



Craig enjoys spending much of her time in the barn, pasture, or training the horses. At Country Arabians, 11 Arabians and one Haflinger make their home on the farm.

Arabians

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ino, crossed with an Arabian stallion, produced 19 foals in her lifetime.

"Fate gave me a great mare. I'm into the fifth generation of her bloodlines," she said. Craig's veterinarian, Richard Stoneback, Oxford, owned Ara-

bians and opened her eyes to the breed after she purchased a horse from him.

"One led to two and two led to four," she said. All the purebred horses go back to the white mare and all the partbred horses go back to the Palomino. "It's a small line but very productive. It's all in the family, I guess," she said.

Craig has now raised approximately 100 foals on the farm. "I've sold several to good friends and it's fun to go to shows and watch them."

Several of the horses who "deserve a retirement home," she said, will permanently reside at Country Arabians. A 33-year-old gelding, for example, is allowed to wander the yard and

"be our lawn mower" before he is moved to the pasture in the afternoon.

"Arabians are good family horses. They are friendly and inquisitive and quite personable, but quite sensitive. They require a lot more finesse in handling them," said Craig.

Her mother, Gladys, owns the farm and her brother works the 80-cow dairy portion of the operation plus farms the cropland of the 267-acre farm, which the family moved to when Craig was four years old. The horses have the run of 20 acres of pastureland.

Show Season

Three-year-old Flag, who carried his tail high when he was a foal, earning himself the name, was the show horse for the season for Craig.

"He is the first one I've shown as a 3-year-old," she said. "He has a trusting personality and is tall and bold and can handle the environment. I've always enjoyed working with him."

Late fall of last year Craig began working with Flag, training him nearly every day for the show ring. "I usually pick one horse and show it through the entire season until I retire that one and show another," she said.

"I used to show a purebred and a partbred at one time," she added, "and I showed one until he was 22 years old."

The show season, which begins in April with a show in Bel Air, Md., ends in Harrisburg at the Keystone International Livestock Exposition (KILE). Craig mainly exhibits in Pennsylvania and neighboring states.

Three class A shows and five weekend circuit shows make a total of eight shows for Craig.

The International Arabian Horse Association rates the shows, and only experienced riders who have met certain qualifications may compete in the Class A shows. Winning riders accumulate points at shows to earn a berth at the national competition, which alternates locations.

Providing an alternative to the Class A shows, however, is the Eastern Amateur Arabian Horse Show Circuit, an organization Craig helped to found in 1976 with Stoneback. The shows are low-key and family oriented, according to Craig, since "the founders wanted an organization where families could show together."

"It was just a sitting-around-the-kitchen-table idea that grew," she said. "We had close to 200 members this year."

Originating in nearby Oxford, the group now includes members in Maryland and Virginia. Each region conducts its own show. "The furthest we travel is two and a half hours," she said.

The central club picked a list of 45 classes that each show should include. At the end of the year the high point award is given to a horse for the separate divisions.

Awards for the junior riders also help to promote future interest in the competition. The top point earner wins the horse of the year distinction, an honor Craig has won in the club since 1996.

Although registries for purebred and partbred Arabians are separated, the horses are allowed to compete together in the amateur circuit.

To learn the ins and outs of horse ownership and show competition, Craig, who never took any riding lessons, took the burden of her education upon herself.

"I learned by trial and error. I watched other people ride and saw what the horse was supposed to look like, then I'd go home and try to make my horse do it," she said.

Reading magazines also gave her training ideas. "If I didn't like it, I just found something else," she said. "I saw what the judges wanted and I'd go home and try to get the horses to go that way."

Craig not only rides her own horses in competition, she also shoes and fits them for the ring herself.

In Training

Careful, methodical training is the reason for her show ring success, believes Craig.

"To take raw talent and turn it into a good show horse, a good working partner, is quite rewarding," she said. Craig also believes another reason her horses are successful in the show ring is "because of their good manners, one of my fundamental things in training."

Craig trains all of her horses by herself, in addition to taking care of the animals. Reading books and observing others at shows helped to educate her on how to train animals. Also she is blessed by good-tempered animals, "which I raised from day

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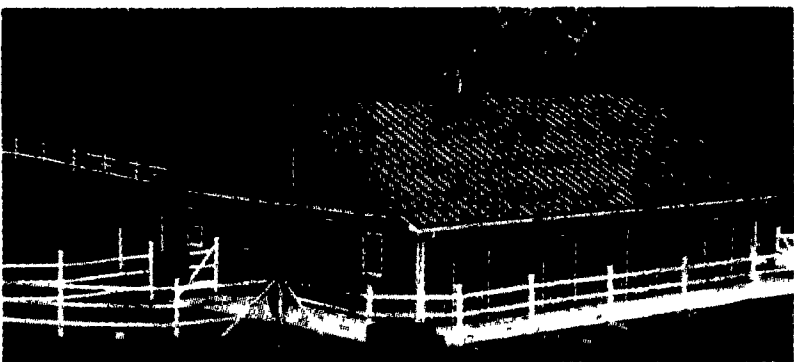
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