

# 1000 horses at Penn National



One thousand horses took part in this week's Penn National Horse Show in Harrisburg. Riders took their mounts through various exercises in preparation for events which had a total purse of over \$45,000 at stake.

Proceeds from the eight-day event go to the Harrisburg Kiwanis Club in support of youth programs. The Penn National is the largest indoor sporting event staged in Pennsylvania and one of North America's finest equestrian shows.

**By Dieter Krieg**  
**HARRISBURG** — During the last several decades, when scores of thousands of farmers left the land, most of the horses went too. Men and horses were replaced by machines to a large degree. The farmers who stayed behind have for the most part evolved into a new breed of agriculturalists who had no choice but to become more productive, more efficient, and more businesslike. And the horses of today are also quite different from their ancestors of generations ago.

What the modern horse is — and what it can do — could be seen this past week at the Pennsylvania National Horse Show which took place at the Farm Show Building. Granted, the high-spirited, graceful animals are a far cry from their rural cousins — some of which are still hard at work on Pennsylvania farms — but they are nevertheless a "branch of a tree" which has its roots in royal horse stables, military academies, and farms.

This year's horse show in Harrisburg drew close to 1,000 horses and 700 riders. Sponsored annually by the Kiwanis Youth Foundation of Harrisburg, the event offered \$45,000 in prize money to riders who came from all over the United States and several foreign countries. Proceeds of the event go to the Kiwanis Youth Foundation, with more than \$250,000 having gone to that organization in the past 17 years.

The barns, which most readers of Lancaster Farming associate with dairy and beef cattle, sheep, hogs, and heavily muscled Belgian work horses, were completely taken over by the extremely refined, almost fragile Thoroughbreds, and their equally well-bred cousins.

While the horses might not have been groomed any better than the best show cows seen at dairy and beef shows, their exhibitors were. Dressed in immaculate riding attire, owners presented themselves and their mounts with unabashed pride.

The Pennsylvania National Horse Show, which incidentally celebrated its 30th season here last week, is recognized as the largest indoor equestrian event in North America, and ranks as Pennsylvania's largest international sporting event. Known for short as the "Penn National," the event annually attracts such world-famous equestrians as Michele McEvoy, Rodney Jenkins, Tony D'Ambrosio, and Bernie Traurig.

Miss McEvoy, from Lagrangeville, N.Y. won the Pennsylvania Big Jump competition here last year to become the first woman to ever have done so. She is also the runner-up of the world's women championship riders. A \$2,000 purse was at stake. This year the opening jumping prize money for the show is \$11,000, according to Harry G. Banzhoff, president of the show and the Pennsylvania National Horse Show Association.

Many of the country's top riders appeared at the show, which opened last Saturday and continues through tonight. Among the top equestrians is Rodney Jenkins of Orange, Va. He was last year's leading rider

here and recently captured the \$30,000 American Gold Cup aboard "Idle Dice" in Philadelphia.

One of the foreign entries in open jumping was Kevin Bacon, from Australia — the first rider from the "Land Down Under" to ever appear in a Penn National.

Another of the show's top features was the "Prix des States," which brings together the leading junior riders from New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New Jersey, Michigan and Tennessee. A \$1,000 prize was at stake, with several thousand spectators watching the event in the large arena.

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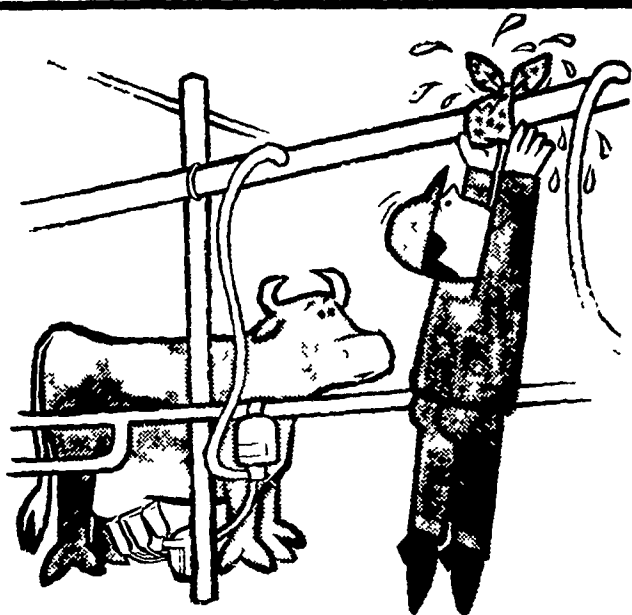
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