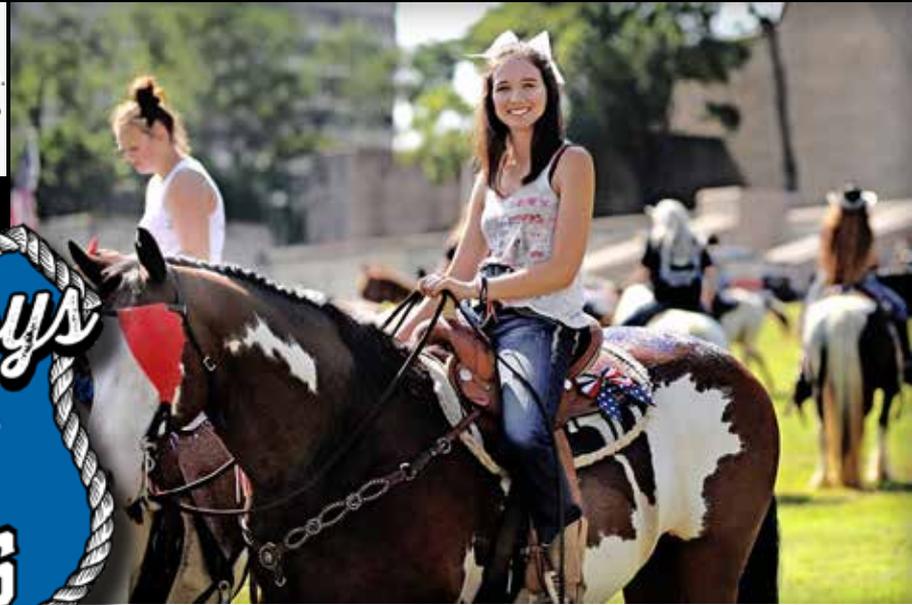


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Cowboys for Cops 4th Annual Trail Ride to be in Oak Grove, MO

Read more on Page 4





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Hello friends! I hope all of you have been doing well and getting in some riding time. I am burning the midnight oil trying to finish up this issue. It is so good to see people getting out and horse events ramping up with good numbers.

Make sure you check out our website and utilize our Better Horses Calendar of Events, IT'S FREE. Go to www.betterhorses.com. Also, did you know you can listen to our Better Horses Radio Show 24/7 if you wish? Check out our podcast by going to podcast and typing in Better Horses with Ernie & Dawn, then bam, there we are. Also make sure you check out our Better Horses TV Show, we are Nationwide on RFDTV and the Cowboy Channel.

We are excited to see that the Cowboys For Cops Parade is back but has moved to Oak Grove, Missouri! (See story on page 4 and sign up to participate.)

Congratulations to all the exhibitors that showed in Guthrie, Oklahoma at the Lazy E in the Versatility Ranch Horse Show. A huge turnout! The NVRHA will host another Finals this September 24-26 in Lincoln, NE. (see ad on page 14)

Join us for the 22nd Annual Dream Ride In the Flint Hills this October 29th, 30th, & 31st at the Clover Cliff Ranch. Information is on page 11. We hope you can join us at this great place with great people. There are a limited number of horses available to lease.

Let me know if there is anything myself or Better Horses can do for you. Keep your eyes and heart focused on Jesus Christ Our Savior. Believe me, it is amazing on what HE can do for you.

Happy Trails & God Bless!



Ernie Rodina

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For advertising information contact:

Ernie Rodina

785-418-6047

ernie@betterhorsesradio.com

Ed Adams

816-830-1998

Eadams2@outlook.com

Connie Rodina

785-418-2615

csrodina5@gmail.com

Jennifer Mitchell, Graphic Designer

913-485-6495

jennifer.rodina@gmail.com

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Missouri Town of Oak Grove to Host the 2021 Kansas City Cowboys for Cops Trail Ride

On Saturday, August 14, 2021, the Jackson County Sheriff's Mounted Posse (www.jcsmp.org) will host the 4th Annual Cowboys for Cops all horse trail ride celebrating the states bicentennial. Sponsored by the Oak Grove Historical Society (www.oakgrovehistory.com) every Cowboy and Cowgirl is invited to mount up and ride for law enforcement.

This downtown trail ride will begin the staging at 8:00am at Frick Park located at 801 SW 12 Street, Oak Grove, MO, 64075. Frick Park has 57 acres of land located on the west end of town. There is a lighted equestrian arena, a pavilion with picnic tables, restrooms, and large

scenic areas. It is the home to many rodeos.

"This year the Cowboys for Cops trail ride gives your horse the unique experience of a small-town parade environment. Even if you have never been in a parade, this practice provides your horse with a herd for calmness with trained outriders available to assist anyone in need", explained Deputy Kelly Sitter McComb of the Mounted Posse.

With a suggested donation of \$20.00, the Oak Grove Police and the Jackson County Sheriff's Department will provide a rolling escort around the historical downtown of Oak Grove.

"We welcome everyone and appreciate the support given to our first responders," said Chief of Police Mike Childs.

Pat Gostigan – President of the Oak Grove Historical Society, explained that August 10, 2021, will officially mark the two hundredth anniversary of Missouri's entry as the

24th state to enter the United States. By celebrating the accomplishments and diversity of all these regions, we help create a better

understanding of our one Missouri



and the ties that bind us together. What better way to celebrate than to have an old time trail ride in Oak Grove.

Oak Grove, Missouri, in Jackson county, is located 25 miles east of Kansas City, Missouri. The city is part of the Kansas City metropolitan statistical area (MSA).

"We are proud to keep up this tradition of Kansas City Cowboys for Cops", said Sheriff Darryl Forte of the Jackson County Sheriff's Department. Our Deputies look forward every year in assisting with the rolling escort.

Ed Adams, Captain of the Mounted Posse, shared, "The Sheriff's Posse 100 (www.posse100.org) charter is to support law-enforcement, their families and first responders who have been severely injured or to the dependent family of those who have died in the line of duty. This includes helping with immediate financial obligations".



The Jackson County Sheriff's Mounted Posse was organized with the interested citizens of Jackson County in 1947 and chartered by the State of Missouri in June of 1949.

The Mounted Posse is reminiscent of the groups of mounted deputies who roamed the hills of Jackson County in the days of Jesse James. The original Posse was the first time in nearly thirty years that Kansas City

and Jackson County had a real gun-toting law enforcement group. The original group was all deputized.

Celebrating its 73rd anniversary, the Members of the Posse consist of accomplished riders serving the citizens of Jackson County. Under the auspices of the Sheriff's office it is a Para-military organization, in that there is a chain-of-command. The members are all volunteers.

Delivering to the Sheriff's office assistance without compensation from the taxpayers. Many, but not all members, are mounted on horseback with training to assist in areas inaccessible by car or on foot.

For more information, contact Deputy Kelly Sitter McComb (816) 547-9508. Or see the facebook page "Kansas City Cowboys for Cops".



Maximize Your Potential: Six Steps to Success

By Merle Arbo



One of the most often asked questions as a judge and trainer is “How can I improve my horse’s performance?” While there

generally aren’t any quick fixes, I’ve taken the time to outline six ways you can improve you and your horse’s performance this show season. Rhythm, consistency, preparation, image, attitude, and priorities are a vital part of any successful program. Over the next few issues we’ll look closer at each one of these keys to see how to improve performance. Let’s get started!

Get Rhythm

Johnny Cash, a ballroom dancer, a good golf swing, and a great horse all have one thing in common. Given the topic, you’ve probably already figured out the answer, rhythm. Regardless of the breed or the event, to me one of the most important factors in a good performance is rhythm.

A western lope, a showmanship or horsemanship turn, a rollback, a foxtrot or running walk, all have a certain rhythm to them. Study the footfall of the horse; a horse with good rhythm is fun and easy to watch. Their next move comes reliably and with predictability.

A good horseman has rhythm also. They use their aids, such as their legs, hands, and seat, in rhythm with the horse to enhance that horse’s performance. One of the biggest mistakes riders make is they use speed as feedback rather than rhythm. As a result, the horse’s

potential isn’t maximized or the performance is less than a hundred percent of that horse’s ability.

This reliance of speed as the sole means of feedback can mean a horse is pushed too fast like a spin in a horsemanship or reining pattern, or in a flatfoot or running walk with the gaited breeds. On the other end of a spectrum, a western pleasure horse’s trot and lope can be too slow and throttled back. Either way, the integrity of the gait or maneuver is compromised. Speed, or lack of speed, is only desirable if the gait or maneuver is correct. After a gait or maneuver is correct, speed then shows the degree of difficulty.

Just like people though, not all horses have the same degree of rhythm, but an effective rider can enhance rhythm in their horse. The first step is to be aware. Think of yourself as a metronome or a drummer in a band. Your job is to keep your partner on the beat. When you are working your horse, think, “1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4,” or “1-2, 1-2” or “1-2-3, 1-2-3,” whatever the gait or maneuver dictates the rhythm should be.

Also, be aware of changes. These changes alert a rider that something is changing before it actually does. A good rider should be proactive rather than reactive. Many times, I can see a horse that is getting ready to break gait before it does because its rhythm changes and slows down or speeds up. A proactive rider can make changes to get the horse back in the ideal rhythm.

