

Horse Population Increasing

A record eight million horses inhabit this country according to estimates from the American Horse Council in Washington, D. C., and the number is increasing rapidly.

The horse population has more than doubled since 1960. In fact, there are more horses now in the United States than before the birth of the automobile, when horses were used as a

primary source of transportation and power.

Again from American Horse Council estimates, equine events drew over 105 million spectators in 1973. And in a 1970 survey, sixty percent of all horse-owning families made less than \$9000 annual income.

Why the sudden interest? Part of the growth is explained in an announcement from the U. S. Extension Service, which administers the nation's 4-H program. At the end of 1974, 320,767 4-H members were enrolled in horse projects, compared to 160,846 in beef cattle and 106,526 in swine. This compares to 30,000 horse projects 15 years earlier.

But that's only part of the increase.

The 12 largest breed organizations recorded 36 percent more horses in 1973 than in 1960.

Don Jones, Executive Secretary of the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), the world's largest and fastest growing equine registry, explains the growth in this way. "Many people are searching for sources of recreation, an 'escape' from the everyday routine, or perhaps a new business

venture. Our society has a great deal of affluence and leisure time to offer the individual, and, likewise he desires to get away from the hustle and bustle of the modern, mechanized world. This outlet, more than ever before we are pleased to say, is becoming the horse."

Growth in the American Quarter Horse Association is exemplary of all breeds of horses. AQHA year-end figures illustrate the phenomenon.

On November 8, 1974, the AQHA officially registered one million American Quarter Horses, which is quite a feat for an association only 34 years old. The AQHA closed out the year with 1,038,559 horses recorded in the Stud Book, registering 76,559 new animals in 1974 alone at the headquarters office in Amarillo, Texas.

Transfer of ownership, considered as the barometer of any industry, also reached a new high in 1974, with 153,230 American Quarter Horses changing hands.

A total of 51 foreign countries have imported the American Quarter Horse, but a large percentage of them are being purchased by people in the upper midwest and along the Eastern seaboard. Thus, the American Quarter Horse is returning once again to the place of his origin. For it was in the early 1600's, in the Carolina and Virginia colonies, that settlers developed this animal, by crossing horses brought from England with those left in America by the Spanish Explorers. These animals, known as "Quarter Pathers" were raced against each

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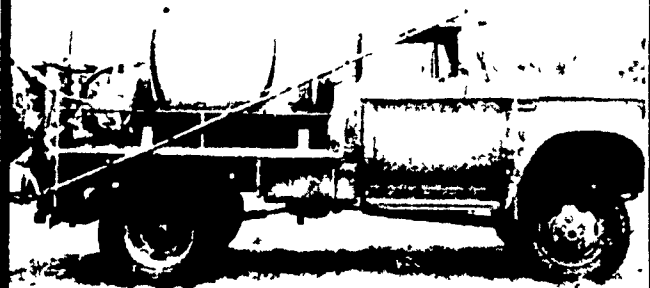
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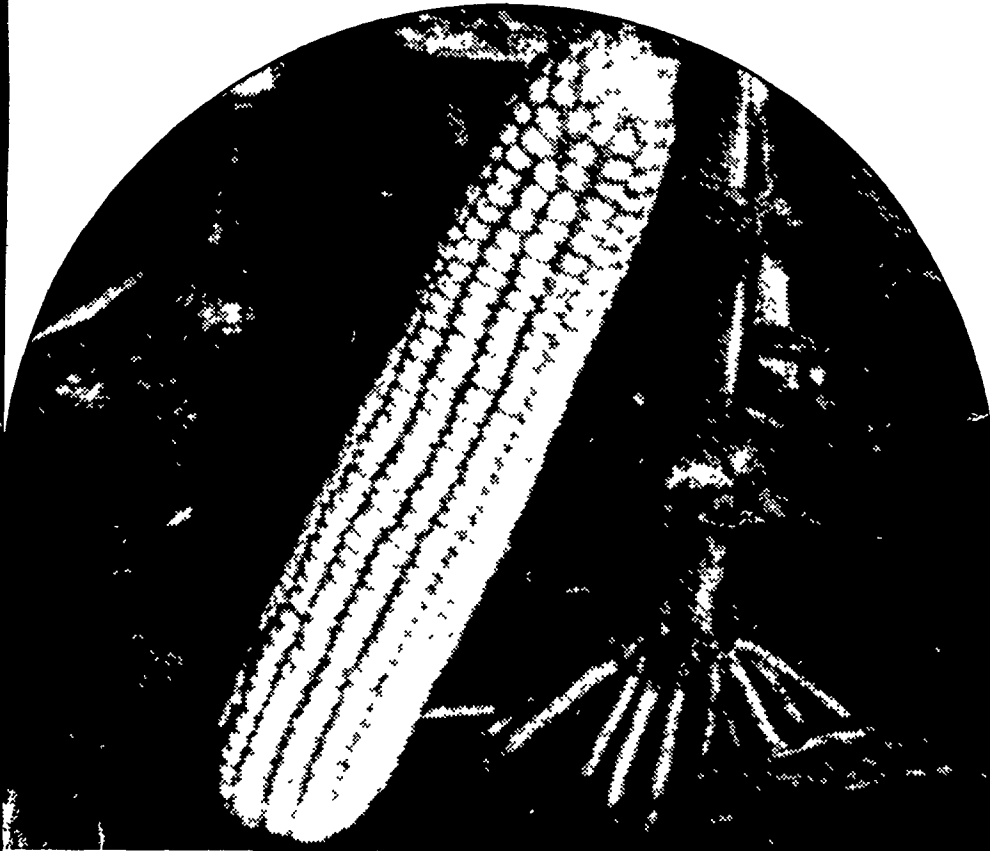


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