

# PLAN NOW, FOR A BETTER PRICE LATER

## Choosing the Best Sale for Your Yearling

*As part of the ongoing efforts of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA) to assist local breeders and consignors in effectively marketing their yearlings, this is the second in a series of articles, aimed at educating and informing readers on this subject, to be featured in California Thoroughbred during 2003.*

*Additionally, included opposite this month's editorial is a "2003 Yearling Sales Planner for California Breeders" pull-out supplement which we hope will prove useful and effective to all our local commercial breeders.*

by **CLYDENE BOOTS**

As we pointed out in our January 2003 article, it is necessary to be very realistic when choosing a sale for your young Thoroughbred, for it is more profitable to be one of the stronger horses in a sale. Buyers at a select summer sale such as the Del Mar Yearling Sale want big, mature, good-looking yearlings by commercially popular stallions, out of reasonably strong mares. Yearlings who lack any of those qualities will almost certainly sell better, at less expense, in a different type of sale.

This month we'll look more closely at some of your other options so you can place your yearling in a sale where he may be a standout even if he isn't the summer sale type.

### **Barretts Preferred Yearling Sale**

This is an especially good spot for the quality yearling who is small or immature, as that additional six to eight weeks to develop can make a big difference. This sale attracts a broad range of buyers and thus provides a safety net in the event the yearling doesn't develop as hoped, or is a nice individual but not "star quality." Barretts has been screening nominations on pedigree so as to limit the sale to the number that can be sold in one day, cataloging around 330. Those not accepted can sell at their mixed sale the end of October, along with yearlings who became available for sale after the nomination deadline.

### **Other Choices**

Two other options in this region are the American Equine Sales Wine Country Yearling Sale in Northern California, and the ATBA Yearling Sale in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Good California-breds have frequently been among the sale toppers in Arizona, where the buyers love athletic yearlings who look really fast. Graduates of the sale are eligible for two restricted stakes at Turf Paradise, which is a big plus in the eyes of buyers who race there. This may also lead to some quick black-type for your mare.

Yearlings to consider for Arizona are:

1) Those who need additional time to mature, since the sale is usually in late October;

2) Smaller, Quarter Horse-type yearlings. "Bigger is better" at virtually all yearling sales, but these smaller blockier yearlings seem to be better accepted there than they are in California;

3) Sires who have quality runners on the Southwest circuit; and

4) Female families whose stakes horses are on the Southwest circuit.

### **Differences in Black-Type**

Many stakes races on the lesser circuits, even in Arizona and Washington, do not carry enough purse money to meet the requirements for black-type in catalogs for Barretts, Del Mar and Kentucky. But sales in those states want to give credit to their local stakes, so they use the lower standard for black-type. This can make what would be a weak pedigree at Del Mar or Barretts suddenly look much, much better. The aforesaid American Equine Sales event also uses the lower standard, so it may be a good alternative choice for people up north who don't want to ship out of state.

The Washington Select Yearling Sale requires the yearling to be connected in one of several ways to the Northwest, and they select on pedigree only. Their mixed sale in the fall is open to anyone. A breeder with Northwest connections, whose mare has a lot of that region's stakes in her pedigree, might want to sell up there.

### **What About Kentucky?**

For the California-based breeder, a quality California-bred is almost certainly going to sell as well or better in California, where a greater percentage of buyers are looking for good Cal-breds, without the added risk and expense of shipping. Sending a lower

quality Cal-bred to Kentucky is even less likely to be profitable.

Some people don't want to sell out of state as they won't collect breeders awards on out-of-state races except for graded stakes. But many of the lesser yearlings are going to go out of state anyway. If they turn out to be good runners, a lot of them will return to California so the owners can benefit from the Cal-bred programs. And, if you are proving a young mare and the yearling looks just average, it is better for it to face easier company and win (thus improving the mare) than to have it run with no success in California.

### **Even More Options**

A really slow-maturing yearling may sell better in January as a "new two," as this gives it far more time to catch up. An excessive winter coat can be avoided by placing the yearling under lights, like you do your empty mares, by early November. Buyers don't expect or want them to have the thin coat you see at the summer sales. Just make sure the coat is healthy and glossy, by adding both some corn oil to the daily feed and grooming the coat well.

A well-bred, well-conformed weanling can bring a very nice price at the Barretts October Mixed Sale in the fall, or as a "short yearling" in January. If it isn't such a good one, the breeder may do better by selling it early rather than incurring another another year of risk and expenses.

### **Choosing the Right Sale**

Breeders who have their own stallions may want to use a combination of these options to spread the offspring among several markets, especially if the stallion's commercial appeal is not strong.

And even breeders with youngsters by a variety of stallions should consider different sales so as to pick one that best suits the individual. Plus, for the small breeder doing his own sales preparation, selling at different times can allow him to do a better job. If only a couple of horses are being prepped at a time, attention can be lavished on them so they look absolutely at their best by sale time, which will help their price no matter where they sell.