Often when I’m riding, I’m humming or thinking about a song in my head that is the same rhythm as what I’m doing. It doesn’t matter if it is Folsom Prison Blues or Crazy Train as long

as it fits what you are doing. When you have to slow the song down or speed it up, that means the rhythm has changed and you need to adjust accordingly. As your horse gets more and more rhythm, it becomes more automatic, more predictable, and that takes us into our next topic: consistency.

Consistency

Another important characteristic of a good performance is consistency. Many times you’ll overhear someone on the rail say, “I know who’s going to win this class,” or “That horse always wins.” Why do they say that? That horse and rider are good at their jobs and dependable every time. Consistency is not hard to spot, but hard to attain.

As discussed earlier, rhythm will lend itself to consistency because rhythm is a consistent beat. Therefore, in theory at least, a talented horse with correct rhythm should be easy to teach consistency. Let’s take consistency a step farther than our equine companion and look at a consistent rider. Horses, many times, mirror their rider in both good ways and bad. I’ve seen horses whose rider was quick tempered and over reacted, exhibit the exact same qualities. On the positive side of that I’ve seen proficient, effective riders that have good rhythm and are consistent, produce horse after horse that excel in competition.

As a trainer, I expect that horse to give me its full attention, but in return I owe that horse my full attention. I need to be consistent with my cues, my corrections, my rewards, and my expectations. I need to ask that horse the same way every time to perform

that task I want it to do. When it doesn’t, I need to correct that horse according to its level of training. Just as you discipline a fifteen-year-old kid differently than you do a five-year-old, the same theory applies to horses. Next, after that horse performs the task you ask, consistently reward that horse. Much like you don’t expect the same thing out of a fifteen-year-old and a five-year-old, you shouldn’t expect the same out of a young horse. Gradually increase your expectations as your horse learns the task.

I see many riders and horses get frustrated because the rider knows what the horse should do, but doesn’t get that horse to do it. An important part in this early stage is rewarding the try. I liken a horse to a little kid many times because it is an analogy that is easy to grasp. If you chastise a little kid over and over eventually they give up and quit trying. The same is true for horses. When you are first teaching a new maneuver to your horse, reward that horse when it tries. Positive reinforcement along with gentle correction helps keep that horse in a willing and positive attitude.

After you have introduced the task and the horse is improving, there is no substitute for repetition, but vary your routine slightly too. Horses, like riders, will become stagnant if you don’t vary your routine. Don’t quantify your routine such as: we’re going to lope ten circles to the right today or practice that back through fifteen times. Maybe your horse does it perfectly the first five times. You still have ten more times to go. Are you riding to reward the positive or trapping that horse into making a mistake? On the other end of that maybe you’ve loped ten circles or backed through fifteen times and it was awful from the first to the last time. Does that mean you are done because you accomplished your goal

for that day? Don't put a number on how many times. Ride until there is improvement, and always end on a positive note. Gradually increase your expectations.

Now that you've mastered rhythm and your horse (and you) are getting consistent, it's time to think about going to a horse show so, we need to prepare!

Preparation

How do you prepare your horse for a show? Do you get ready for a big show the same way? Obviously there are a few differences in taking a young horse to its first horse show versus an older seasoned veteran but there are a few similarities too.

While the best teacher is usually experience, steps can be taken to ensure the transition is a smooth one from the training barn to the horse show. Think about the upcoming event you would like to take your horse too. What will be different than your regular schedule? A big difference for a young horse, and sometimes old pros, is distractions which come in many forms. Other horses, spectators, little kids, dogs, traffic, the announcer, the photographer, umbrellas, and numerous other things can take your horse's mind off of you and onto something else.

Some people try to insulate their horse from the rest of the world when they train or show. They want the arena totally quiet when they are riding and everyone to stay at the other end of the pen. I believe they are doing their horse a disservice. Sure, short term benefits mean their horse isn't distracted, but long term their horse is going to suffer when an unexpected event happens or they can't control the environment. Strive to expose your horse to all possible scenarios. Think about the people

that work at Disney World. I'm sure they are really excited the first few days they work there, taking in all the sights and sounds. After while the new wears off and they soon get tired of looking. Your horse will get tired of looking also. The horse show just becomes another day at work.

Another way to prepare your horse for the event is to simulate situations at home, not only traffic but other things as well. Some arenas are notorious for having pigeons flying around the arena. Patches of sunlight shining on the arena, noisy ventilation fans, bad footing, air conditioners, or a difficult trail obstacle can all be encountered at certain pens. Try to simulate all those as best as you can at home; you'll be better prepared for them when you see them at the show.

Schedules at shows are usually imposed rather than chosen. At home you might choose to ride at 5 or 6 in the evening, but at the show your class is the first one to show at 7 that morning. Vary the time of day you ride. This change will help you determine how much warm up your horse might need on a cool morning instead of a warm afternoon. An additional step I take at home is to get the horse comfortable with being tied. Being tied is a time for the horse to relax. At the show, two classes before your class may be split or they may decide to take a break. Either way, it is impractical to untack your horse and saddle up again. Your horse shouldn't stress out because he's saddled and tied; he should wait patiently until it's his turn. If you are at a show, showing out of your trailer, the day seems even longer for a horse tied to your trailer that paws constantly!

The more I haul a horse to shows, the better I know how to prepare it for the next show; not only the day

of the horse show but the week or two before. I will try to have the horse ready for everything that will be asked of it in the class. I'll study that horse's response to certain bits. If I find one I like, I'll save it back and usually show in it. I'll remember what specific exercises I did with that horse the week or two before and which ones helped and which didn't. Maybe I rode that horse twice a day two weeks before a big show or ponied the horse more times than usual that week. After the show I'll think about what could have been better and what would help improve that for the next time.

When you get to the show, don't change the way you prepare your horse just because you see someone else doing something different. In the horse show world, many times it's monkey see, monkey do. If someone does something different and has some success with it, everyone seems to jump on the bandwagon. Have confidence in yourself and horse. There's a time and place for trying out different methods but at the horse show before your class usually isn't a good place to start. Put that idea in your thinking cap and try it out next week when you get home. If it doesn't work, you'll have time to fix it before the next show.

For horses that haven't been hauled to horse shows much, I'll take along and start introducing it to horse show life. Generally, I won't show a horse the first time I take it to the horse show. When I show that horse I want it to be as prepared as possible and not 'beat itself' because it wasn't as ready as it could be. I'll note what that horse is like the first day of the show. Some horses are great right off the trailer and others need a little play time on the lunge line or an extra day of rest before they are ready to go to work.

Sometimes little details that are hard to pinpoint make a big difference. One particular horse I had was a really nice pleasure horse, but I noticed at the end of his class he would kick at his belly when anyone touched him with spur. He didn't care about how light the touch was or using different rowels, as I experimented with both. I rarely noticed the problem at home. After a couple of horse shows, I observed when I would take him back to the stall after the class, the first thing he would do is urinate. The next horse show we went to, I changed the way we got him ready the day of the show. I would ride him before the class, bring him back to the stall, let him urinate, then go show him, and the behavior was eliminated. He would get a little nervous at a show and when he had to urinate, he didn't like any nudge to his belly. By changing his routine the day of the show, I made him more comfortable and fixed the problem we were having.

So far we have rhythm, consistency, and preparation and you think you're ready to enter the pen, but wait. What about your appearance? We're getting closer to showing now let's address your appearance!

Appearance

Somewhere in our American culture, we have the idea we need to stand out; be different from the crowd. This same notion holds true for horse show apparel. The problem with that idea is how some people interpret it. Think about what image you are trying to portray to the judge. Sure, a peacock feather flowing from your cowboy hat will get you noticed but that might have a negative effect on your appearance. Sometimes

Continues onto pages 8 & 9

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in an effort to stand out from other contestants, exhibitors will go too far and actually detract from their performance.

I tell people many times horse show fashion (and training a horse for that matter) is like learning to play the piano. You must first learn the rules to be good; to be great you then must know when to break them. If you are new to the horse show world don't try to push the envelope at first.

Your show clothes don't have to be the most expensive ones in the pen, but they need to work for you, rather than against you. I often think about an interview with Marcus Allen, who was a running back for the Raiders and later the Chiefs. He was talking about his first rushing touchdown. A reporter asked him, "Why didn't you do a celebration dance in the end zone?" Marcus told the reporter, "Because I wanted to look like I had been there before." A judge might not know you are a rookie unless you show or tell him. Just because you are a rookie, doesn't mean you can't dress and act like a veteran.

Start with the basics. Don't try to begin with many outfits. Start with one good one and then expand. Buy the best you can afford of the basics. A well-shaped hat will add to any outfit. One of my pet peeves as a judge is a hat that looks like it has been behind the truck seat since the last horse show. Take care of your investment.

Don't underestimate clean, well fitted attire. A simple starched shirt and jeans can go a long way. Pay attention to details. Have someone video your class and the others in the class. What do you notice? How does your tack fit? How do your clothes fit? Don't be afraid to be critical. Look at other contestants in the class. How is their appearance? What do you notice different? Look

at your horse and the other horses in your class. Do the other horses have tail extensions? Are their manes banded or braided? How well are they clipped and groomed compared to your horse? All these things play a part in your overall image.

