

# The Perfect Foal

(Continued from Page E5)

netic makeup, or genotype, is generally invisible to the mare owner, we can gauge a lot about the stallion by what we can see, or his phenotype.

In this sense, phenotype means the stallion's outward appearance, such as his color, size, conformation and movement. Conformation traits tend to have higher heritability than movement traits, and thus have a higher correlation from one generation to the next.

Phenotypic information can be obtained from a visual inspection of the stallion, in hand and under saddle. The phenotype of the stallion can be compared to that of the mare, and potential problems brought to light.

Breeders should be cautious though, and not assume that a stallion can fix serious problems with a mare's conformation or movement.

• **Performance:** An excellent way to determine a stallion's abilities is to evaluate his performance record.

While much of a horse's potential can be altered by environmental factors such as training or nutrition, stallions that consistently perform well in high-caliber competition generally pass this aptitude on to their progeny.

• **Pedigree:** Investigation of a stallion's pedigree will give the mare owner background information on his genetic makeup. Some bloodlines are known for excellent properties, such as jumping prowess, dressage ability, cow sense, speed or a host of other desirable qualities.

Breeders should take note, however,

that the more generations they travel from the stallion in question, the less influence those ancestors have on a sire. Pedigree evaluation is especially important in young sires, who have not yet accumulated performance winnings or sired foals of their own.

• **Progeny:** While a particular stallion may be outstanding in terms of phenotype, performance and pedigree, the wise breeder knows it is not the stallion they're interested in, but rather that stallion's offspring.

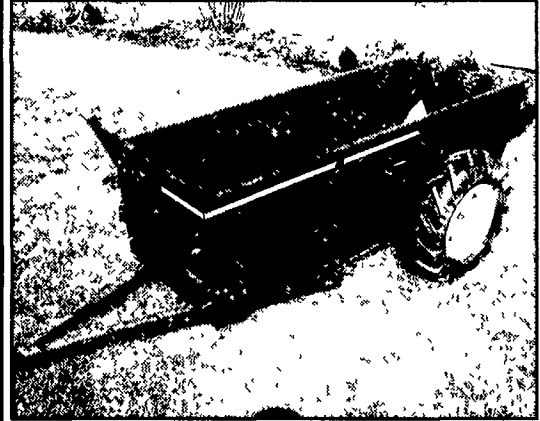
Breeders should attempt to visit or evaluate as many offspring as possible, and if possible, obtain show or inspection results for those progeny who are of appropriate age.

When evaluating foals, it is also important to consider the dam, as she contributed half of the genetic makeup of the youngster.

Every mating is like playing the lottery. The element of chance can never be eliminated, but with careful consideration of the four P's of stallion selection, mare owners can easily increase their odds of producing the perfect foal.



When selecting a stallion, the mare owner can dramatically improve their odds of producing that special foal by considering phenotype, performance, pedigree and progeny.



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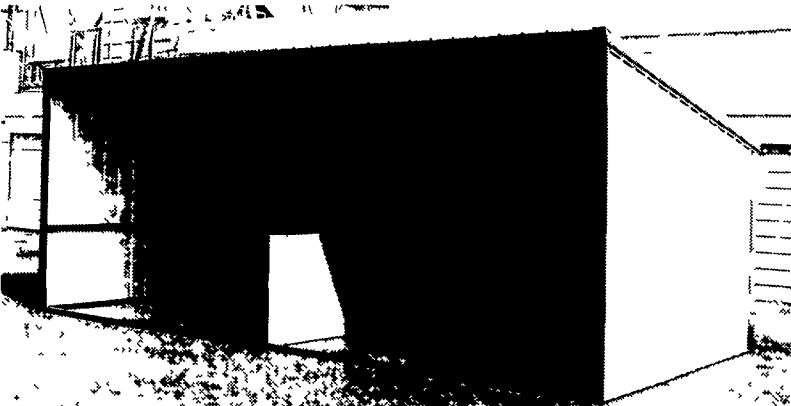
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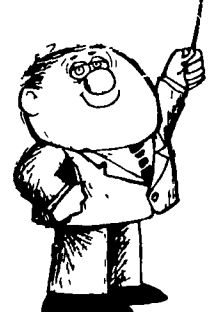
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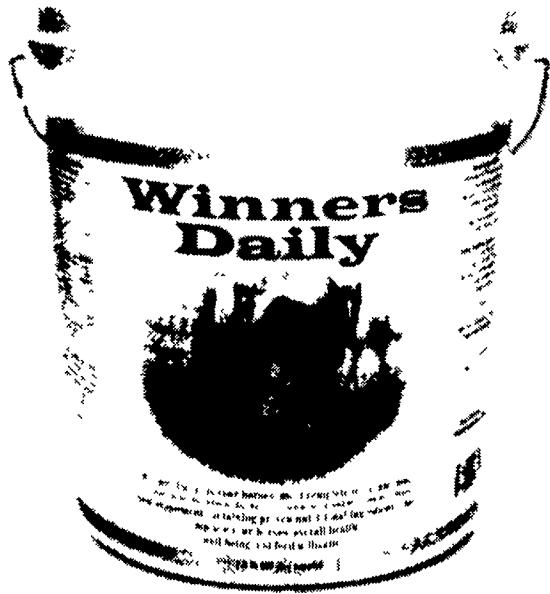
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