

Budweiser Clydesdales

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equipment is the main factor that makes them so spectacular.

Six men are responsible for the Clydesdales when they travel—the driver, the assistant driver, and four chauffeur grooms who take care of the horses and harness. These six men and the 10 horses are on the road for 10 months out of the year, traveling approximately 40,000 miles in that span of time.

According to information furnished by Anheuser-Busch, Inc., these animals are the most widely traveled horses in the United States. Their transportation is three 40 by eight foot vans which were specially built for them. Two of the vans house the Clydesdales and a third van carries the huge brass-trimmed wagon, portable stalls, the harness, and other important equipment required for their personal appearances.

According to the men who care for the horses, their schedule never lets up. After one fair, horse show, or parade, the animals are loaded up and transported to their next location, often states away.

In a recent interview with Lancaster Farming, one attendant revealed that since the first of January there have only been 10 days when the men and animals have not either been on the road or showing. They left home last December and they will return on October 23.

"I've got a permanent

home. It's right there in the cab," he said, pointing to the one of the three trucks.

According to Earl Woolcott, the head of the East Coast hitch (Budweiser has two hitches—one in the East and one in the West), the animals are cared for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

"You've always got to be around," he said. "There could be a fire, or one of the horses could get sick, or when they're in portable housing, the winds could collapse the tent."

The attendants have no fear of people stealing the equipment or the horses, insured at \$10,000 a piece, because, as they put it, "where would you hide a Clydesdale?" and "after one day they'd get tired of the feed bill."

The animals eat 25 quarts of feed and 40 to 50 pounds of hay a day, all of which is purchased where the entourage goes.

While the majority of the attendants stay in motels on the tour, there is always one individual who stays with the horses.

"They are never left alone," states Woolcott.

It's not just the horses that require attention, however. The gleaming brass and leather harnesses and shining Budweiser wagon has to be kept up, as well. Upon first observation, the harness, valued at \$30,000, appears brand new, but according to attendants, it is four years old, a fact that attests to the care given it.

The history of the Budweiser Clydesdales goes back to post prohibition days. Before the federal crack-down on liquor, the Anheuser-Busch brewery used horses and brewery wagons to deliver their beer. But, with the advent of prohibition, that tradition was ended as the brewery went into the making of other products such as soft drinks, commercial yeast, and other products.

Then, in 1933 when prohibition was repealed, August Busch, Jr., purchased a team of Clydesdales horses and had them trained to pull a huge brewery wagon as a special way to commemorate the repeal. In that way, the tradition began.

Today, these animals are seen from coast to coast at state fairs, horse shows, and parades.

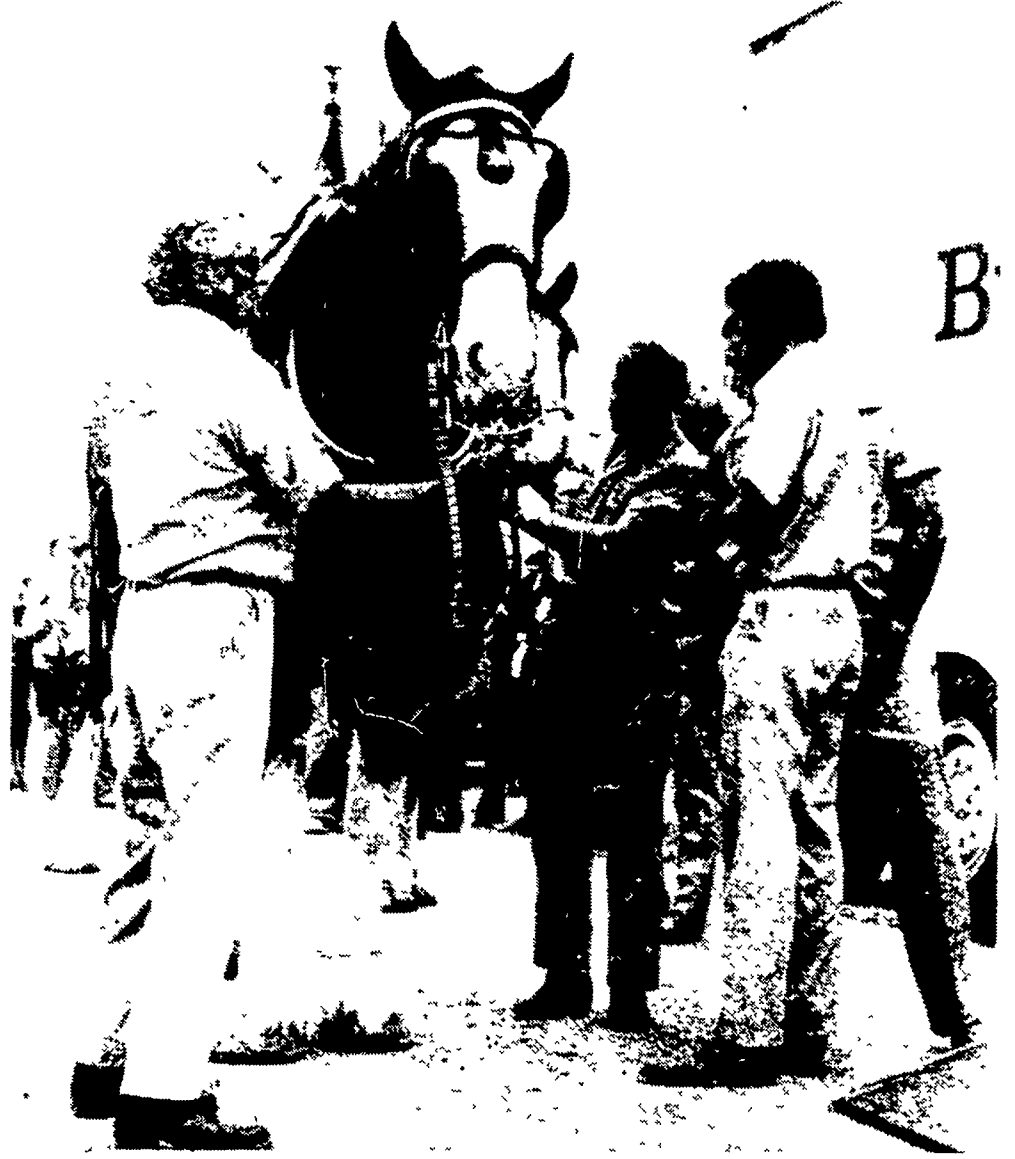
According to Woolcott, while the animals are so well trained that they look as though they follow one lead animal, this is not the case.