Think about how you look to a judge, not only your clothes, but your overall image. I remember when those plastic flip numbers first came out years ago. As a trainer, they were pretty handy. As long as someone knew their number, I could just flip them around and was ready to go. I didn't have to hunt down safety pins or magic markers. I was talking to a Missouri judge who we had shown to lately and he made a comment about the flip numbers. He said they had a glare on them and were hard to read, along with a few profanities. Needless to say that was the last show I used those plastic flip numbers! Try to think about things from a judge's perspective, not just an exhibitor's perspective.

If you are unsure about something, don't be afraid to seek advice from someone who you respect. Be careful though; sometimes advice is worth what it costs!

All right, you and your horse are looking spiffy and just got done showing but didn't do as well as expected. Now is a good time to keep a positive attitude.

Attitude

We've all seen them at the horse shows. We will avoid them after their horse doesn't win a class. You know who I'm talking about. They will give the judge the evil eye or kick the dirt in disgust. Those people that come up and say, "I just don't know what that judge was looking at," or "I can't believe the judge used that horse!" If they happen to corner us, we will politely skirt around the topic and

change it to another subject as quick as we can. One of the most important factors often overlooked is attitude.

Horse shows are competitive, but no one likes a poor sport. I often wonder if people think the judge can't tell a poor sport also. Attitude also plays a role in your appearance and image. I would wager judges could recall poor sports in horse shows more readily than the horses they picked to win. Most spectators struggle to remember the class placings from yesterday, but easily recount the temper tantrum that someone threw.

I tell my customers we should only worry about the things we can control and judges aren't one of the things we should worry about. If they have a good ride and get overlooked, I still consider that a success. To me, horse shows should be about fun and improvement, a place to socialize with friends and appreciate good horses. I don't care what horse you have, it is impossible to win every event you enter. The best way not to get beat is not to enter a class.

View the horse show from the judge's perspective. More than likely he or she has taken the day before to travel, gets in late that night, gets up early the next morning and stands on their feet the next 8 to 12 hours, just to get a late dinner that night and another full day of travel the next day. When you consider the amount of travel time, the time spent in motels, and paying the barn help while gone, the hourly wage goes down significantly. The judge does not want to waste even more time when an exhibitor is not ready for their class.

In addition to being prompt, be courteous. Horses and exhibitors have bad days. Most judges understand that a horse sometimes needs correction. However, this is a horse show, not a clinic or practice.

Don't waste even more time because your horse spooks at a trail obstacle and you spend five minutes trying to get your horse over to it. If every trail exhibitor did this, just imagine how long the show would be. Work on the obstacle after the horse show or next week during practice.

Some exhibitors feel that they paid for a class and they should get to show in it. The key word here is "show." A judge has a responsibility to other exhibitors, spectators, and management to keep the show moving along. If an exhibitor interrupts the flow of the show, a judge has a right to dismiss the exhibitor. Again, an exhibitor who complains that they were unfairly excused leaves an unfavorable impression on the judge.

Now, let's consider attitude when showing. A judge can tell with ease what kind of day the competitor is having just by the look on his or her face. A positive, pleasant expression goes a long way towards the overall impression a judge gets. I think most judges don't like a fake smile, but most would rather have a fake smile than a scowl! Are you confident in your horse? Your pattern? Sometimes the difference between a good pattern and a great pattern is the confidence shown by the exhibitor. They know where the cones are and what is expected next. The pattern flows smoothly and effortlessly.

After you are aware about your attitude and the effect it has on your appearance, almost anyone who is having a good ride or a good pattern can confidently "sell" that pattern or ride to the judge. A great exhibitor can remain calm, cool, and collected even when things aren't going right. Sometimes, it is possible to mislead the judge into believing that everything is going as planned when it really isn't. These actors will place

higher and win more because they view the arena as their stage. They keep their composure and roll with the punches. Possibly the judge didn't see your break of gait in the corner, your overturn, or spin the wrong way. A number of exhibitors tell on themselves when things go wrong. If the judge was not exactly sure what happened, a competitor's attitude and appearance will telegraph what actually happened. Keep your chin up and go right on like nothing happened.

Be positive and prompt. Be courteous and confident. Be gracious when you win and a good sport when you don't. It sounds simple enough, but it's hard to do. Master those and you are on your way towards a great attitude, which is an important, but overlooked part of appearance. Finally, let's talk about priorities.

Priorities

Wouldn't it be great if we all had enough time, energy, and resources to do everything we wanted to do? Unfortunately, we don't. Work, school, soccer practice, taxes, and a multitude of other things all keep us from doing what we want to get done. How can we make sense of all these things and still accomplish our horse goals? Prioritize.

Prioritize your goals. It is impossible to win every class at a horse show if you struggle with winning one. Focus on one event. Maybe your favorite event is trail or showmanship. Work towards getting better in that class. After you've accomplished your goal of being competitive in trail, then move onto another goal.

I usually employ the strategy of changing the most noticeable things first, whether that is the horse or rider. Let's apply this priority theory to your

appearance. I often hear old timers at the horse show talk about the good old days. One of the stories I recall, Doc Allen told about a horse show where an old beat up truck and a rickety trailer came pattering into the horse show. All the people standing around were laughing at the rig. Doc said they proceeded to unload the best looking horse at the horse show. That horse won everything that day from the halter to the reining. (Back when they showed them all day long!) When the guy was loading up, someone asked him why he was hauling that fine animal around in that rig. The guy replied, "I couldn't afford a good horse and a good rig, and they don't judge trailers at the horse show." This story brings home the point that we need to focus on what the judge will be judging us on, not what others at the show will judge us on.

Pick a goal and be specific, but reasonable, about it. Now take a realistic look at your appearance and your horse. Given that your horse is capable of accomplishing this goal with you, study others that have accomplished the goal you wish to. What are the similarities? What are the differences? Maybe you can't go out and buy a whole new outfit or all new tack, but prioritize and go get the most important ones. Start simple. Maybe you are in desperate need of a new hat or a new saddle. Be clever. If you can't afford a brand new saddle, look into gently used ones. You'll get all the feel of a nice saddle for a fraction of the price. Use this what-do-I-need-the-worst approach every time you upgrade your equipment and you'll start realizing the rewards.

Prioritize your riding time also. We cannot simply ride the horse two times and have it perfect for the next

show. If you know you are only going to get to ride your horse twice this week before the next show, work on the problem areas. Don't spend time practicing things you already excel at. If you could change one thing per ride on your horse, think about what that horse would be like in ten rides, fifty rides, a hundred rides. True, every horse has a different capacity for learning, but you get the point. If your horse struggles at walk overs in trail and competing in trail is your goal, spend those limited riding minutes practicing walk overs this week. Next week if your horse masters the walk overs then proceed onto the next big problem area. Before you know it, your problem areas will become fewer and fewer.

Finally, prioritize your horse shows. If your goal is competing in the World Show or at the Congress, you might not have enough vacation days or the financial means to go to every

horse show you normally go to. Pick the shows that would be the most beneficial to you and your horse to prepare for that show and eliminate the shows that would be marginally useful. Keep in mind time and monetary constraints as bigger shows cost more money and usually require more travel time.

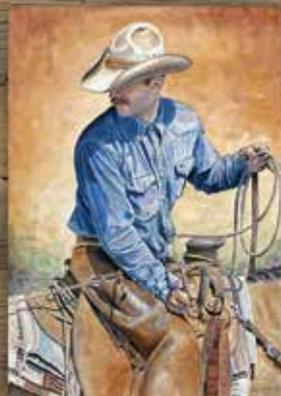
We have finally made it through all our topics: rhythm, consistency, preparation, image, attitude, and priorities. Hopefully, you might have gleaned a new idea or two that will help maximize you and your horse's performance. Just remember when in doubt, keep it simple and review your basics. You can accomplish your goals, one step at a time!



GALLERY III

The gallery boasts an impressive display of artwork. Items range from individual note-cards to matted prints, canvas reproductions, and original paintings.

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WESTERN ART CORNER



John Keeling



Originally from Salina, Kansas, John earned his BFA-Design from KU in 1983. Since college, he has lived and worked in Kansas City, Missouri.

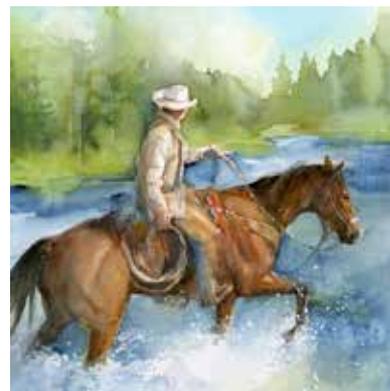
After retiring as a Creative Director from Hallmark Cards in 2013, John has been reinventing himself as a full-time watercolor artist. His award-winning work has been recognized throughout the country, including membership in the Watercolor USA Honor Society.

John operates a custom pet portrait business from his home studio in Crestwood. He is represented by MHS Licensing and his watercolors can be found on a range of products, including calendars, fabric, and home decor. He has illustrated two children's books about Sam, a shelter dog, written by KC author Annie Presley.



John enjoys teaching watercolor to all ages and skill levels. He holds workshops in his home studio and gardens. In May of 2022, he will be leading two Beginners Workshops in Provence, France.

For more information about John, his work, and workshop opportunities, please visit his website at www.johnkeelingpaintings.com.



