

Pheasant Hollow Farm gears up with horse power

BY GINGER SECRIST MYERS
Staff Correspondent

GETTYSBURG — When Joanne Kinsey calls her beauties, the ground literally shakes beneath your feet. That's because Joanne's beauties are her 1800 to 2000 Belgian horses.

Bubbling with enthusiasm for the farming life that she and her husband Gene are mapping out, Joanne states emphatically, "I'm into this horse business because I love these big horses."

It wasn't until two years ago that the Kinseys became involved with draft horses. Joanne remembers that they'd had horses for years, but those were pleasure horses.

She relates, "I tried to get into Peruvians, but the people weren't very friendly and something always happened to mess it up. Two years ago we saw the big horses at the Farm Show and fell in love with them. We went to talk to our neighbor Larry Ornsdorff, who has Belgians and decided to buy our own. The draft horse people

are the friendliest and most helpful people I've ever worked with."

The Kinseys now own 14 of the big horses. Joanne considers that they might have gotten too many too fast but laughs that the deals they got were so good they just couldn't pass them up.

Though both Gene and Joanne are involved with the horses, the bulk of the responsibility for the horses falls to Joanne.

Gene is kept busy with a family construction business, farming 800 acres which includes 515 acres of corn, plus a small beef herd. The Kinseys have decided that they are spread too thin and are presently leaving the construction business to devote their efforts full time to their first love, farming.

Joanne stresses that besides the enjoyment she receives from working with her draft horses, there are financial gains to be made. While the Kinseys don't stress showing, they do become involved in the larger shows since these events attract potential

buyers. Joanne points out, "The trick in this business to keeping your head above water is to have something good to sell every year."

Getting that good horse takes hours of work, starting from weaning to breaking the animal to hitch and pull. The Kinseys work their horses and own a sleigh, manure spreader, wagon, and a forecart. Joanne points out that every piece of equipment they buy must be usable, just as each of their horses must be usable.

The Kinseys figure that they have invested \$20,000 in their breeding stock plus about \$15,000 annually in related expenses. However, they are confident that within three years their horse business will be showing a profit. Joanne explains, "People really appreciate the idea of having an animal that they can work as well as enjoy. Horses are a good investment property, returning as much as 38% profit. Even though the market price is down from last year, the demand is still high. Foreign buyers are increasing too. Of course some of them are buying stallions to use for meat production purposes."

Joanne admits that she's learned a lot since her first purchases and is now a better judge of horse flesh. She's learned a lot about what make a good hitch team too. Joanne explains that draft horses are called "cold blooded" because they react so calmly to potentially dangerous situations. She has observed that if a draft horse gets into trouble, it usually waits for someone to help it rather than struggle as other horses might.

Since the draft horse is so calm, Joanne points out this quality makes them excellent working horses. When teaching a team to hitch, Joanne recommends waiting until the horse has almost reached its full height and the bones in its legs have stopped growing. Most horses are broke to hitch and pull

by hitching them with a trained horse and letting them learn by example. Joanne feels that the sooner you start working and handling the horse, the better chance the horse will develop a good working temperament. Your hitch team should also work well together and be well matched so that their strides pull together according to Joanne's standards.

Joanne feels fortunate to have the quality of breeding stock that they have at Pheasant Hollow, but cautions anyone considering getting into the business not to jump in too fast. She advises interested persons to subscribe to the Draft Horse Journal and to learn everything they can about the big

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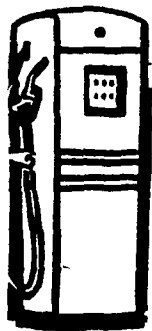
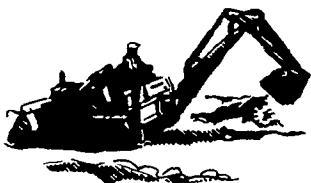


Joanne Kinsey, Pheasant Hollow Farm, handles her matched Belgian mares like a professional as they work out with their wagon. The Kinseys are building a breeding herd of draft horses that will work as well as they show.



Joanne Kinsey loves her horses and her horses seem to love her. Pictured with Joanne is "Katie," one of the fillies that the Kinseys hope will be a good brood mare as well as a good hitch horse. Katie won third in a tough class at the Farm Show this year and a blue ribbon in a group class.

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