

Breeding in Japan



When Western-style horseracing was first introduced to Japan by the foreign residents of Yokohama during the 1860s, most racehorses were domestic breeds, with some imports from Shanghai and other parts of China. During the 1870s, a few thoroughbreds were imported from the United States for the first time for use as breeding stock.

The breeding industry in Japan began in earnest in 1907 when, with the assistance of the Mitsubishi Conglomerate, a thoroughbred stallion and 20 broodmares were imported from the United Kingdom to stand at Koiwai Farm. With the subsequent authorization of horseracing and the regulation of racing programs and other racing related affairs, horseracing in Japan started to prosper, and the number of domestically bred racehorses increased as the thoroughbred breeding industry developed.

Although the breeding industry suffered a near fatal blow during the closing days of World War II, horseracing along with society started on the long road to recovery after the war ended. As racing activities surpassed their pre-war prosperity, the number of foals bred increased to over 10,000, an unequalled number in the history of horseracing in Japan.

Since 1995, however, the industry has been in a gradual decline. In 1997, the number of thoroughbred foals fell to around 8,000, and its number in 2023 was 7,796.

Bloodstock sales in Japan are conducted by the Japan Bloodhorse Breeders' Association (JBBA) in cooperation with various local breeders' associations, and by the Japan Racing Horse Association (JRHA) who conducts the famous public auction, "JRHA Select Sale".

Although the number of thoroughbreds has decreased, the breeding standards - as well as their expectations for the foals - have been getting higher every year.



JRA Breeze Up Sale

Number of Foals Produced (2014–2023)