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Hearty Grub with Mark Burkdoll

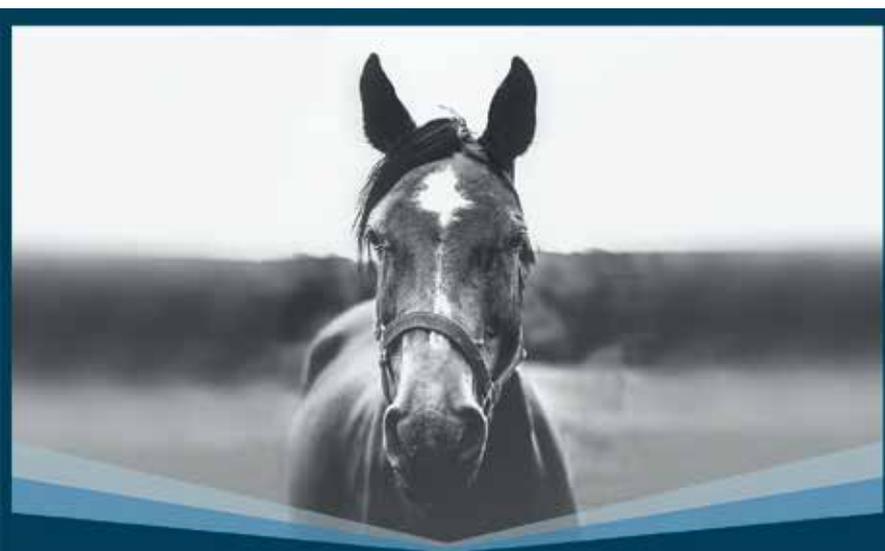
Cowboy Taters

1 pound red potatoes, (about half the skins removed) sliced thin
2 Tbsp melted butter
1/4 cup whipping cream
1 cup shredded onions (yellow)
1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
salt and pepper

Mix all ingredients together and put in cast iron skillet and press down tightly.

Cook on stove top over high heat until the cheese starts to melt, then move to oven to finish (15 to 20 min depends on the thickness of the potatoes).

Put under broiler for the last couple of minutes to brown the tops.



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'Age Is Meaningless' When Deciding Whether To Retire An 'Old' Horse

By Frank J. Buchman

"Older horses are often healthier and happier when they are continued to be used."

Like people, every horse is different, and conditions sometimes demand retirement. Certain horse owners contend a 20-year-old is "past their prime, time to retire." However, many of the best horses continue working much longer.

"Putting an old horse 'out to pasture' is unnecessary and even unwise," two renowned horse veterinarians agreed.

"Instead, consider the horse's needs to develop retirement keeping the horse active and content," recommended David Trachtenberg, DVM.

"The end of a horse's career is determined less by age than physical capacity and other intangible factors," added Ruth Sobeck, DVM.

"Age is meaningless," Trachtenberg insisted. "If a horse is in good shape and handling workload with ease, there's no reason to retire. It is detrimental, physically and mentally, for a horse to suddenly go from being active to not doing anything."

The best way to retire a horse, the veterinarians said, is to gradually decrease activity, based on changing physical abilities.

"It's not always easy to decide when to make those adjustments and to what extent," Sobeck said. "Of course, you never want to ask a horse to do work that the aging body can no longer handle."

An acute injury usually leaves little room for doubt when it comes to planning a horse's future. "On the other hand, when an older horse's decline is subtle, it can be difficult to see," Sobeck insisted.

A veterinarian can be helpful in such a situation. "I may see an older horse only two or three times a year. So I'm going to notice that it's stiffer or losing muscle mass," Sobeck said. "That's sometimes an eye opener for the owner who hasn't seen or won't admit their horse is slowing down."

However, in other situations it becomes apparent that a horse can no longer handle a workload "It will tire faster and take longer to recover," Trachtenberg said. "A horse may trip more or be sore after a long ride, both signs of slowing down."

Too much work can also make an older horse behave differently. "When a horse is aggravated with a bad attitude, it may be telling you to cutback the workload," Sobeck added.

Still any horse will have good and bad days. "Owners shouldn't read too much into a single episode," Sobeck continued. "Instead, look for patterns. Keep a daily diary to record just how your horse feels and evaluate it at the end of the month."

Veterinarians can help distinguish age-related issues from problems that can be solved or at least made less severe. "Ninety percent of the time, arthritis is the issue in an older horse who is slowing down," Trachtenberg said. "Yet chronic, low-grade laminitis, typically referred to as 'founder,' can be quite similar."

Repeated soft-tissue stress can put a horse on a retirement track as well. "Many times an older horse injures the same ligament or tendon again and again," Sobeck said. "The horse can be rehabilitated, but when it reaches a certain level of work, lameness will reoccur."

Some horses will not reveal they

are hurting. "They'll tell you I'm fine. I can run on these tendons, when really they can't," Sobeck said. "When x-rays tell one story, but the horse is giving another, owners must overrule the horse for its own good."

Non-musculoskeletal conditions, such as heaves and Cushing disease, aren't likely to drive a horse into retirement.

"Medications can usually control these problems," Trachtenberg said. "Still untreated conditions can certainly lead to complications that make it difficult for a horse to perform a job."

There are no rules of thumb for determining how much a horse of a certain age and with particular conditions can do. "That is done on a case-by-case and even day-by-day basis," Sobeck informed.

Using an older horse sparingly won't preserve soundness. "The adage that horses only have so many miles in them applies more to the extreme sports like barrel racing and roping," Trachtenberg said. "Reduced riding can't take five years off a moderately arthritic horse's life, so continue to ride the horse for enjoyment. But, instead of going hard and fast, ride easier trails."

Eventually, if the horse has the personality, it may just be led around with kids on its back. "That's an important job, too," Sobeck said. "The years that took a physical toll on the horse may have made it perfect for younger or inexperienced riders."

Even when an older horse works less, or not at all, the task of caring for it won't necessarily become easier. "The needs will be different, but still important," Sobeck said. "The biggest



Putting an old horse "out to pasture" is often unnecessary and even unwise, veterinarians contend. The horse still requires considerable care and attention.



The years that took a physical toll on an old horse may have made it perfect for younger or inexperienced riders.

mistake I see people make is just throwing a retired horse out in a field and assuming it'll be fine."

The horse still needs proper nutrition, regular dental and hoof care, vaccinations and deworming. "The horse can't be expected to fend for itself," Trachtenberg said. "A senior horse ration is advisable, but the horse probably doesn't require supplemental vitamins and minerals

Continued on page 14

Age is Meaningless

when fed good forages.”

Simply looking at an older horse daily will go a long way toward keeping it healthy. “Continue to handle the horse and be aware of weight and overall health,” Sobeck advised.

Consistency is important, too. “If the horse received an oral joint supplement while he was working, continue to give it in retirement,” Trachtenberg said.

The horse’s mental health must not be overlooked either. “Companionship is still important to older horses,” Sobeck said. “They need the company of another horse if at all possible.”

Old horses might also miss their former routine. “Even if an older

horse can no longer be ridden, it’s good to include it in previous activities,” Trachtenberg said. “Taking an old horse to a show as a traveling companion for a younger horse will make them both happier.”



Mom's Pineapple Ice Box Cake

Melt 1 pound marshmallows in 1 cup milk in double boiler. Cool. Whip 1 cup heavy whipping cream. Add 1 small can crushed pineapple. Add to cooled marshmallow mixture. Line pan with crushed vanilla wafers. Add cream mixture over wafers. Cool in refrigerator.

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Fly Control Tips for Happy, Healthy Horses

Say “Bye” to flies for horse health and comfort; implement these fly control strategies

By Aimee Robinson

Aimee@ValleyVet.com / 414-916-3246

It's a nice, sunny day that is perfect for a ride with your horse. You sink into the saddle in pure relaxation. Then suddenly, a horse fly lands on your horse's rear end. He swishes his tail and the tranquility of just moments ago is halted as your horse bucks mid-air to rid the biting pest. Can you relate? Most of us with horses – admittedly – can.

“Summer days provide the perfect environment for a rapid increase in fly populations. When flies are abundant, horses become irritated and stressed. More than that, flies cause far greater damage than being a nuisance alone,” warns Arnold Nagely, DVM, co-founder of Valley Vet Supply. “Flies also contribute to significant equine diseases and conditions. By controlling the fly population through a multi-pronged approach, horse owners can reduce risks for a number of health challenges, such as strangles, influenza, eye worms and summer sores.”

With risks heightening as temperatures climb and fly environments thrive, summer sores can have a painstaking impact on equine health and comfort. While curing them can be a relentless battle, preventing them begins simply—by controlling the fly population.

Summer sores are caused by house flies, face flies and stable flies, as they transfer parasitic nematode larvae (Habronema species) to moist areas around a horse's open wounds, eyes, nostrils, mouth and genitalia. When the larvae create a hypersensitivity reaction, chronic, fleshy and non-healing wounds can result, known as summer sores. The condition is costly and can require

months off from riding and training as the infected horse heals.

Anne-Marie Morgan is a horse owner and trainer. She's no stranger to the negative impact flies can have on a horse, especially relating to summer sores. “Thankfully, we have a very clean barn with a great fly spray system that keeps flies, and the risks they present, to a minimum,” Morgan said.

