

# National Belgian Hitch Coming To New Holland, Points West

**NEW HOLLAND** (Lancaster Co.)—The first six-horse hitch to ever walk across the United States, from Maine to California, will be making a pre-Christmas visit to New Holland, today and Sunday, Dec. 2-3.

The hitch will be headquartered at the New Holland Sales Stables on Fulton Street, two blocks south of Hwy. 23. To spread a little Christmas cheer, driver David Helmuth and his wife, Vikki, plan to have the six champion Belgians "all decked out" with bells, garland and ribbons.

"Folks in this area have been urging us to come for a visit for a long time, and since we have an opening in our schedule, we decided to make a pre-Christmas swing through your part of the country," said Helmuth.

After the Dec. 2-3 appearance in New Holland, the team will head to Washington, Pa. on Dec. 5-6, and then to Zanesville, Ohio on Dec. 7-8.

The hitch is owned by Country and Reminisce, two of nine magazines published by Reiman Publications of Greendale, Wisconsin. The full-color, ad-free magazines have more than 11 million subscribers across the U.S. and Canada.

### Will Come Bearing Gifts

"We're going to be bringing each subscriber a Christmas gift, too—a free cookbook!" Helmuth pointed out. "We'll hand them out, one per subscriber family, to those who come out to see us in New Holland.

"We'll also be bringing along a lot of our company's other books, which are being phased out, and will be offering them at half-price. So some people may want to come out to say 'hi' and do some bargain Christmas shopping at the same time.

"What's more, we're giving 5% of all the sales proceeds to the New Holland Chamber of Commerce to apply to the project of their choice," Helmuth emphasized. "That way we're sort of giving a gift to the whole town."

The giant Belgians, which weigh over a ton each, have some enthusiastic fans among subscribers who closely followed their walk across America. A 1-hour video, narrated by Willard Scott, and a book, titled *The Mane Event*, have also been produced about the hitch's 3,800-mile trip.

As a result, many of the magazine's subscribers have come to know each horse by name and regard them as their horses. The editors often refer to them as "The only six-horse hitch in the world co-owned by over 11 million people!"

These "owners" sometimes drive hundreds of miles to see, meet and pet these giant steeds. This is likely to be the case with the hitch's visit to New Holland next week, since the appearance has been widely announced.

### Pulling for Seniors

The team's 16-month cross-country walk along rural roads through 18 states was aimed at



This six-hitch Belgian horse team that drove across the country from Maine to California in 1993-94 is driven by David and Vikki Helmuth, Nasha, Iowa. The team will be housed at New Holland Sales Stables this weekend and then move on to Washington, Pennsylvania, and Zanesville, Ohio.

honoring senior citizens. The crew stopped at senior centers all along the route, giving rides to more than 50,000 people—mostly seniors—in the hitch's custom-made red wagon, adding meaning to the wagon's bold slogan, "We're Pulling for Seniors!"

To make it an official "ocean-to-ocean" junket, Helmuth trotted the team through the Atlantic surf off the East Coast before leaving Kennebunkport, Maine and head-

ing west, way west, to San Diego, where the team eventually splashed in the Pacific surf.

In all, the trip covered more than 3,800 miles, and the horses walked every step, averaging about 10 miles a day and resting on Sunday.

In the time since the trip was completed, the hitch—often called "America's team"—has made numerous appearances at fairs, festivals, rodeos and other events

across the U.S. The visit to New Holland is the first appearance in Pennsylvania since the hitch crossed through the state's northwest corner on its cross-country trek.

During that April 1993 to August 1994 trip, the Helmuths and six crew members overcame several hazards, such as being awakened at 4 a.m. by the tremors of the 1994 California earthquake

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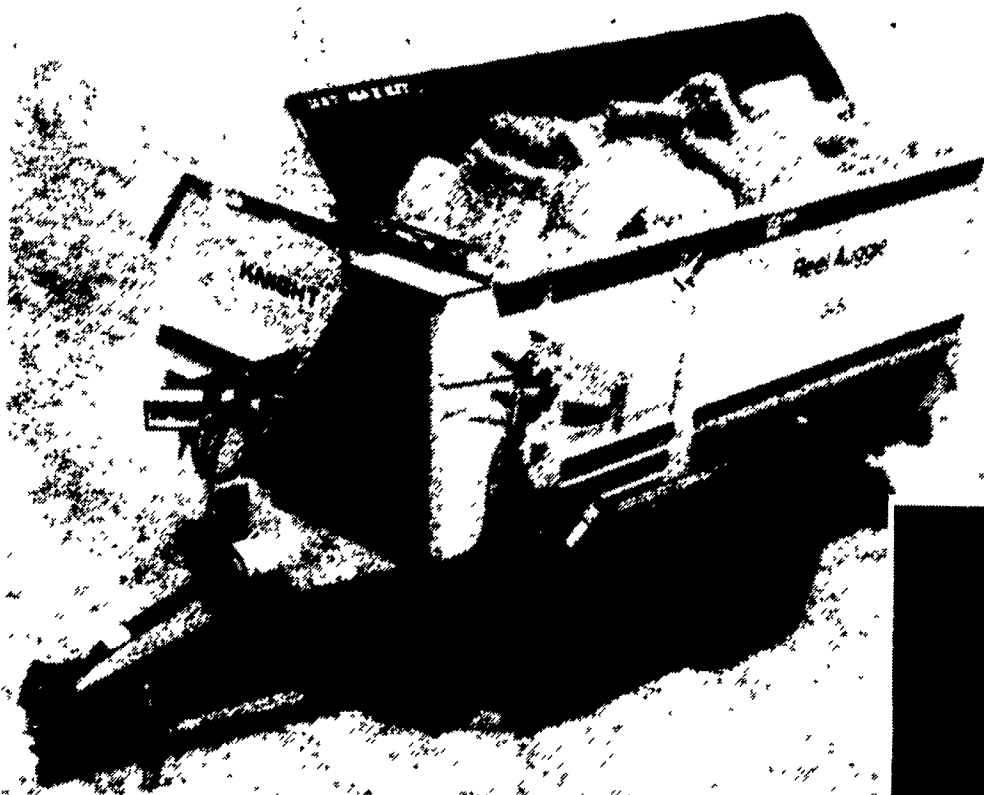
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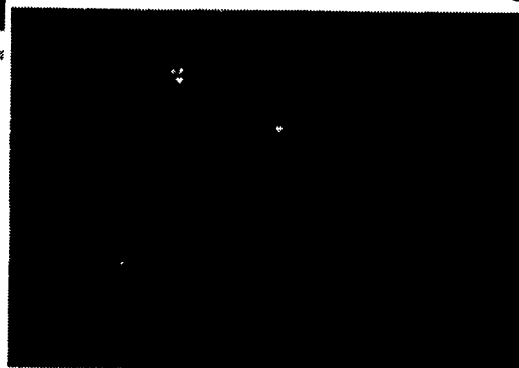


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