

Horse Model Show To Benefit Saddle Cinches 4-H Club

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MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.)—In recent decades, a new hobby has taken the world of horse enthusiasts by storm. Come the end of July, thousands of this pastime's devotees converge on Kentucky Horse Park for an annual three-day convention known as Breyerfest. Participants come from all age groups: it attracts followers from the ages of six to sixty...or above! What is this equine hobby? It's a relatively new pastime known as model horse showing!

Several manufacturers produce high-quality, realistic horse models; Breyer and Hartland are perhaps the top names in the field. But collections of models don't have to be consigned to dusty shelves. Many of these animals are works of art, and, as such, deserve to see the inside of a show ring. Model horse showing works like this: a shower packs up his or her best models and travels to the show site. There, a minimal fee allows the competitor to enter models in showmanship classes (in which the model is judged on appropriate position, condition and quality of finish, and proper adjustment of tack), breed classes (where the animals are judged against their breed's conformational standard), and performance events (in which properly tacked-up jumpers, pleasure horses, or barrel racers compete for the most appropriate tack, set-up, and manners). Models are placed, 1st through 6th, as real animals would be; each collection (or "stable") has the points its models have earned tallied, and championships are awarded. In short, model showing gives horse enthusiasts of all ages the chance to learn more about equine conformation, breed standards, and competitions.

The Saddle Cinches 4-H Club of Manheim is planning its first annual open show, to be held on Saturday, March 16, at the Farm and Home Center in Lancaster, PA (just off PA's Route 72). The building will be open to entrants at 9:30 a.m. on show day, with classes beginning at 10:00. Divisions for all ages (both children and adults) are planned; ribbons will be awarded to the 1st through 6th place models in each class, with the champion person in each division receiving a rosette and a Breyer model.

One of the highlights of the day is the scheduled model signing party. Breyer manufactures various models inspired by the classic Misty of Chincoteague children's books. Most recently, a gift set

consisting of Misty II, Black Mist, and Twister was added to the Breyer line. Misty II is the great-granddaughter of the original Misty of Chincoteague; she is owned by Kendy Allen of Manheim, as are her daughters, Black Mist and Twister. As members of the famous Misty family, the animals travel to schools, fairs, and shows all over the region. They're also shown in 4-H competitions locally. In October, I rode Black Mist in the Western Pleasure Pony class at the State 4-H Horse Show (I lease and train this animal). Having your horse immortalized as a Breyer model is a rarity, but a letter I sent to the Breyer company last year brought results. When I reminded the company of the talents and fame of Misty's family, it decided to produce the models! Breyer then worked from photos to create portraits of the real ponies.

The Misty II gift set will be in stores by the time of the show, and owner Kendy Allen will be available to sign the models. Maureen Beebe Hursh, who was featured as a character in the original Misty books, is also scheduled to sign Misty models and books (\$3 per signing). A signed model always escalates in value and collectability, and a model signed by the real horse's owner is very rare.

Now on to show specifics: A model horse which is left exactly as the company manufactured it, with no touch-ups or repainting, is known as an original finish model. Some collectors choose to customize original finish models, using heat, epoxy, and Dremel tools to resculpt the models into unique or more correct positions. Models can be repainted as the collector chooses; hair manes and tails and even glass eyes are often added in an effort to create a more realistic model. At this show, all classes will consist only of original finish models, with no repainted or customized divisions. The customized horses are often more competitive — and more expensive — than their manufactured counterparts, and so must be shown separately.

First on the list are the showmanship classes. In these classes, models should have correct conformation, be in mint condition (not scratched, faded, or marked), and should be standing square, as they would in a real grooming and showmanship class. The model is required to wear a miniature replica of a halter or bridle; this would make it possible for the handler to control it were it an actual animal. Models are anatomically correct, so classes are divided by sex, and to give foal and yearling models a

chance, maturity.

Breed classes are an assembly of models from the same breed category; the animals are judged against their breeds' conformational standard, as at any livestock show. Many models come packaged and labeled as being a certain type of horse or pony, but the best way to figure out where a model should be entered is by sitting down with a horse breeds book. Photographs, descriptions, and rules about what coat colors a breed registry accepts can help entrants to properly place an animal. And of course, asking the judge at the start of the show can be a big help. Most model judges are very helpful, often offering entrants suggestions for successful showing.