Florida-based horse owner, Miriam Wohlers, also shared how, “In the summertime, it is a constant battle with summer sores. Flies are horrendous, due to the constant humidity. All you can do is work to contain the flies.”

Flies can be relentless, especially during the summer months.

Dr. Nagely said, “Horsemen likely have seen a rise in flies since April, and they can expect to see increased fly populations through September, even into October in some regions of the country. It's best to begin fly control strategies as early in the season as possible to curb the numbers, reduce horse health risks and keep horses comfortable overall.”

Reduce the fly population at your horse barn with these simple strategies.

STOP FLIES BEFORE THEY HATCH

- Insect growth regulators pass through the manure of treated horses, preventing flies from developing into adults by inhibiting the development of the exoskeleton in fly larvae.
- Barn managers also have success in eliminating the fly population using fly predators, which are beneficial

bugs that conquer the fly's cocoon and kill immature pest flies naturally.

CLEAN STALLS AND TURNOUT AREAS DAILY

- Regular cleanings help rid fly-attracting odors and the warm, moist environment that is a fly haven for laying eggs and source of food.
- Help manage moist, wet areas of pastures through drainage where practical.
- Remove manure piles off-site from pastures, or spread manure over fields and paddocks, to help dry out piles and attract fewer flies.
- Spread out or remove uneaten hay to dry quickly.
- Keep overburden of plant residue at a minimum by controlling and cutting back excessive weeds and plant growth.

HANG FLY TRAPS

- From sticky traps to fly-attractant bags that can catch up to 40,000 flies, there are many options available.
- Be sure to read the product label and directions, as it's not uncommon to see these fly-attractant products hanging in areas in which horse owners would ideally want fewer flies. Be sure to pull flies away from the barn, not encourage more flies to come in.

MAINTAIN A TIDY BARN

- Remove dropped grain and supplements from stalls and feed rooms; doing so also will help prevent visits from opportunistic rodents, and the snakes that might be right behind them.
- Place tight-fitting lids on all garbage

cans to stop flies from enjoying an all-you-can-eat buffet, plus prevent wafting, unpleasant aromas with regular cleanings.

- Empty and scrub feed tubs and water buckets regularly to help keep flies at bay, as well as ensure horses have access to fresh, clean water at all times (a horse consumes an average of 10 gallons of fresh water per day.)

USE PREMISE AND FLY SPRAYS

- Using a premise spray quickly controls adult flies and other barn-residing insects, as well as helps deter new ones from entering the area.
- Barn insecticide spray kits can offer reliable fly control measures, through automatically timed spray applications.
- Fly spray is a must for quick and easy on-horse protection against flies. For the best results, make sure your horse is clean, so the spray sticks to the hair, not to dirt or mud.
- Ensure the horse's face is shielded from flies, too, by using a fly control product that is safe to use nearby their eyes. There are specially formulated ointments that can be applied using a cloth for this sensitive area.

ENSURE PROTECTION THROUGH FLY GEAR

- Fly apparel — such as fly sheets, masks and fly boots — also offers more protection than from a fly's painful bite alone. Fly gear can provide UV protection for horses, with some sheets and masks blocking more than 80% of harmful UV rays.

INSTALL BARN/STALL FANS TO INCREASE AIR CIRCULATION

- Circulating air helps to deter flies because the air requires more work

and energy from flies to travel to and land on your horse.

To help shield her mare from flies and Florida heat, Wohlers has three fans mounted and running in her mare's stall at all times during warmer months. Coupled with using fly spray, she also regularly washes and switches out five fly masks, and uses fly traps. "I want my mare to be happy and healthy," Wohlers said. "Flies are not only annoying, but they also carry a lot of diseases, and I don't want her to contract anything from them. Flies can be so frustrating for her, and I want to do everything I possibly can to prevent them."

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Longest Employee At Bluestem Farm & Ranch To Retire After 44 Years' Service

By Frank J. Buchman

Service of one of the most recognized and the longest tenured employee at the Emporia farm store is climaxing.

Concluding more than 44 years working at Bluestem Farm & Ranch Supply, Bruce Burenheide will retire on June 25th.

"It's been a great place to work for a family business always caring for their employees and customers," Burenheide said. "It was a difficult decision, but I decided now was the time. I'll miss the others I work with and serving the customers who are my friends from such a wide area."

Growing up at Olpe, Burenheide helped on his family's small farming operation and worked for other area farmers. "I also worked at the Olpe locker plant and Crown S Farms so I had diverse experiences," he said.

Graduating from high school in 1974, Burenheide attended Emporia

State University majoring in business administration and psychology. "I started to work for Bluestem part time during college and then went to work fulltime when I graduated in 1978," Bruce remembered.

Already at its present location on West Highway 50 when Bruce started, Bluestem Farm & Ranch Supply opened in 1961.

"Lee Nelson, farmer, implement dealer and former county agent, had a location on Commercial Street downtown," Bruce said. "Lee expanded Bluestem to new facilities here in 1968. He was always a hands-on boss who knew his employees and his customers and took care of them all."

Serving customers "on the floor" early in his career, Bruce worked in sporting goods, later tools and then paints departments. "I've done about everything there is at Bluestem one



Bruce Burenheide has worked at Bluestem Farm & Ranch Supply in Emporia 44 years. As the longest tenured employee there, Burenheide will retire on June 25th.

time or another moving up to the main office," he said.

As the buyer manager for 25 years, Bruce assists in all phases of the business with many diverse duties. "I'm buyer for the three departments of the store that I worked in and help wherever else I can," he said.

Handling much of the advertising and promotions for Bluestem, Bruce gets called upon to interview and hire new employees. "I've had the opportunity to work with a lot of good people throughout the years," he said. "A number of our employees have farm backgrounds which is an asset to work here."

Part time help is important to make sure there's a fulltime staff to serve customers. "Because I started working here during college, I have a soft spot for students who need a job," he admitted. "Several employees worked here during and after college, and

then their sons have been employees too."

Long tenure working at Bluestem is common because it's such a family operation. "We're now in the third generation of Lee Nelson's family owning and operating the store," Bruce said. "They're all different but have followed Lee's philosophy of concern for employees and customers."

Next in line of seniority at Bluestem now is Lonnie Standiferd, the store manager who's worked there 37 years. "We have about 85 employees now, down from nearly a hundred as we've tried to become more efficient," Bruce said.

There've been three major facility expansions at Bluestem in Bruce's career. "Customers wanted more and different merchandize, so we added on in order to accommodate them," he said.



Bluestem Farm & Ranch Supply opened in 1961 on Commercial Street in Emporia and has been at the present location on West Highway 50 since 1968.

Show Pen Maintenance

By Merle Arbo



Imagine an elementary school where there isn't any discipline plan for the students. That means no trips to

the principal, no detentions, no in or out of school suspensions. The only way for a teacher to reprimand the students is a stern talking to at best. Think about walking into a classroom. There would be chaos! I'm sure a few students would be sitting down and tending to their studies, but I can also see a few kids swinging from the rafters. This idea may seem wild, but to some horses, a horse show isn't much different for them.

Like the above analogy, many people will train their horses at home, but when they take their horse to the show pen, they simply drop their hand and are at the mercy of the horse. Like some kids, some horses will continue to do their job because they want to. Other horses might be like the kids swinging off the rafters! Regardless of what type of equine student you have, chances are it could benefit from a little show pen maintenance.

Ever go to a horse show and pick a winner out, only to see them stop and back right in front of the judge or put two hands and pull on the reins? To the untrained eye, it appears that they just self-destructed, but in reality the rider might be keeping their horse honest or preparing for a bigger upcoming show. If they allowed the horse to continue an unsatisfactory behavior, then they are teaching that horse that it is acceptable.

Reiners are probably the most noted at show pen maintenance. At a weekend horse show, you might see several amateurs go back into the open, not only to help with numbers, but to help keep their horse honest in the pen. Going back into a different division such as amateur or open can not only be applied to reining, but to western pleasure, trail, western riding, horsemanship, showmanship, etc. For example, a novice youth could go back and show in the youth and then the open division. Not only does this help the exhibitor gain experience, but gives an opportunity to school the horse in the show pen, should the need arise.

One of the most common rebuttals is "the judge was looking at me." While that may be true, most judges are horsemen and understand horses aren't machines. Sometimes the only time a horse will exhibit an undesirable behavior is in a show pen environment. While I won't place an exhibitor very well when schooling, I will permit that individual to school that horse in the class. The big debate that has risen lately is where the line of schooling versus abuse is crossed. That line is an individual judges' call, but most exhibitors and judges alike know when that line has been crossed. I've shown to some judges who weren't very tolerant of any schooling and some that may have been too tolerant. Remember the judges who are intolerant and don't school under those judges!

Obviously the bigger the show, the less tolerant judges will be of schooling, so use some discretion when schooling your horse in a class. Usually small shows work the best if you are going school your

horse because there aren't as many in the classes. Those small shows aren't as pressed for time either. Be considerate to others showing in the class. As a trainer, I understand the need to school your horse. As an exhibitor, I don't feel like your schooling should interfere with my ride. Just because you may have come to school, others might come to show. The quickest way for an exhibitor to get pulled in the middle during a rail class is to interfere with the other horses!

