

## STALLION SELECTION SEMINAR

FEBRUARY 1, 2012

SPEAKERS ARE: Dr Bridgette Jablonsky of Hanover Shoe Farms and Joe Thomson, owner and Garrett Bell, operations manager, Winbak Farm.

There was a tape failure in the first few minutes, but the topic of discussion was discerning what purpose the foal will serve when breeding your stallion. Are you breeding to sell? To race for your own stable? For sire stakes? For Grand Circuit?

If you are breeding to race for your own account, you can take more risks and worry less about the commercial response to the pedigree and looks of the foal. You might breed a mare that you know has some flaws, but you know her, you know the family and believe those will not be a factor in the performance of the progeny.

If you are breeding to sell, you will be financially penalized for lack of pedigree, performance in the family tree and the conformation of the yearling. There are too many choices for shoppers at a sale to take a chance on a horse with a glaring weakness. The market is very unforgiving and your yearling must also be sold in a venue where they will be competitive with the others selling.

The caliber of the mare must be compatible with the caliber of the stallion. The most popular stallions are usually syndicated and there may be only a few spots for outside mares and they must be of the highest quality to even be considered.

MODERATOR: What makes a filly a good broodmare prospect? Not every female horse is a good prospect to join the gene pool. What factors should be considered in deciding to breed a mare?

DR JABLONSKY: When we are purchasing mares (as broodmare prospects) there are three factors, there's pedigree, performance and conformation. Ideally mares should have all three, but then you pay a premium for them. We have some mares that were not good performers themselves but are from good families or vice versa. Good performers but their families are so-so.

Again there is a difference for the small breeder. If you are breeding to sell your yearling, obviously your mare should be adequate in those categories. However, people breed mares that are special to them for some reason. Maybe she was a fair horse, but maybe she never quit. Or she was tough or a mare that they knew had blinding speed but got hurt early in her career. If you are breeding for yourself, I never talk a person out of that because they have a special bond with that mare – there's a reason why.

If a person calls me up and says I am looking to sell yearlings and they present me with a mare that I know cannot compete with other mares out there that are being bred and have yearlings to sell at the sales then I try to gently discourage them from that.

Having said all that, the greatest horses sometimes come from mares you would not expect them from. I'm not advocating that average or below average mares get bred but if you look at our two best mares, D Train and Rich N Elegant, one was purchased for \$10,000 and one for

\$12,000. They both did have characteristics that, looking back on it, you could say “Yes, this mare did have the chance to be the broodmare she turned out to be.”

But it’s not always the million dollar making mares from the great families that become the best broodmares. If you’re looking to sell, especially that first foal or second foal, she has to bring something to the table or else people turn the page. It’s awfully easy to turn a catalog page.

MODERATOR: Can you speak to conformation issues? I think we’ve all run across horses that were not terribly well conformed or had one flaw that was pretty striking but through force of their personality or good shoeing or being rigged well, they were able to overcome that. Dr J and then I’ll ask Winbak as well, what kind of eye do you cast on those glaring conformation weaknesses? How forgiving are you?

Dr JABLONSKY: We are very strict. We are not forgiving at all, Because we are a commercial breeder and we have found that looks sell. It is much easier to sell a great looking yearling from a mediocre family or mediocre mare than it is to sell a poor looking yearling from a top mare. Just the way the customers have evolved, so for us it’s very important. However, if you are a small breeder and again, there is a difference – if you’re a small breeder and you’re looking to sell, I would strongly advise you start with a good looking mare. Good conformation, attractive looks. There is only so much you can breed out of a mare. If you’re breeding to race and your mare has poor conformation, there’s some other reason why you’re breeding her – she was tough, whatever, you take her flaws and try to breed them out to the best of your ability.

MODERATOR: How about Winbak? How willing are you to overlook a conformation flaw in a mare that you knew overcame it? How dicey is it to breed them and sit around and wait to see if it shows up in the next generation?

JOE THOMSON: We have that argument and conversation a lot. We have a few mares here that are pretty bad in their conformation so the yearling manager and I are always having a laugh about who was right – whether the mare throws a well conformed foal or a bad one.