"The driver has four reins laced through the fingers of each hand," says Woolcott, "And, each horse is driven all the time."

While they harness only eight horses, 10 animals are taken on the tour to ensure that eight will always be suited for the hitch.

"What we try to do," says one attendant, "is plan on bringing some younger horses along to fit them into their spots."

When a Clydesdale joins the hitch, he is usually three



Five of the six attendants who groom and take care of the Budweiser Clydesdales begin "dressing" them in their finery for a show.

to four years old. A Budweiser Clydesdale must be bay in color and have all four leg stockings white and must have a white face.

The corporation has its own breeding farm in St. Louis, Mo., and all tolled, has about 120 head of these magnificent animals, according to the Budweiser attendants.

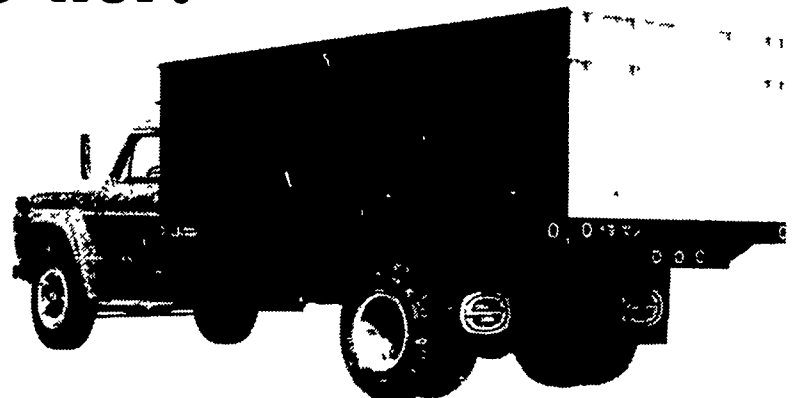
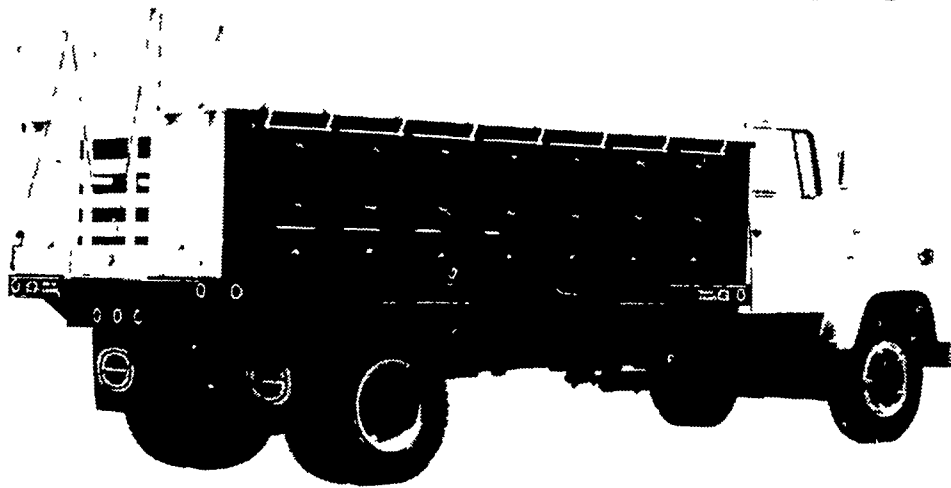
Located at the St. Louis plant, the Clydesdale stables have been designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.

The New England home of the Clydesdales is in Merrimack, N.H., at the brewery and stables. Along

with the horses, Budweiser also has eight of the biggest oxen in the world, according to the Clydesdale attendants.

Tickets for the Penn National Horse Show can be obtained by writing "Pennsylvania National Horse Show, 31 N. Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101."

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