Next time you are riding in your class at a horse show and your horse pulls a fast one on you, don't be afraid to send it to the principal's office immediately. After a few trips, your horse might start realizing it had better heed your warnings!



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Walton Wisdom Tip

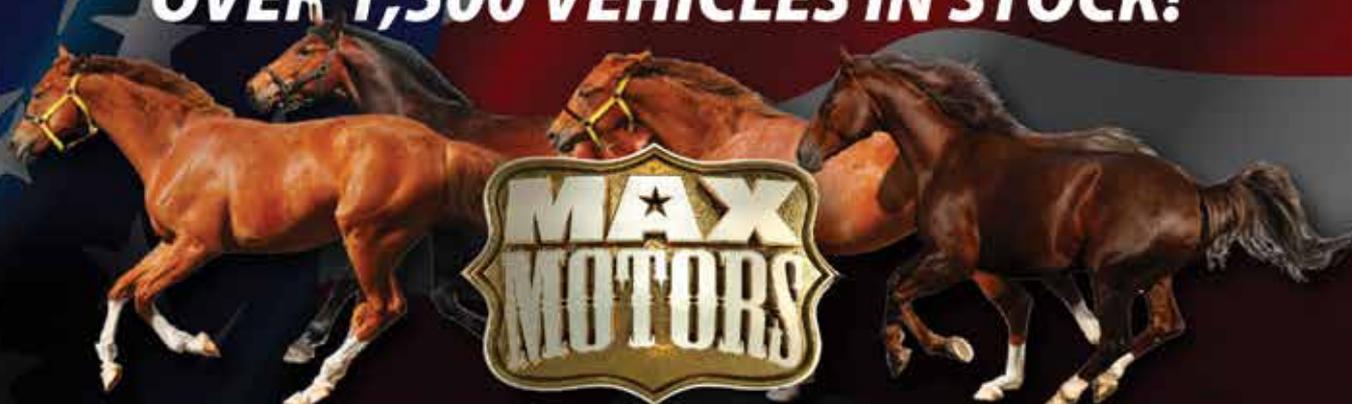
Using cross ties is a common practice in a boarding facility.

A common mistake is to let the horse walk forward and lean on the cross tie while you are tacking them up.

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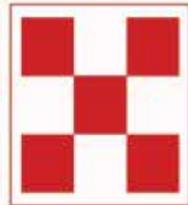
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Genetic Diseases of Quarter Horses and Related Breeds

Laurie Beard, DVM, MS, DACVIM and Elizabeth Davis, DVM, PhD, DACVIM

Over the past three decades there have been remarkable advances with the identification and diagnosis of heritable conditions in horses. The common goal of this process is to help improve breeds so that horses are selected not only for desirable traits, but to also identify conditions that may negatively impact the health and well-being of horses (Figure 1, healthy QH). From this perspective, hyperkalemic periodic paralysis (HYPP or sometimes known as Impressive disease) was one of earliest genetic diseases diagnosed in Quarter Horses in the 1990s. Most horse owners and equine professionals have some knowledge of HYPP including clinical signs, management and how the disease is inherited. Beginning in 2007, horses identified as being a homozygote (having 2 alleles = genes for the condition) for HYPP were no longer eligible for American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) registration. The AQHA has more recently provided expanded genetic testing for horse owners and breeders, commonly called the “5 panel test”. Recently a sixth genetic disease in Quarter Horses has been described and is called myosin heavy chain myopathy (MYHM). Currently the only required genetic testing by the AQHA is for HYPP. However, equine professionals have the ability to test for up to six conditions that may negatively impact horse health, in this way breeding practices can be designed with specific information that can truly help to improve the genetics of horses that are produced, providing a foundation for responsible breeding decisions. Identification of genetic diseases

is rapidly expanding in human and veterinary medicine. Although there are genetic tests that are commercially offered that have no scientific validation, there are tests available through diagnostic laboratories that are valid, which means the test results are accurate and repeatable. The goal with any test is to have a test performed that provides a result that is trustworthy and meaningful, this is the value of having a validated test performed. Validated testing allows the individual that has selected the test to confidently interpret test results, knowing that the test was run properly and the results are meaningful.

This article describes more recently identified genetic diseases in horses that have all been scientifically validated, which include Polysaccharide Storage Myopathy – (PSSM), Glycogen Branching Enzyme Deficiency (GBED), Malignant Hyperthermia (MH), Myosin Heavy Chain Myopathy (MYHM), and Hereditary Equine Regional Dermal Asthenia (HERDA). It is noteworthy that five out of the six genetic diseases identified in Quarter Horses are muscle diseases. For owners of Quarter Horses, tests for five of these conditions can be ordered as a panel through AQHA <https://www.aqha.com/home>. Testing is straightforward, following AQHA instructions, hair samples can be sent directly to Veterinary Genetics Laboratory at University of California-Davis. Testing for MYMH, while not offered through AQHA, can also be requested through Veterinary Genetics Laboratory at the University of California Davis. Additional

commercial testing laboratories include, Animal Genetics <https://www.animalgenetics.us/> and Vet Gen <https://www.vetgen.com/> which are also well recognized laboratories that offer scientifically validated genetic tests.

Polysaccharide Storage Myopathy (PSSM)

Polysaccharide storage myopathy (PSSM) is a common disease of Quarter Horses and many different breeds (paint horses, appaloosas, draft and warmblood breeds) that is a cause of recurrent tying up in horses. Polysaccharide storage myopathy is characterized by abnormal accumulation of glycogen (a storage form of sugar) in muscle cells. Glycogen is important for muscle cell energy production, when not available in the proper structure, muscle cells cannot function properly. Horses with PSSM often have a history of recurrent tying-up, which is also called exertional rhabdomyolysis. Clinical signs include muscle stiffness, sweating, and reluctance to move often during exercise. Most commonly, signs of tying up develop in the first 15-20 minutes of exercise. Dr. Stephanie Valberg, Mary Anne McPhail Dressage Chair in Equine Sports Medicine and Professor at Michigan State University, College of Veterinary Medicine has identified two main types of PSSM, termed PSSM Type I and PSSM Type II. Type 1 PSSM is caused by the genetic mutation of the glycogen synthase (GYSI) gene. Type 2 PSSM represents an independent form of PSSM that has not been genetically



Healthy American Quarter Horse



Skin lesion along the topline of a horse diagnosed with HERDA.

defined, but is characterized by muscle cell changes and abnormal staining for muscle glycogen identified on histopathology.

Diagnosis of PSSM1 and PSSM2

The diagnosis of PSSM1 can be made by submitting whole blood or hair with roots to equine genetic laboratories and having DNA testing performed for PSSM Type I. The GYSI mutation that results in Type I PSSM is inherited in a dominant fashion (Table 1). This mode of inheritance results in clinical signs whether an individual gene (heterozygote) or two genes (homozygote) are inherited. In the heterozygous form, where only one gene is present, clinical signs are less severe than if the horse inherits

Continued on page 23 & 24

two genes and is a homozygote. Conversely, although clinical signs are similar, the only way to establish the diagnosis of PSSM2 is by muscle biopsy and careful histopathologic testing. There are no scientifically validated genetic tests for PSSM2 at this time. If you own a horse that has demonstrated signs of recurrent tying up episodes and you have concerns about the potential for PSSM (Type I or Type II), you should consult an equine veterinarian about the process of genetic or biopsy testing and the most appropriate diagnostic laboratory for testing purposes.

Management of PSSM

Even though there is no cure for either PSSM1 or PSSM2, both forms of the disease are optimally managed by regular, preferably daily exercise, and optimal nutritional practices. Regular exercise is an essential component of managing horses with either form of PSSM. Provision of daily turn out with compatible pasture companions can be extremely beneficial. If horses are managed with a predominant pasture setting, a grazing muzzle may be necessary if the grass is particularly lush, to avoid an overweight condition or over consumption of carbohydrate (starch) in pasture grasses. Specifically, the diet of PSSM (I or II) - affected horses must be focused on a low carbohydrate intake. Since PSSM is associated with increased muscle cell glycogen, reduced overall carbohydrate intake helps reduce glycogen accumulation within muscle cells and should improve the overall health of the horse, reducing the frequency of tying up episodes. For this reason, even forage should be monitored as a source for potential excessive starch intake, optimal pasture grass should comprise mainly

native orchard/prairie type grass. In addition to forage, concentrate supplementation should only be provided if absolutely necessary because many concentrate feeds contain starch. If additional calories are needed, such as in a performance horse that has difficulty maintaining ideal body condition, fat can be added to the diet to increase caloric intake either with vegetable oil or commercial fat supplementation. There are commercial high-fat diets that are designed for horses with muscle disorders, these are indicated for a horse diagnosed with PSSM that requires additional calories in a concentrate feed. An additional consideration, particularly in horses that are challenging to manage symptom free, is that horses diagnosed with both heritable conditions that include PSSM and malignant hyperthermia (MH; will be explained later in this article) will result in more severe clinical signs of tying up. Therefore, in instances where horses do not improve with appropriate management, testing for both PSSM1 and MH may be indicated.