One of the mares I’m thinking about was the dam of Muscle Hill (Hambletonian winner) and she always threw trotters that were not real big and toed out a little bit. It was like that every year, but it didn’t seem to hurt Muscle Hill and he was probably one of the best-gaited trotters to ever come down the pike.

It’s funny, we had one who had been a 1:51 pacing mare and won \$3 or \$400,000 and this past year she had the first foal that was straight, so we kind of had a few laughs about that. She went in :51, won \$3 or \$400,000 – what do you do with a mare like that?

So this foal saved her from being under somebody else’s ownership. It happens and as Dr J said, they did pay a whole of money for, but they went through a lot of mares to get to those two, I can promise you that.

MODERATOR: If you read through a lot of the pedigree books and articles you see an awful lot of what looks like math, which is 3 x 3 and 4 x 4 and 2 x 2 and being inbred to Meadow Skipper. I found out from both of you that you’re not sitting there with calculators making these decisions. Can you give us some insight as to how much you look at – in Readers Digest version – what does linebred and outcross mean and how much of a decision-making factor is that for Winbak and then we’ll as Dr. Jablonsky.

GARRETT BELL: We don't take that in to consideration, really, until after the fact. Line breeding is breeding within a family, so to speak. Usually three generations back trying to carry on the traits through, it's the great grandfather of the sire line. We don't focus on that upfront, we focus on that after the fact just to make sure that we're not too close.

MODERATOR: So once you've made your decision you say, "Let me go back and look at this to make sure I'm not making some horrific error that I didn't think of at the time."

GARRETT: Correct, correct. An outcross would be going absolutely the opposite direction. Trying to reach outside the box, outside the family and trying to make that magic mating, so to speak.

MODERATOR: So you're bringing in a stallion who's not found anywhere in four, five, six generations maybe?

GARRETT BELL: Correct.

MODERATOR: So on paper, you don't see anyone related to your mare's family?

GARRETT BELL: Correct.

MODERATOR: Dr J, how do you look at that formula at Hanover?

DR J: I don't think we subscribe to either of those theories. We don't take it in to consideration, much like Garrett says.

We don't like to breed closer than 3 x 3, so the sire and the dam are the first generation. We don't go any closer than sharing a common ancestor in the third generation (great grandparents).

We're big believers in niches. We use Crosses of Gold (<http://pathway.ustrotting.com/>) a lot. We believe that some stallions do better with certain broodmare sires. That is something we are believers in. We're also giving stallions back the best blood of their dam is kind of taking off. We've been doing things like breeding mares by Andover Hall to Cantab Hall and vice versa.

The good filly American Jewel goes back to Three Diamonds on both sides, so we don't look at a mare and book her strictly based on her pedigree and who her ancestors are. We make the cross and look at it and we do rely heavily on niches – Andover Hall with Donerail mares and other examples like that.

MODERATOR: I will ask Dr J and then go back to Winbak. You referred to Crosses of Gold, which we will talk about later. That give you real life data – mares that are by the same stallions, have similar bloodlines as your mare, how do they cross with real life stallions who have in some case, 6 – 10 crops racing. You have a lot of data.

But with a mare that doesn't have a whole lot of close relatives that have done well, you're picking the stallion for her for the very first time, maybe it's a stallion that only has a crop or two out – you don't have the luxury of all that data to go about it. How do you pick a mating in those circumstances?

DR J: With younger mares, obviously with older mares we try to give them the blood that's worked for them in the past. Maybe shake it up a little, maybe go to a son. If a mare's had a lot of good Cam's Card Sharks, maybe go to a son of his.

For the younger mares, we do a lot of it based on looks. We really try to envision what breeding this mare to this stallion will look like. Maybe that's me. We do it by committee, and my part of that committee knows the mare's conformation and what they've had. So I really want to try to match them up to get a good looking foal.

So we're not saying you should breed a good looking foal that has no pedigree, but we really a lot of what the mare looks like. We try to spread it around (to other states). If you don't have a strong inkling to what you want to do with your mare, it's important to place her in the right program, perhaps she would do better in a smaller program, if you're going to sell the foal. Then her (foal's pedigree) page will be at least on par with other foals in that area.

