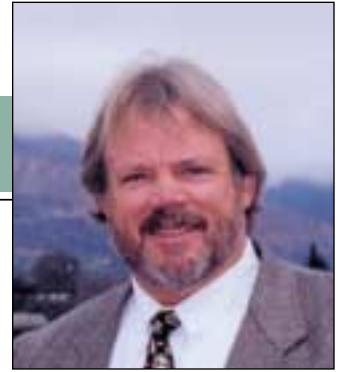


CTBA Director's Forum



There's Nothing Like a Team Effort

I'm writing this piece while sitting above a round pen, observing some yearlings getting ready for different sales, here and across the country. This continues to be one of my favorite times of the year. Partly because the pressure of breeding season is ninety percent over, but mostly because I get to watch something in the flesh that was simply ink, on paper, a few years ago.

As we go from sale to sale during the year, we get to see the progress being made by young stallions and mares, and then try to begin comparing them with the old mainstays. These horses, the young and the old, are what drives us to the marketplace. Do we take a shot at a young horse in a pedigree that could be a little less expensive, or do we stay with the old tried and tested? Are we looking for something to use later in the breeding shed or are we buying just to race?

If we're buying just to race, our California incentive program, along with the best racing facilities in the world, provide us with opportunities for our state bred prospects that are unequaled anywhere in the country.

We have some of the best breeders in the world right here in California. Considering that we have the opportunity to take some of these pedigrees and add to our own broodmare bands, combined with the amount of quality stallions moving into our state, gives us the recipe for continued improvement when measured against both the national and world markets.

Last year, the CTBA invited what they considered to be some of the best minds in the business to a meeting before our annual sale. Most of the people who were invited came, and after sitting under the direction of a facilitator and meeting for most of the day, one thing rang clear. Make sure that the Del Mar Yearling Sale remains the high quality sale it is known for.

To that end, some say that we have gotten even tougher in our sales selection. I will tell you that I stand behind all of the people who have been a working part of the sale for so many years. They are fully dedicated to one objective, maintaining the Del Mar Yearling Sale as the best sale of its kind in California, and one of the best in the country.

We owe a great deal of thanks to the great owners and trainers, who reside in this state. It is their horses, such as Tiznow, Free House, Indian Charlie, General Challenge, Budroyale, Richter Scale, Big Jag, Gourmet Girl, Lazy Slusan, etc., that have helped put us on the map nationally. With their continued dedication towards the sport of horse racing there is no reason why we, the CTBA, can't keep our promise to you.

Prior to his death, our old friend Eddie Gregson and I had plenty of time to talk over the sale, and I know that he has left us with a blueprint for the event that works. As the new chairman of the Sales Committee, I believe that the majority of this blueprint needs to remain intact, but we will be tweaking it as years go by, in order to constantly keep abreast of the changing needs of both our buyers and consignors.

It's a wonderful time to be involved in the horse business. My thanks to all of the CTBA staff, past and present, who for some 50 years have helped make this sale what it is today. But mostly my thanks go out to the buyers and consignors, because without them we would never have a sale of this caliber.

Hope to see you at the Del Mar HorsePark on August 13th and 14th.

—Frank 'Scoop' Vessels