Glycogen Branching Enzyme Deficiency (GBED)

Glycogen Branching Enzyme Deficiency (GBED) is a disease of Quarter Horses and related bloodlines that results in an inability to properly store glycogen that is fatal in foals. Glycogen Branching Enzyme Deficiency is inherited as a recessive disorder (Table 1), which means clinical signs are only present when the individual is a homozygote (two alleles = genes are inherited). Unfortunately, when present this disease is always terminal, disease may result in abortion or if the fetus reaches full gestational length, early

death will occur. This condition is a result of mutation in the glycogen branching enzyme that results in the inability of muscle and cardiac tissue to store glycogen (storage form of sugar). Affected (homozygote) foals that are born alive will be weak, have markedly low blood glucose, may have contracted tendons, and suddenly die. Muscle disease may be evident due to an inability to rise or identified on blood tests that show high levels of muscle origin enzymes.

Diagnosis and Management of GBED

The definitive diagnosis of GBED is made by genetic testing. Heterozygote horses (carry one gene for the trait) for GBED are not clinically affected and appear completely normal, but are carriers for the gene mutation. Breeding two heterozygotes that are carriers for GBED will result in a homozygote (affected foal) 25% of the time. This is an unfortunate and devastating outcome when considering that when present as a homozygote condition, it is 100% fatal. Collectively, it is important that breeders know if their mare / stallion pairs are carriers so they can avoid breeding two GBED heterozygotes (carriers), which will prevent the very unfortunate loss of the intended pregnancy or foal.

Malignant Hyperthermia (MH)

Malignant hyperthermia (MH) occurs in Quarter Horses, and related bloodlines and is a condition of hypermetabolic activity that results in episodes of muscle contracture, increased temperature and irregular heart rhythm. This genetic disease is due to a malfunctioning calcium-release channel of the sarcoplasmic reticulum in skeletal muscle cells, resulting in constant muscle contraction and cell death. An episode

of MH is most commonly triggered by inhalant anesthesia, and less commonly by severe stress. During an episode of MH, horses will have an extremely high temperature, excessive sweating, high heart rate and abnormal heart rhythm. Death is possible during an episode.

Diagnosis of MH

The diagnosis of MH is made by genetic testing. Malignant hyperthermia is an autosomal dominant disease; thus if one copy of the MH allele is present, this is sufficient to result in clinical signs of disease in the affected horse (Table 1).

Management of MH:

It is very important to know if your horse is a carrier of MH, particularly if your horse requires general anesthesia for surgery. Specifically, it is important to tell your veterinarian if your horse is a carrier for MH so that inhalant anesthesia is avoided. If a horse is positive for MH and general anesthesia is required, an alternative anesthesia can be administered, such as intravenous (medication) anesthesia. Unfortunately, horses positive for MH that undergo general anesthesia, similar to other species that develop this condition, run the risk of fatal outcome.

Myosin Heavy Chain Myopathy (MYHM)

Myosin-heavy chain myopathy is a condition in Quarter Horses and related breeds that can result in two specific clinical conditions. One form is immune-mediated myositis (IMM), the other is non-exertional rhabdomyolysis. Both conditions result in muscle mass loss and are associated with the same genetic variant. Immune-mediated myositis

results in the immune system attacking certain muscle fibers resulting in muscle inflammation and rapid muscle atrophy. Common triggers for immune-mediated myositis often include infectious respiratory agents (such as *Streptococcus* spp. organisms) or possibly vaccines. The non-exertional form of rhabdomyolysis can result in a horse having muscle stiffness, firm muscles and potential recumbency (unable to rise). This form of the disease may be associated with muscle atrophy in some cases.

Diagnosis of MYHM

A DNA test is used to determine if a horse carries the gene for MYMH, named MYH1. Myosin-heavy chain myopathy is inherited as an autosomal co-dominant condition with variable penetrance, which means that a heterozygote is less severely affected than a homozygote (Table 1). Horses that are homozygotes for the disease are reported to have more frequent and severe symptoms. Interestingly, just because a horse carries the gene for MYH1 does not mean with 100% certainty that a horse will develop an episode of immune-mediated myositis, this is a reflection of incomplete penetrance of this trait, not all animals that have the mutation are clinically affected, but most have some manifestation of disease. As the most recently identified heritable muscle disorder in horses, ongoing

investigations are being conducted to learn more about the disease and frequency that carrier horses will develop clinical signs of disease.

Management of MYHM

Horses that develop immune-mediated myositis are best treated with corticosteroid therapy for immunosuppressive purposes. Additionally, high risk triggers should be avoided in horses that have been diagnosed as carriers or are homozygotes for MYH1. An example includes *Streptococcus* vaccines for strangles, these vaccines are generally not recommended for Quarter Horses that have MYH1 because of the potential that it could trigger an episode of immune-mediated myositis. If risk-based respiratory vaccines are indicated, intranasal vaccines are recommended rather than intramuscular vaccines, which will lessen the overall systemic exposure to this potential immune system trigger. Additional precautions include spreading out the administration of vaccines over time, rather than administering all vaccines at one time, to reduce the risk of myopathy. Ideally working directly with your veterinarian is the safest approach to ensure establishment of a safe and effective vaccine protocol for a horse that has been diagnosed with MYH1 mutation and could develop MYHM.

Hereditary Equine Regional Dermal Asthenia (HERDA)

Heritable Equine Regional Dermal Asthenia (HERDA), is a genetic disease that affects collagen formation in certain Quarter Horses. The clinical presentation of HERDA involves the skin of affected horses. Specifically, HERDA is characterized by signs of fragile, hyper-extensible skin commonly along the topline that results in breaks in the skin and subsequent scaring. The figure (figure 2) shows an example of the skin lesions characteristic of a HERDA positive horse. Young foals rarely show signs at birth or early in life. The disease most commonly becomes apparent when horses are being trained to ride at approximately 2-3 years of age. Unfortunately many affected horses are eventually euthanized due to the severity of skin lesions, there is no cure and these horses cannot be used for riding or breeding purposes.

Diagnosis and Management of HERDA

The diagnosis of HERDA is made with DNA testing. HERDA is an autosomal recessive disease, heterozygotes (carriers) for HERDA are not clinically affected, they appear normal (Table 1). However, breeding of two heterozygotes that carry the trait for HERDA will result in an affected foal 25% of the time. Having genetic information available

at the time of breeding will help to avoid the unfortunate situation of breeding two HERDA heterozygote carrier horses with one another. It is important to avoid the development of this condition through indiscriminant breeding practices, because the majority of affected horses will be euthanized due to the severity of the skin lesions.

In summary, there are several heritable conditions that have been identified in horses, particularly in Quarter Horse and related breeds. Organizations such as the AQHA and accredited diagnostic laboratories have substantially enhanced the ability for horse owners and equine professionals to learn about the genetic makeup of their horse, particularly if breeding is being considered. Open communication with veterinarians about what conditions a horse has will allow for optimal care and prognosis at the time of needed treatment. If equine enthusiasts have questions about testing or disease manifestation of any of the described disorders, it is most appropriate to work with an equine veterinarian to gain current and accurate information about conditions that could impact performance and overall health and well-being of horses.



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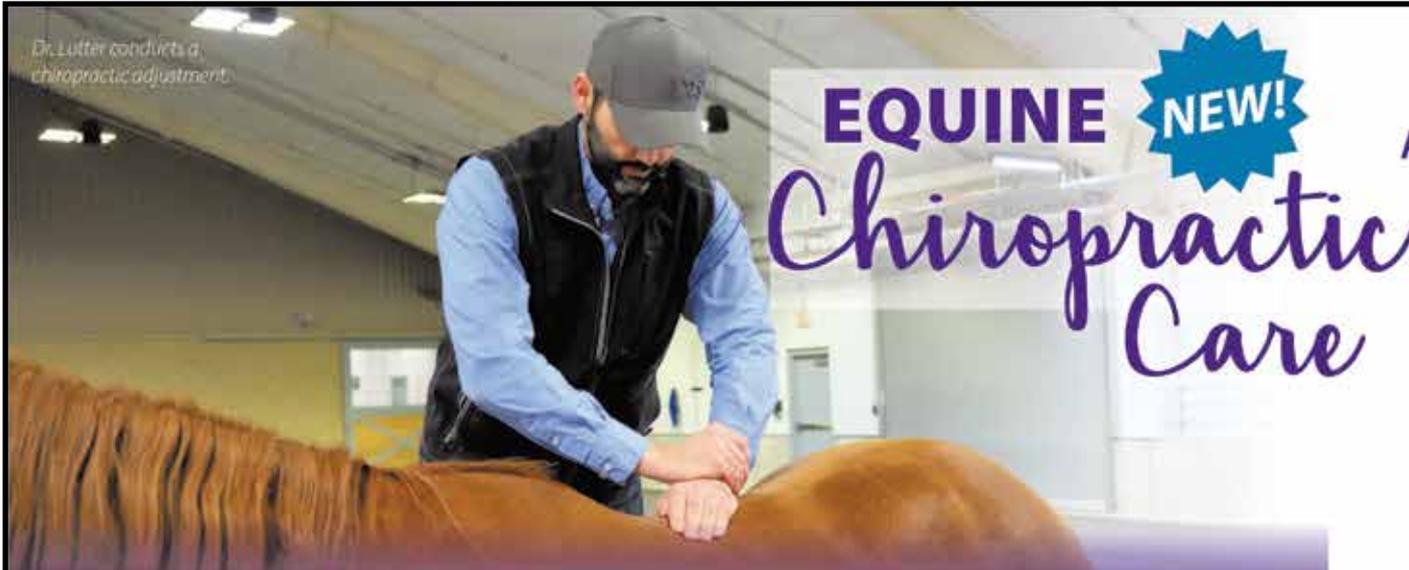
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Cowboy Church with Steve Stafford

Hey folks, good to be with you again. It's been awhile since we last talked and had a good cup of coffee. Now I'm sure you're just like me and busier than you'd like to be, but the world is a fast moving deal, and getting faster with every year. I remember when our kids were small, it seemed as though we were the busiest in the summer, but now - we're just busy. Recently we had our Horsemanship Bible Camp with our church, this is our version

of Vacation Bible School. We had a bucket full of kids come with their horses, we rode all week, learning something about rodeo skills and horsemanship. But the emphasis was on Jesus. Sure we enjoyed riding our favorite pony, but I wanted them to grow closer in their walk with the Lord. We're not trying to train them for the National Finals Rodeo, we're trying to prepare them for life.