MODERATOR: So you are creating a bigger fish in a smaller pond?

DR J: The quality of the mares that get bred in Pennsylvania is good, so if your mare is just mediocre, maybe you don't want to breed her in Pennsylvania. Try places like Indiana, Ohio, where there's less competition. We do that too with some of our mares, some of our older mares, we'll maybe try Indiana or something like that to shake them up a little.

GARRETT BELL - WINBAK: We do a lot of what they do. We are going for looks, but also pedigree. We look at what worked with her dam. We go through her pedigree and we hope to come up with good conformation.

JOE THOMSON – WINBAK: I look at sales results from what stallions brought; a good place to look for what has worked in the past is to go through the sales catalogs. Look at the sales catalogs and look at the results and you will see if the breeder was successful in his selection or if they were any good or not.

At the USTA you have the Stallion Stars (<http://stars.ustrotting.com>) so you can actually go in there and see how different ones perform with different matings. Those things will help you be where you want to be and figure out who to breed to.

What role does conformation of the mare play? I have had questions from our listeners saying their mare is average to small and they are concerned they will produce an average to small baby., Is it important and can you offset the deficiencies of the mare by the stallion? To what extent can you make up for what the mare lacks by your choice of stallion?

GARRETT BELL – WINBAK: We do try to do that. It is hit or miss because it's nature. We do try that – we try to take a really nicely conformed stallion and match them up with maybe one of our lesser conformed mares. On size – we definitely try to do that with ours. I'd say it works out at least 50% if not more. But sometimes it goes completely the other way – you may have a perfectly conformed mare and a perfectly conformed stallion and all of sudden you've got a mess on your hands. There is no science there, I don't think.

JOE THOMSON – WINBAK: The percentages can work in your favor. You don't want to breed a horse with a lousy front end to mare with a lousy front end. You try to clean up the front end as

best you can and find out where the faults of your mare are and try to find stallions that are good to really good in that part of conformation.

QUESTION: HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET PEOPLE THAT ARE SHOPPING FOR A STALLION ACTUALLY COME TO THE FARM AND SAY I WANT TO SEE HOW HE MOVES, I WANT TO SEE HOW DEEP HIS CHEST, MY MARE'S REALLY NARROW IN THE FRON. DO YOU GET MANY OF THOSE SHOPPERS AND ARE YOU OPEN TO THAT?

GARRETT BELL – WINBAK: Here at Winbak, we're open to that. If they want to come see any of our horses any time they want, especially stallions. We have show days every year for each location. People can come out and see the stallions. We try to do it in April or May so we can bring out actual foals by that stallion. It's been successful for us in the past. We do get a lot of phone calls asking about the stallions and we invite them out to come look.

DR J: I think with size, you can help. You certainly don't want to breed a small, fine mare to a small, fine stallion. It's easier to bump a mare up in size or maybe downsize her a little. With conformation, there are some flaws I've found that are very hard to breed out.

But certainly if you can help it, you don't want to breed a mare that toes out to a stallion that toes out himself. But what is more important, once a mare and stallion start having offspring it's really important what the offspring look like. You have some stallions that you just know what kind of traits they pass. If a mare tends to do the same things with her babies or does it herself, if she is a young mare, you want to avoid that.

It's really not scientific. You can't breed a sickle hocked mare to a stallion that's a little straight behind and come out with a perfect curvature to the hock. It does not work that way. You can try it, but you certainly don't want to breed two horses with the same flaw or horses that throw the same flaw unless you have a very compelling reason to do that.

MODERATOR: It's also very hard to get your mare accepted to the best stallion or even the right stallion. When you are reviewing applications from various mares, what are you looking for? What are the factors?

JOE THOMSON/WINBAK: What you try to do is get the best performing athlete you can possibly breed. If you can afford it, you want to go the best stallions, but that can be hard and why it's hard is there is a limit on the number of mares that can be booked and a stallion that has a strong syndicate will have very few (public) breedings available. When you have a manager for a stallion you have to be more selective about the horses that are in there.

