	24.78	8	95.86	13.80	-	-	28	97.25	20.05	20	96.01	22.65	8	100.16	
Razem																				

Values in the same columns with the same letters differ statistically significantly at $P \leq 0.05$
 Wartości w kolumnach oznaczone tymi samymi literami różnią się istotnie przy $P \leq 0.05$

The results of Hucul path for stallions and mares in 2009 and 2010 are summarized in figures 1 and 2. The minimum set points needed to pass this task was 60 points for stallions and 50 for mares. The number of individuals that obtained up to 59.9 points during the field trials increased in 2010 in respect of stallions (fig. 1). In the case of mares higher numbers of individuals scoring above 50 points were observed in 2010.

Researches conducted by Stachurska et al. [2006] concerning the degree of difficulty of each barrier during the performance trials showed that Hucul horses committed fewer errors over barriers that used naturally occurring elements of the terrain. Better results were also obtained when in subsequent competitions the animals went through the same path.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In analyzing the results of performance trials by Hucul horses, it should be noted that fewer individuals re-entered for the trials in 2010.

2. Similar final scores by horses in subsequent years were observed amongst stallions representing Gurgul lines as well as in mare families of Polanka, Wołga and Wyderka.

Analysis of the results of Hucul path showed that mares scored higher in 2010.

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Streszczenie. Celem pracy była ocena stopnia przygotowania koni huculskich do prób dzielności w 2009 i 2010 r. Próby dzielności dla tej rasy należy zaliczyć do powszechnych i dobrze zorganizowanych. W skład zasadniczej polowej próby dzielności wchodzi ocena pokroju i ścieżka huculska. Warunkiem zaliczenia jest uzyskanie łącznej ilości punktów minimum 85 dla klaczy i 95 dla ogierów. W 2009 r. zgłoszono do prób dzielności 222, a w 2010 r. – 191 sztuk. Wykazano, iż w 2010 r. mniej licznie reprezentowane były rodziny klaczy Żyrka, Gurgul, Laliszka i Polanka oraz linia męska Pietrosu. W 2010 r. ogiery były gorzej przygotowane do prób (w 2010 r. nie zaliczyło 20,0%, w 2009 r. 13,2%), a klacze lepiej (odpowiednio 10,2% i 20,1%). W ocenie eksterieru koni wykazano w 2009 r. większe zróżnicowanie, co potwierdzono statystycznie. Zbliżoną punktację końcową w kolejnych latach stwierdzono u koni reprezentujących linię ogiera Gurgul i rodziny klaczy Polanka, Wołga i Wyderka. Analiza wyników ścieżki huculskiej wykazała wyższą punktację klaczy w 2010 r.

Słowa kluczowe: konie huculskie, próby dzielności, ścieżka huculska