Each day before we would eat, I would ask the children who would

like to pray? One day a little girl raised her hand, and said, "Dear God, thank you for the air to breath, and the light to see." I thought what a nice prayer that was. The next meal I asked the same question, and another girl raised her hand, her prayer went like this, "Dear God...", then she froze. So I asked if anyone would like to help her finish? Another girl raised her hand and said, "Um, um, um".

So again I asked if there would be anyone who would like to help and finish the prayer? A little boy raised his hand and said, "Amen, let's eat!" Sounded good to me, so we ate our lunch. Another day one boy's prayer went like this, "Thank you God for this dead meat we are about to eat, Amen." I thought some of the moms were going to faint on the spot, but I loved it. Don't you love the simplicity



of a child's heart? Jesus said "Until we become like the little children we will not know the kingdom of God." I loved camp this year, I love these children, and I love my Jesus. I hope you know Him like I do. And the next time that you pray, just remember, come to Him as a little child, because He loves it that way.

Hey this is Steve Stafford, I am the pastor at Risen Ranch Cowboy Church, and a very proud member of the Better Horses Family.



"Just For Grins" artist Don Dane



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Hey Friends,

It's summer on the plains, and we are busy on the trails. Best Of America By Horseback has been covering some ground this spring, with a hearty schedule for the summer and fall. We are continuing to add Ride events to our schedule all the time. We enjoy taking our riders and viewers to beautiful, scenic locations that will fit any bucket list. Showcasing these locations and campgrounds gives us a great deal of pride, as we have seen this boost awareness and traffic to many wonderful venues. We just finished a loop in Missouri, as we revisited some locations where folks wanted us to do a return event. Our next Ride Location will be at the former Flying R Ranch near West Plains, MO, which is now the North Fork River Ranch, and is under new ownership and management. That event is scheduled for July 16-18, and what an amazing place to ride. From there, BOABH will travel to the Diamond P Ranch at West Yellowstone, Montana. Exciting. September 24 finds us in Pedro, OH, then back to Kansas the first weekend of October at Kanopolis State Park. Oct 8-10 at the beautiful historic Hughes Ranch near Bartlesville, OK. And, for a treat, we are returning this year to the Dream Ride the last weekend of October, on the beautiful prairies of Kansas. My home sweet home. In November, Alabama has invited us to Trails Ect. in Midway, AL to a family-owned facility with terrific riding scenery.

We are always looking for new places to take our friends to ride, so if you have suggestions of locations or are interested in advertising your products on our show with us, please contact me, Del Shields personally at 620-433-1819 or by e-mail at singingpoet_1@hotmail.com You can keep up with us on Facebook, watch past episodes on our YouTube Channel, learn of our newest scheduled events on our website, www.bestofamericabyhorseback.com and watch us on RFD TV and the Cowboy Channel regularly as scheduled.

I am excited to be taking on my new role of producing these Best Of America By Horseback Rides and Events, as the show goes forward. While Tom is doing great, and is still traveling some, he is asking me to take the reins and explore new opportunities. I hope you'll have the opportunity to come join us and be a part of what has come to be an amazing journey for the past 16 years.

God bless you. Be safe, and...
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A Cowboy's Faith

By Frank J. Buchman

Ornery Shorty Was Talented

"Best known as Shorty, or Short, grinning ornery Marven Brabb towered above most with diverse abilities."

Last week Shorty, a New Year's Day baby in 1928, passed away at 93-years of age. Until a few months ago, Shorty had continued daily care of his straight Hereford cow herd. Time had taken toll, but Shorty with walking canes remained himself, jovial, mischievous, knowing, heartfelt concerned.

Then serious health incapacitated Shorty forcing him off his beloved farm into a care home. For a while, Shorty would visit briefly when called, but lost interest in what was happening "back home."

His cattle were dispersed and then machinery, a large assortment of tools and household were sold at

auction. Uncertain if Shorty was even aware but difficult time for friends watching his life's toil going under the gavel.

It must be 45 years since first meeting Shorty who enjoyed off farm work for the lumberyard. Anything needing built or repaired; he had the ability and always seemed eager to do the task.

At a purebred Hereford sale, Shorty with his big smile bought a top bull. Sadly the ring man who he'd done a number of jobs for didn't even know his name. It'd always just been "Shorty," but Marven Brabb was never forgotten after that.

The old barn had two grain bins, milk cow stanchions, three workhorse stalls and a lean-to. Shorty renovated made them into nine riding horse stalls with his uniquely-designed two-by-six gates inside Dutch doors.

For the annual livestock field day including 25 Quarter Horse sales, it was Shorty who always helped get ready. Any fence and building repairs were his assignment, along with a fresh coat of red paint on the barn. In his 80s, he'd jaunt right up that 24-foot extension ladder with his spray gun paint thinned with gasoline.

For any special project or advice needed, Shorty was called. He repaired machinery, replaced all the worn disc blades, even fixed a saddle when the tree was broken.

Passing of wife June in 2008 after

nearly 61 years of marriage did set Shorty back. But his four children, grandkids, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren still made those bright eyes twinkle.

Hard working talented friends like Shorty are impossible to replace.

Reminded of Second Samuel 1:26: "Crushed by your death, oh what a friendship yours was."

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Dear Maggie

We would really like to find a new home with maybe some property but when properties come on the market, they sell very fast and often over list price. How do we buy a ranch, farm or horse property in this market?

Frustrated L

Dear Frustrated,

The market right now is not for the faint of heart! You have to have a plan in order to be ready and be committed to buying in today's market. Here are some tips I give my buyers as well as some of the creative ideas I have seen this year:

Have a buyer's agent working for you.

Agents get to see listings before you can as well as Pre-MLS listings. Pre-MLS listings are visible in the MLS system with a date that the listing will go live. These listings are not on Zillow or other third party websites so it is a big advantage to know about listings that are coming soon.

Have your finances in order and already be pre-approved for your loan.

You have to submit an offer also showing that you have the financial ability to complete the purchase.

Be ready to look at houses the day come on the market.

You will have to be flexible and work with your agent to see the new listings quickly.

Have a strategy in advance with your agent.

What are you willing to do to make your offer stand out. Here are some things I have seen this year:

- o Escalation Clauses – You submit your offer with an escalation clause

that you will exceed any other offer higher than yours by \$X amount up to your maximum price. For example, you submit an offer of \$400,000 with an escalation clause that you will exceed any higher offer by \$500 up to \$425,000.

- o Purchase the property In Its Present Condition but with the ability to do all inspections and cancel the contract if there are any items that are just not acceptable. Often a seller will negotiate if repair requests are reasonable.
- o Pay the Seller's closing costs.
- o Pay the Seller's moving costs up to \$X amount.
- o Reimburse the Seller's utilities from contract to close.
- o Waive the Appraisal and be ready to make up any additional down payment that may be required by your lender.
- o Offer a fast closing.
- o While not an absolute, do not make the sale contingent on the sale of your current home. If you must, you have to make everything else in the contract very compelling. Set your limits and be willing to walk away if a property is 'too rich' for your limits.

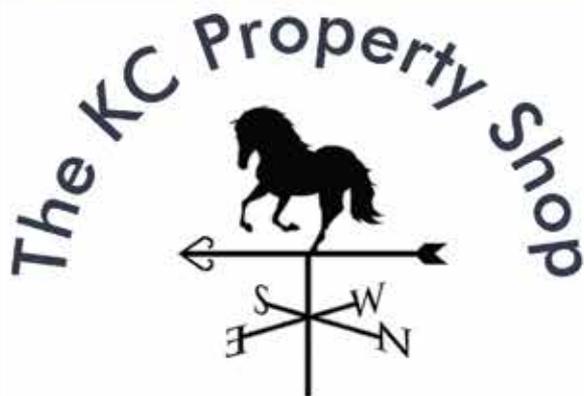
Good Luck and you can find your perfect property! Just be patient.

Maggie





Blue Ribbon
Service
with
Loyalty,
Honesty
&
A Winning Heart



Maggie Stonecipher
Let me help you with all your
Buying and Selling Needs!!
Residential - Horse Property - Farm & Ranch
(913) 908-6992
Maggie.PropertyShop@gmail.com
www.TheKCPropertyShop.com