MODERATOR: THOSE APPLICATIONS DON'T COME WITH PHOTOS OF THOSE MARES. MAYBE IT'S A MARE JUST OFF THE TRACK OR UNRACED, HOW MUCH DO YOU LOOK AT THOSE FACTORS OR EVER ASK TO SEE PHOTOS OF THE MARE?

JOE THOMSON: I don't think we've asked for pictures but basically what we are looking at is the Performance as a race horse or her production and the third thing to look at is, is she in foal or maybe been barren for two or three years?

If we only have a short list of mares we can accept, then we want to have the best shot we can at getting those mares in foal, whether they're our mares or someone else's mares, you want to have live foals.

GARRETT BELL: It would be performance on their pedigree page. That would be the major factor for most people.

MODERATOR; DO YOU NEED TO SEE A STRONG PEDIGREE FROM AN UNRACED MARE'S FAMILY?

GARRETT BELL: They would need much more performance from their siblings.

MODERATOR: SO IF YOU HAVE AN UNRACED MARE, YOU NEED TO SEE A POWER PACKED FAMILY?

GARRETT BELL: Yes, hopefully getting in to some of the syndicated stallions, absolutely.

MODERATOR: DR J COULD YOU SPEAK TO THAT PROCESS AS WELL? WHEN HANOVER GETS A VAST NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR THEIR STALLIONS, WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DO YOU LOOK AT AS BEING VERY IMPORTANT BEFORE YOU CHECK OFF THE YES BOX?

DR J: Absolutely pedigree and performance and we look at the customer – has this been a loyal customer of ours? Have they supported our stallions? Have they supported our industry?

But you're talking about a few stallions that will fill up and are strongly syndicated and you only have a handful of breedings. The other horses, there is strength in numbers for them, especially starting out. It has been shown that it is very hard to overcome a low number of mares bred to them. They need to have foals out there in order to have a few of them click and then they'll get the better mares and then their books will fill.

For the less popular stallions, unless there is a really glaring reason not to take a particular mare...

MODERATOR: WHAT WOULD BE A GLARING REASON?

DR JABLONSKY: She's 15 years old and being bred for the first time, her grandmother is 50...

MODERATOR: She's about to have a June foal...

DR J: A bad reason, a reason we feel she should not be bred. We will loosen a little and accept mares if they have something going for them. If their pedigree is not good but she's got a mark of 1:54, she cranked out \$100,000 the hard way, we'll take her. Or vice versa, if she's unraced but there's some production up close, we'll take her.

Like I said before, you never really know where the next good horse is going to come from. Certainly your odds increase when you breed the best to the best and you hope for the best. That's kind of the motto of commercial breeding farms and breeders everywhere. I would rather add 10 or 15 questionable mares to a stallion's book and give him an adequate chance to make it.

MODERATOR: I'LL DIVERT FROM OUR AGENDA FOR ONE MOMENT AND ASK THE FOLKS AT WINBAK AND THEN DR J AS WELL TO GIVE US A LITTLE HOPE IN HITTING A BALL OUT OF THE PARK. GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF MARES YOU DIDN'T THINK MUCH OF BRED TO A STALLION THAT YOU DIDN'T PUT A WHOLE LOT OF THOUGHT IN TO AND EVERYTHING WENT RIGHT. WHEN YOU LOOK BACK AT THAT PEDIGREE PAGE, DID YOU SEE WHAT YOU DID RIGHT – SOMETHING THAT JUMPED OFF THE PAGE IN RETROSPECT?

JOE THOMSON – WINBAK: We had a couple situations that turned out really good for us. Miss Garland was the dam of Vivid Photo. I think he won about \$3 million, won the Hambletonian. When we bred her was when we started accumulating some mares because she was a Garland Lobell and the owner (Thomson) loves Garland Lobell mares, so we bought her, bred her and it turned out to be Vivid Photo, who was a \$30,000 yearling. We thought that was a decent price; Roger Hammer bought him and made a fame and fortune with him.

MODERATOR: JOE, WHEN YOU WENT BACK AND LOOKED AT THAT MATING AND SAID, "HOW DID THAT HAPPEN, CAN WE DO THAT AGAIN?" WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT JUMPED OUT AT YOU?