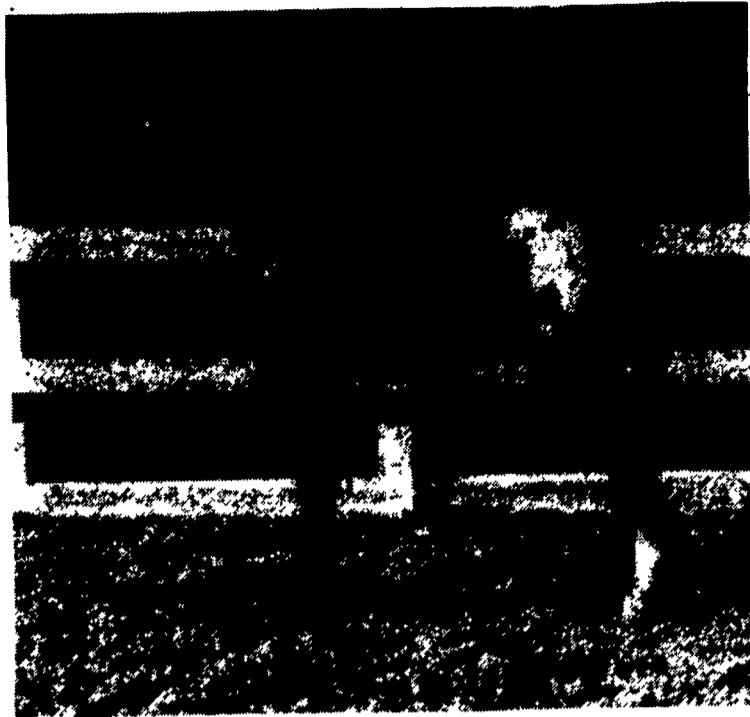
Performance classes are perhaps the most interesting division. In these, models are expected to wear correct, well-fitted saddles, bridles, and harness. The models are then judged on how realistically they appear to be performing a given event. For example, a barrel racing horse would be expected to be galloping through a barrel race pattern, complete with miniature barrels. The model would be wearing a western saddle and bridle. The only thing lacking would be the rider! Incidentally, model tack isn't hard to come by: most tack shops carry Breyer's model tack. Private collectors also offer custom-made saddles.

Here is a brief explanation of what each performance class requires: An English pleasure horse should appear to be moving quietly and willingly at the walk, trot, or canter. It should wear an English saddle and bridle. In jumping, a horse with English tack should be trotting or cantering toward a jump. Some models are positioned in a jumping position, and these are fine, too. Both English and Western trail classes require the horse to be negotiating an obstacle (such as a bridge or low jump). Western pleasure entries should wear Western saddles and bridles. They should be walking, trotting, or cantering, and should appear relaxed and calm. Western events include barrel racing, pole bending, calf roping, etc. Here, a properly tacked-up horse should be executing the given event, complete with barrels, poles, or calf. Cart and harness requires a model or team of models harnessed to a sleigh, cart, or wagon.

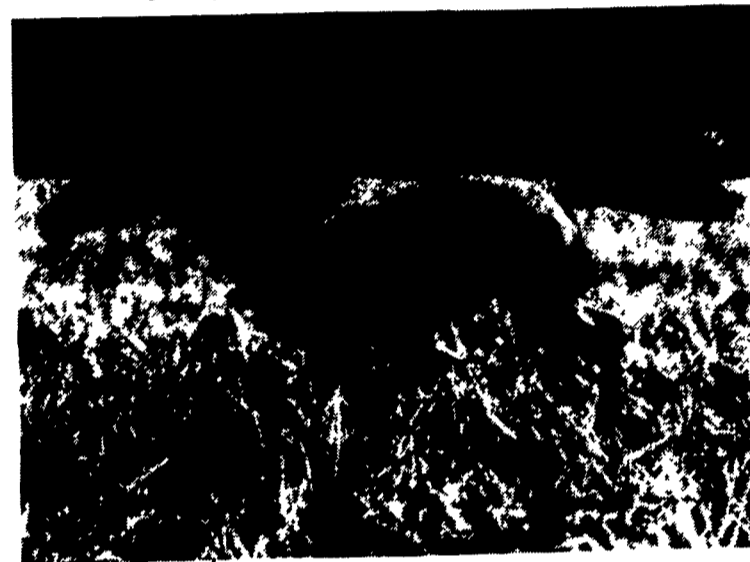
Costume class requires models to be decked out in realistic costumes. Popular costumes include an Indian warrior's skin blanket and feathered bridle, an Arab's tasseled saddle and bridle, and a knight's richly-ornamented warhorse. Finally, the barn class is simply a creative, realistic set-up of models and a stable.

