

Flood waters couldn't stop this exhibitor

By KENDACE BORRY HARRISEURG — In the draft horse competition, there was one exhibitor whose horses came close to not making it to the competition this year or any year in the future, for that matter, for they were involved in the flood waters that invaded Cambria County this past Summer.

Harry J. Wright, Summerhill, who showed the reserve champion Percheron stallion and the first place two year old mare in this year's Farm Show, related how the floodwaters covered his 26 acre farm

located 16 miles east of Johnstown.

He spoke of the little creek located on the side of the hill at the edge of his farm. On the night preceding the flood, he said, as usual he brought the eight horses into the stable to be fed. But, because of the heavy rain, he didn't let them out into the pasture right away. But finally about 10:30 p.m., he put all but one of them back on the hill for the night. One mare stayed in the barn.

He added that the Collie dog tied by the stable barked furiously as he went by, but he couldn't figure out why

because nothing seemed wrong. His Dalmation, which was afraid of the thunder, stuck close by his side, and followed him into the house. Because of its fear, he put it into the basement before he went to bed.

Awakened around 5:30 a.m., he was amazed to see water surrounding the house and covering most of the farm's lower lying area. Quickly checking the basement, he found the Dalmation huddled on the top step of the cellerway, standing in about four inches of water. The Collie outside had drowned.

In the stable the mare left inside was standing in water halfway up her neck. Wright noted that if the water could have been one foot higher, the horse would not have been able to survive. When he and his sons could get into the stable to rescue her, the

water was still up to her stomach, and the mare was too terrified to move.

Total losses of equipment and damages of his property, Wright estimates at between \$35,000 and \$40,000. His new 1977 cattle truck was completely submerged as was his 1974 model pickup truck. A camping trailer was floating in the yard for awhile but a fence kept it from being swept away. Extensive damage was done in his butchering shop as well as in his basement, where among other things, a freezer with a fresh side of beef in it, was upset. Wright also owns two Weber wagons which were damaged by the high waters.

Wright has been in the Percheron business for about six years, mainly because he enjoys showing the animals. The 63-year flood veteran was raised on a farm that had Percheron horses and he uses his animals for showing, parades, as well as work on the farm including hay making and manure hauling.

He is the only draft horse exhibitor from Cambria County at the Farm Show and he wishes that the Cambria County Fair would reinstate the draft horse competition in its program. "There's just something about draft horses that no other horses have," he explained. "People just love to watch them, whether they're standing still or moving. I think something is missing



Harry J. Wright, Summerhill, shows his two year old mare, Commander's Hanna, which placed first in her class.

in not including them in the fair."

Besides being in show competition, Wright has also had the distinction of having a team of his Percherons pull the Pa. Bicentennial Wagon at the Cambria County Fair in 1976.

Already looking forward to next year's competition at the Farm Show, Wright spoke about bringing more horses next year and entering more classes. "I've got a young stallion that is even better than this one," he added. "I'm anxious to see what he will do."

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