JOE THOMSON: I don't think so, there was just a good cross and there are so many things that have to go really right for a horse to do well. When you get back to - we all try to get Back to the 3 x 3s. We bred a horse by the name of Rainbow Blue that turned out to be a 2 x 3 cross to On The Road Again. Darned if she didn't go on to be one of the best pacing fillies of all time.

We actually didn't get a lot of money for her because we were a little afraid someone was going to call us in on the 2 x 3 breeding. (She was a \$10,500 yearling).

Her dam was by On The Road Again and her sire was a son of On The Road Again. There was a period maybe 10 years ago when a lot of people were doing that kind of breeding and we think it's too close, but it just got through all our checks and rechecks and went on to be very good for us. Another mare we had, was Sanabelle Hanover who had filly by the name of Sanabelle Island, we thought she was a nice filly but she was a little turned out in one of her knees.

She was the first millionaire we ever had, she won \$1.7 and the person who bought her paid, I think \$6,000 for her because of that turn out. You would think to yourself that you should get rid of the mare if that's all you can sell a foal for, but as it turned out she ended up being one of our better mares.

MODERATOR: YOU MENTIONED THE RAINBOW BLUE CROSS WAS TOO CLOSE – THAT WAS A GOOD THING THAT HAPPENED WITH A 2 X 3 CROSS, WHAT DO YOU FEAR WHEN YOU HAVE A HORSE THAT IS TOO CLOSE?

GARRETT BELL: Like Dr J said, you fear you'll pick up all the bad traits of the family. If it's small got a bad attitude, hard to get along with, those are things you don't want to breed on. You want to get rid of that and hope that with a heartier horse, one that might not be so refined, would not have the faults of that family.

Dr J: Forgive me if I keep using the same example, but she's hard to ignore. I keep thinking of Rich N Elegant – a perfect example. She's the dam of Rock N Roll Hanover, Red River Hanover, Rustler Hanover. She was \$12,000. I believe she was racing in a \$14,000 claimer when they bought her. You look at the family, it can be called solid, but it's not flashy and it's old.

She was bred to Western Hanover in his first crop. He's a horse whose starting stud fee was \$4,000 and basically bred a very, very weak group of mares. He was not well supported; people thought he was too small. We bred those two horses and when you buy a mare like Rich N Elegant, you hope you can get out on her. You dream of the home run but more often than not, it can't happen.

It made those two horses whose future was not exactly feeling like you were breeding the next world champion and you get Rustler Hanover, which was her first foal. She followed it up with several other top horses, so it can happen. That goes back to what I said about why we try to breed as many mares to our stallions as we can to the ones who are struggling to fill their books.

Western Hanover did all that in his first crop with a very poor group of mares, but he overcame that. It was on him having enough foals out there and people were saying, "Boy these mares are below average, this stallion can really step it up," and that is exactly what he did. He had been syndicated at \$3 million. When he died, shares were being sold to him at the rate of \$11 million.

This yearling hasn't raced yet, so it remains to be seen if he will be good, but we sold him last year out of a mare that we had to keep because we brought her to prep her and she was lame, We did not sell her, she had a navicular cyst. This is a mare we wound up with, we had no intention of breeding her, she was consigned to a yearling sale.

We couldn't sell, she's by Tom Ridge, out of a good family but Tom Ridge hasn't exactly lit the world on fire as a stallion. We bred her to Crazyed and I thought the sales results for him were disappointing because his yearlings, I thought, were good looking and he was a good horse, a son of Credit Winner, he stands in New York.

But basically you bred a mare we were forced to breed to stallion whose foals did not sell well. We got a beautiful colt that we sold for \$120,000. Crazy things like that happen. It remains to be seen if the colt will be good. It shows that high priced yearlings come out of matings you least expect.

MODERATOR: IF YOU GIVE A MARE EVERY OPPORTUNITY, BREED HER TO A VARIETY OF STALLIONS AND YOU'RE RAISING HER PROGENY THE BEST WAY YOU KNOW HOW. THEY'RE TRAINED BY GOOD TRAINERS AND THERE STILL DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING THAT IS EVEN ABOVE AVERAGE - WHAT GOES INTO YOUR DECISION TO NO LONGER KEEP THAT MARE IN THE GENE POOL OR AT LEAST THE WINBAK GENE POOL?