The aim of model showing is to recreate an actual horse show on a small scale. Not only is this less expensive than attending an event at Quentín, but it also opens up the field of competition to children and non-horse-owners as well. Model showing provides a chance for horse enthusiasts to learn more about various breeds and events ... without the high stakes or high expenses of actual showing. It also makes a great weekend event for riders sidetracked by slushy spring weather!

A pre-entry fee of \$8 allows showers to enter over 20 classes; it also guarantees them table space to set up and store their models at the show. \$10 on show day allows a competitor to enter, but table



Bay leopard blanket Appaloosa colt model.



Buckskin Mustang gelding.

space is not guaranteed.

If the concept of model horse showing sounds interesting, register for the Saddle Cinches show! Send an SASE to Saddle Cinches Model Show, c/o Kirsten Kauffman, 761 Hess Rd., Elizabeth-

town, PA 17022-9520, or call (717) 367-5295 (evenings). Checks can be made out to Saddle Cinches 4-H Club. Upon registration, a class list and details will be mailed to entrants. Support the 4-H horse program and give the hobby of model showing a try!

Cattle Consistency Program Set

YORK (York Co.) — "Cattle Consistency: Implications for Packers and Producers," a program designed to encourage producers to remain competitive in the beef business, is set for Tuesday, Feb. 20 at Hoss's Steak and Sea House West beginning at 6:30 p.m.

With the continued trend toward value-based marketing in the industry, it is extremely important for beef producers in all segments of the industry to be aware of beef packers priorities when purchasing cattle.

Beef packers are increasingly trying to produce branded and specification products that are consistent for characteristics such as quality, product size, weight and shape. Under present marketing conditions, they are constantly faced with the challenge of finding a market for vastly different kinds of cattle.

There is a cost to producers associated with marketing this wide variation in quality. The value-based marketing approach encourages producers to first investigate the specifications demanded in the marketplace and then attempt to design a product to meet the guidelines.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to learn about the buy-

ing practices of a major Pennsylvania beef packer, Moyer Packing Company.

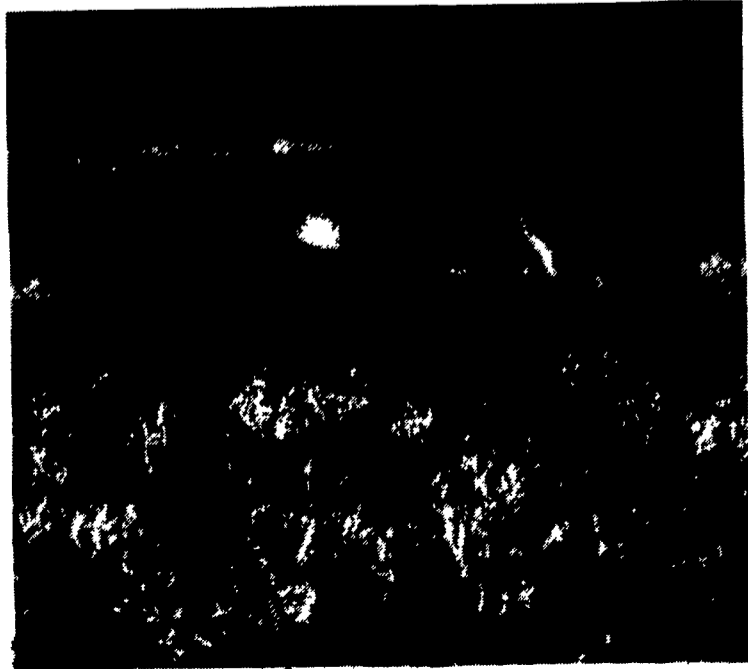
Steve Bryce is the head cattle buyer for the company and he will address the effects different kinds of cattle have on the packer.

The meeting is important to both the cow/calf producer and the feedlot operator. Feedlot operators have the opportunity to adjust their feeding programs and strategies to meet market demand and to carefully consider the kind of finished cattle the market demands when they buy feeder cattle.

The cow/calf producer is the design engineer who can breed cattle that meet the specifications feedlot operators want. Regardless of your niche in the production process, don't miss this opportunity to learn more about the importance of cattle consistency to the entire beef industry.

Advance registration is requested for the meeting so that adequate seating is available at the restaurant. Each participant will order the dinner of their choice from Hoss's menu.

To register for the meeting, call Penn State Cooperative Extension at (717) 840-7408 or stop by the office at 112 Pleasant Acres Road, York, PA.



Strawberry roan Welsh pony mare.