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Of Mice and Horses

Animal handling is a big part of my life from the horses I care for and train to the mice and rats of the research laboratory where I work. As a licensed veterinary technician since 1986, I've spent the last decade training hundreds of research scientists how to handle rodents. I've found that mice and rats respond to handling very much the same as horses. The handler's attitude has a direct effect on the animal.

I repeatedly demonstrate proper mouse handling techniques and get complete cooperation from the animals. However, when the same techniques are attempted by a handler with a fear of mice, the animals' reactions are often quite different; they become uncooperative, agitated and sometimes aggressive.

One of my current responsibilities includes training research investigators how to measure blood pressure on mice. In order to obtain interpretable blood pressure measurements, mice must remain still and calm while situated in a clear plastic cylinder. Their tails are surrounded by a cuff that is programmed to inflate and deflate (similar to the blood pressure stations found in local pharmacies). For 15 minutes a day, three days in a row, mice are trained to enter the clear plastic cylinders and accept slight pressure on the tail from the cuffs. If the mouse handler is not patient and calm during the training process, mice frequently become agitated and may produce nothing but poor, indefinable, blood pressure measurements on the day of testing.

Horses, once as wild as mice, are just as sensitive to the attitudes of those around them. If the handler is not patient and calm, horses may become uncooperative, agitated and sometimes even aggressive. It is important for handlers to realize how their attitude and behavior directly influences the attitude and behavior of the horses they work with.

JANET HOFF

*Owner/Trainer, Equine Charm School
Grass Lake, Michigan*

Too Much Appreciation

Iam not renewing the *Journal* at this time, not because I don't enjoy it, because I enjoy it too much.

I do not own any horses presently, so I

read your stories and look at your horse pictures when I have other things to do. I have run out of space to put the magazines! Keep up the good work. Maybe I will find more storage area later.

JEAN SMOCK

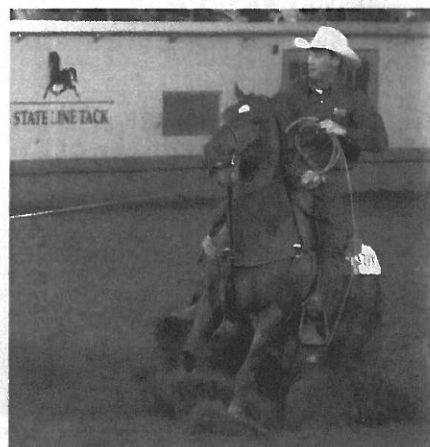
Independence, Missouri

Corrections

In the November Skyliners article, "Overcoming EPM to Make it to the World," the farrier's name was misspelled. His name is Jim Keane of Schererville, Indiana.

On page 74 of the November issue, in the article "Finalists Get Vegas Odds," the AQHA points listed for Generatin A Spark and Susan Russell were incorrect. Generatin A Spark has earned 159.5 AQHA points in open and amateur reining and working cow horse competition.

On page 138 of the December issue, the trainers' names were left off the amateur championship for Joyce Collis and Akita Ransom. The trainers were Vicky Overholser of Tennessee, Ray Riddle of Louisiana, Rick Baker of Tennessee, Kevin Shaw of North Carolina and Bennie Sargent of Kentucky. Collis and Akita Ransom were the 2004 Kentucky Quarter Horse Association all-around amateur select champions.



The AQHA Performance Championship for Jack Smooth Roper on page 146 of the November issue indicated the wrong photograph. Jack Smooth Roper, shown above, received his open performance championship July 23, 2005.