

The Balance of Power



by DOUG BURGE

As you can see from the cover of this month's issue of *California Thoroughbred*, it is that time of the year when we feature the current crop of California-bred foals. Keeping with our policy, we have included foals by some of the top California stallions, while also emphasizing first-crop sires and those whose first Cal-bred crop is now on the ground.

It is our goal to showcase numerous farms and stallions each year in order to assist with stallion promotion as well as highlight the various options available to local breeders.

The purpose of the breeder, stallion and owners awards program, by law, is to "encourage agriculture and the breeding of higher quality horses in this state." This provides a major incentive for California breeders to strive to produce both more and better foals. An analysis of the annual foal crop provides answers as to whether the goals of the incentive program are indeed achieved.

From a standpoint of quality, California continues to produce high caliber horses as evidenced by the sales and race results across the country. With arguably the best stallion population in the history of the state, the prospect for future top runners looks very bright.

In regards to quantity, the foal crop has leveled off the past few years after a significant increase in the late 1990's and

early 2000's. As seen from the graph below, the 2004 California foal crop is estimated to be roughly 4,100 which is the third largest behind Kentucky and Florida, respectively.

As the Golden State's racing industry has become more and more dependent on the horses bred locally, it is very important that we continue to produce an ample number of quality foals. Cal-breds currently make up well over 50 percent of the field sizes at the tracks and fairs in both Southern and Northern California. Nationally, California provides 11 percent of the North American foal crop. Thus, 11 percent of the foal crop currently makes up over 50 percent of our fields.

The quality/quantity issue has always been a very debatable topic. On one hand, breeders need to continue to cull and upgrade their breeding stock, however, at the same time we must provide the proper inventory for California racing. Obviously, you can never have too many quality horses.

The CTBA will continue to provide the incentive and educational tools necessary for breeders to meet the goal of producing desirable Thoroughbreds. The future of racing in California depends on our success.

Enjoy the Cal-bred foals cover story on pages 15 to 21.

Live Foal Crop

