

# Sold on Success



*From the Executive Corner*

It is time once again to discuss and preview the prospects of the annual CTBA Sales' Del Mar Yearling Sale, the premier yearling sale on the West Coast. The inspection and evaluation process has been completed, consignors have been notified that their yearlings were accepted, and a total of 122 yearlings have been included in the 2004 catalogue.

As previously announced, the sale will be one night only, Monday, August 16, after the races, and held in the prestigious saddling paddock at the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club. The shift from the Del Mar HorsePark to the racetrack not only provides for a convenient first-class setting with many amenities, but also a cost savings measure which allows for the reduction in the number of yearlings catalogued while further stressing quality. The stricter standards for acceptance will assist in meeting the goal of providing California breeders a venue to market and sell their prized yearlings. It is important that such a marketplace exists to reward breeders/consignors for their investment and to further stimulate the production of quality Thoroughbreds in the state.

The HorsePark, which was the home of the sale from 1996 to 2003, did prove a successful location which helped revitalize this historic venue. In fact, many records were recently set at the HorsePark.

But with that said, and through the support and encouragement of the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, it was decided to bring the sale back to its home at the racetrack. Chief benefits to this location move include: a smaller, more select group of horses cataloged (as mentioned above); convenient stabling of yearlings near the backside, which is closer to buyers/trainers; and the improved permanent facilities.

Overall, I am pleased with the group of yearlings offered. Our tightened policy on sale prospects, especially with regard to conformation and pedigree, has yielded a very marketable catalogue.

Another plus this year is the large assortment of sires represented in the sale. In fact, 66 different stallions have sired yearlings featured in the sale. These are not only the top sires in California, but also some of the leading national stallions.

It is also important to point out that all but five of the 122 yearlings who are on offer are registered California-breds. This is a reflection on the increase in not only quality, but also in the demand

for Cal-breds. The bulk of the buyers who attend the sale are looking chiefly for Cal-breds to take advantage of the lucrative opportunities available.

The CTBA's Sales Committee has spent considerable time and effort this year making the needed adjustments to combat the disappointing results of 2003. Although last year's sale yielded the fourth highest average in the history of the sale, it was still a 21 percent decline from the record sale of 2002. The variables that attributed to the decline (increased Workers' Compensation costs, a perceived decrease in overall quality of the individuals catalogued, and concerns with radiographs and sales preparation) have all been addressed.

We will continue to work with consignors and buyers to make this sale a tremendous success. Please find the extensive preview of the sale beginning on page 24.

On another note, but also dealing with yearling sales, I am pleased to announce that the CTBA Sales' Northern California Yearling Sale will be conducted at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton on Tuesday, September 28. The catalog will consist of roughly 185 yearlings, as well as a dispersal of approximately 44 head of horses to be held following the sale.

It was through the support of CTBA members and clients that ample entries were provided in order to go forward with the sale. There is an obvious need for a good marketplace for Northern California breeders and the Pleasanton sale should certainly fulfill these needs.

—Doug Burge



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