GARRETT BELL/WINBAK: The first thing we'd look at is sales price – how do they sell? Another thing would be her age – how old is she? How long has she been breeding? A lot of people don't want to buy the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> foal out of a mare.

MODERATOR: WHY IS THAT? IS THERE A REASON FOR THAT?

GARRETT BELL/WINBAK: No, I don't think so. People just think she's an old mare and past her prime. Then another factor is how difficult is she to breed? Has she been getting in foal every year? Has she been barren every other year? Do we have to do embryo transfer? We use those factors, but sales price and physical condition are key.

MODERATOR: DR J CAN YOU SPEAK TO THAT?

The two main things are commercial appeal and her health, her ability to carry a foal. If the mare has lost her commercial appeal and has been given every chance and there is no reason to see any light at the end of the tunnel, we don't have glowing training reports on her two-year-old and she is below a certain age, we sell that mare. Once they get to a certain age and we

feel like it's not worth the investment any more, to pay the stud fee and raise the foals, we retire her.

MODERATOR: I HAVE A QUESTION FROM A PARTICIPANT THAT WONDERS IF YOU HAVE A MARE THAT HAS WORKED HERSELF IN TO HAVING A LATE FOAL, MAYBE JUNE, IS IT BETTER TO GIVE HER A YEAR OFF AND TRY THE NEXT YEAR ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OF FEBRUARY OR TAKE A SHOT AND RISK GETTING A FOAL BORN IN JUNE?

DR. JABLONSKY: Certainly there are a lot of people who, once a due date starts getting be May, they do skip a year and start early the next year. I see plenty of mares booked to our stallions that have had that happen. We don't.

Our feeling is it's better to get a foal every year rather than not. We very rarely intentionally give a mare off unless she needs the year off for health reasons. If you're selling, I have heard comments that people really don't like late May or June foals, though there have been good horses born then. Our two most popular stallions are both May foals. If you're selling and you don't mind feeding that mare for a year when she's not pregnant, it may behoove you to not have a June foal and keep her over and start again in February.

GARRETT BELL: We look at it the same way and sometimes if it's late in the season we might try to embryo transfer the mare. That way we get a foal for the next year but we can also start the mare fresh at the start of the season. We'll do it for the middle line mare all the way up.

QUESTION: I am looking to breed to race and I am either looking for a broodmare or a horse currently racing. How long should the layoff time be for going from the track to being a broodmare?

DR JABLONSKY: Our maiden mares off the track start under lights on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December so they're cycling by the time breeding season starts. That's ideal, but we've had mares that got hurt in a race, ship them here the next day, breed them the next day and they're in foal and they carry it.

I don't think it's a hard and fast rule; a lot of it depends on the condition of the mare, what therapies she had to race. It is a case by case decision, but there have been plenty of examples of mares that get here and are in foal immediately and have no issues. Ideally you would like to be off a couple months, get them under lights, put some weight on them. But it's not a deal breaker if you can't do that.

GARRETT BELL: It's case by case, all depends on the mare. They've come off the track and we've actually bred them and send them back to race. It's the mare, depends on the mare. Her physical condition, if she's sound, she's racing well, she's very healthy, then we'll breed her and send her back to the track.

QUESTION: I have a mare who has had six colts in a row, all by different stallions. Does that come from the mare or the stallion?

DR JABLONSKY: The stallion determines sex. There are theories in horses and humans about how to get one gender over another. X chromosomes produce a filly; people say they are heartier, so if you breed a mare before she ovulates, a further window from her ovulation, you

are more likely to get a filly because more of the X sperm will be alive. But I think with the number of sperm we're dealing with, that is pretty shaky in my opinion.

Stallion determines the sex of the foal and if you want a filly I really think you are just having bad luck and I think it depends on the stallion you breed to. Now, if you wanted a filly and she was owned by Hanover Shoe Farms a sure bet would be to breed her to Cam's Card Shark because that's all we get from him. Laughter.

QUESTION: Can you breed heart in to a horse as a trait? A willingness to win?

GARRETT BELL: That's a tough one. I don't know how to answer that.

