

The Circle 7X Ranch

Mulino, Oregon

by G. Spencer Hinsdale

(Editors Note): This is third in a series of articles on Appaloosa Breeders, their horses and their plans.

Few horsemen in the Northwest are not familiar with the Circle 7X Ranch at Mulino, Oregon, and its owners, Gus and Gail Ellis. Situated 23 miles south of Portland in the lush Willamette Valley, and nestled in the foothills of the Cascades, the 217 acres of the Circle 7X offers an Appaloosa breeding program unequalled in the area for quality and integrity.

Gail is the first to admit, however, that such a program is accomplished only after many years of consistent and loyal adherence to a program of breeding Appaloosa-to-Appaloosa. As a staunch upholder of such a program, Gail strongly disagrees with any breeder who out-crosses the Appaloosa to other breeds in an attempt to improve the Appaloosa strain, for she feels that the Appaloosa has qualities of its own sufficiently admirable so as not to require dilution by out-crossing.

The Ellis' began their earnest approach to Appaloosas a number of years ago in Idaho, with the purchase of a single horse for their ranch. That was the beginning of a great affection and respect for the breed, and resulted in the following years being spent in a long, and continuing search for other Appaloosas of near pure strain. This search took Gail many thousands of miles to ranchers and breeders



Main House

who could provide her with Appalcosas that had not been crossed with other breeds for a number of generations. But today Gail feels that the years of patience have had their own reward. Her herd consists of not more than 30 head, and her interest in showing the versatility of the Appaloosa has brought her top honors in the fields of Hunter, Trail, Stock, Western Pleasure, and Parade Horse Classes. One of her proven sires, the Duke of Windsor, has won 7 Grand Championships, 2 Reserve Championships, 19 Firsts, 6 Seconds, 5 Thirds, and all in the last three years.

Her performance gelding, Silver Heels, has won in Open Classes as well as Breed Classes, showing a record of 20 Firsts, 11 Seconds, 6 Thirds and 2 Reserve Championships, in the last three years of showing.

Bear Paw, another of the Circle 7X stallions, shows an enviable show record, particularly in the fields of Parade and Costume Classes, as well as in halter. Diamond Judy, one of their top mares, has brought her own share of ribbons and



Fillies



Fillies



The Duke of Windsor

trophys, including National champion mare in 1957, home to grace the walls of the Ellis home. At many of the shows it seems that the Ellis' toughest competition rests in showing against themselves.

In this day where we see so many ranches operating their horse breeding programs as side-lines to other endeavors, it is indeed refreshing to visit the Circle 7X where good horses constitute the exclusive business of the ranch.

When asked about the future, Gail outlined a continuation of her Appaloosa-to-Appaloosa breeding program, stressing her conviction that the Appaloosa should be bred up, not out. After viewing her consistent winning record in Open Class competition against all breeds, who's to say she's wrong?