JOE THOMSON: The bigger the heart, the more blood pumps through the body and the better the horse is, but it is impossible to know what you've got. The Thoroughbreds are big in to measuring heart size through ultrasound.

MODERATOR: You're talking literally the size of the heart?

QUESTIONER: I'm talking the willingness to win; some horses just want to try.

DR JABLONSKY: Some stallions do that better than others. Commercial stallions are commercial because they did something right and they must have heart. You can talk to the person who trained them and find out more about their attitude.

A horse here that I think can give you a hard trying horse, especially when they're older is Dragon Again. I think they are hard triers and he was, too. He was not a very sound horse but put in some of the gamest miles I've seen against Western Ideal, he just refused to be beaten. And if he was beat, it was by a slim margin. I hear his colts, once they've been gelded and get a little age on them, they want to win.

QUESTION: You said that if you breed 2 x 3, too close, you're likely to get all the bad traits, why wouldn't you also get the good traits?

GARRETT BELL: It's possible you could, but I don't think the odds are there for you. You are just too close, I think. You are breeding too close in the family.

QUESTION: In your minds, in breeding certain characteristics, what comes from the sire and what comes from the mare? What do they pass on?

JOE THOMSON: It's like shuffling a deck of cards; you don't know what you're going to get, from either side of it.

QUESTION: The sire's not more dominant to bring conformation and the mare doesn't bring heart, something like that?

DR JABLONSKY: I don't think so. I don't think you can match them up like that.

MODERATOR: Is it a crapshoot?

DR JABLONSKY: It is, kind of. If a mare and a stallion both have the same good characteristic, chances are you will get that characteristic. But if we breed one that has it and one that doesn't, I don't think it matters which has it or not. I think you are 50/50 to get it.

QUESTION: There's nothing like gait being dominant and coming from one parent over another?

DR JABLONSKY: I don't think so. Certainly if you have a mare that's not good gaited, you want to breed her to a stallion that is good gaited but I don't think it comes from one or another. It can come from either or both and in a rare case, neither.

QUESTION THAT WAS EMAILED AFTER THE SEMINAR REGARDING ADVISABILITY OF JANUARY FOALS IN NORTHERN CLIMATES:

DR JABLONSKY: It is definitely my preference to not have January/February foals because of our climate. However, due to the large number of foals we expect and mares we breed each year, we have to use all months available to us. I'm not sure where you live, but if it is a similar climate to ours I would avoid January/early February foals.

if you have a particularly harsh winter and are not able to get the mare and foal out you can wind up with problems such as limb deformities in the foal and impaction colic in the mare to name a few. Your point about not knowing the fertility of your mare is a good one, however, I don't think missing her first 2 heat cycles of the year will make a difference. If she is fertile, she will catch right away and if she is so difficult that you don't get her in foal all season, it is unlikely she would have gotten in foal with an extra try or two.

In fact, some maiden, barren mares won't even start to cycle until March or so without intervention (besides lights). If she were mine I would have March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup> as your anticipated start of breeding and hope she cooperates.

QUESTION REGARDING MARES THAT APPEAR TO BE READY TO BREED BUT YET DO NOT GET IN FOAL:

DR JABLONSKY: In all honesty, you need to have a competent reproductive vet check the mares to determine readiness to breed and use ovulation inducing drugs to ensure that they ovulate in a timely fashion after being inseminated.

Your mares ARE cycling; you just aren't breeding them at the proper time. Many mares cycle without showing their readiness to a stallion – about half of our mares never show to a teaser. Response to lutalyse is too variable to use to time breeding and days post foaling is also (with the possible exception of foal heat breeding which can be slightly variable).

I would recommend you invest in having a vet come out to palpate/ultrasound your mares to determine when to breed them. The money you will spend will be more than made up for with less money spent on shipping semen and with getting the mares in foal.

QUESTION: # 1. We have a 13 year old mare under lights since mid-November and wondering at what point to start checking her. And would you let her cycle once and then breed or try to breed her right off? We're in southern Michigan and are running into some warm spells and wondering if you would remove their blankets during this time and then put them back on or just leave them on? And for the barren mare under lights, would removing the blanket and putting it back on affect her cycling at all? Any help you could provide would be greatly appreciated and thanks so much for your insights yesterday!

#2? If you had a mare that has a 2011 two year old making over 300K how many times would you breed her back to the same stallion? (Breeding to sell).

DR JABLONSKY: I assume that your 13 yo mare has had foals before – if she has and you know her gestation period isn't particularly short, there is no harm in breeding her early unless you don't want a January or early February foal.

If her gestation is short you may not want to breed her February 13<sup>th</sup> and run the risk of her foaling before January 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are asking about success of breeding on the first heat cycle, that depends. Often, with mares that don't cycle all year (some do), the first heat cycle is long as they make several follicles that grow and regress and grow and regress and they never ovulate.

These mares are called transitional and it can get quite expensive to keep checking them without breeding them or getting fooled into breeding them on this cycle when it won't result in ovulation and then pregnancy. We have one mare that has been showing to the teaser since January 3<sup>rd</sup>. I haven't checked her but this is what she is doing.

If your mare is not being teased or doesn't show to a teaser it may be helpful to check her a few times before breeding season to establish that she has had a few heat cycles before you actually want to breed her. You can also get a uterine culture done on her before breeding her when she is in heat if you check her before. If you can tease her and she shows you can, of course, monitor her heat cycles this way.

Mares cycle during the winter months in response to increased length of light (that is why we put them under lights) it has nothing to do with temperature, blankets will have no effect on whether or not they cycle. We don't blanket any of our breeding stock (stallions included who are out 24/7). You can make your decision to have blankets on or off them based on temperature and how comfortable they are. I am an advocate of letting horses grow hair and keep warm that way vs. blanketing them in the winter but if you like blankets you can put them on and take them off without considering their heat cycles.

The second question is tough. A 300k winning 2yo is big. If it's a filly you would definitely want to breed her back there until you got a colt. If it's a colt, but the first by that sire I wouldn't advise against going back a few times if he was a commercially accepted sire.

However, if this 2yo is the best he had and he's a mediocre stallion otherwise you would make more money by stepping her up with a better stallion or a hot young one. If this 2yo is known locally but not nationally, you probably want to keep her in the same program. People will think, "Look what she can do with average stallion "A". What will she do with hot stallion "B"?"

And what I mean by same program is let's say this 2yo made \$300,000 in Indiana but may not be well known outside Indiana. You will probably do just as well with the best stallion in Indiana then let's say Somebeachsomewhere or Andover Hall (you didn't say if she was a trotter or pacer).

QUESTION ABOUT FEEDING PROGRAMS FOR MARES AND FOALS:

DR J: We use Purina, we have a complete pellet formulated for us for our mares and foals that takes into account our hay and grass and "completes" the necessary minerals etc. We use 12 percent protein when the grass is good and 14 percent when it's poor.

Once the foals are weaned they are fed Horseman's Edge which is a 14 percent Purina Pellet. The weanlings/ yearlings have extremely good quality hay available to them especially important when the grass is dormant.

The mares get a good quality timothy mix. Our horses are on at least 2 acres each and most of our fields have extremely good grass. Exercise and good grass are crucial. All horses have access to free choice salt and trace minerals. It's not overly complicated but it seems to work for us.

MODERATOR: For the breeder who wants to take advantage of what history has shown us, there is a vast store of data on the USTA web site. David Carr, the USTA's manager of information and research, has prepared the information that follows to give small breeders an idea of what is out there to help guide their stallion selection decisions.

DAVID CARR: The USTA offers four online products that we hope will be useful tools to assist you in your breeding decisions. You can access each of these by starting at the USTA's website, [www.ustrotting.com](http://www.ustrotting.com). The four products we will be talking about today are STARS, Sire Statistics, Pathway, and Crosses of Gold. Some of these products may be very familiar to you; others you may be encountering for the first time. Although a couple of the products do carry charges for using them, the other two are free. We will start with the free products, and fortunately, one of them, STARS, contains some reports from Pathway and Crosses of Gold, so you can become more familiar with both of those products without incurring any fees. In particular, I would encourage you to explore thoroughly.

So, let's start with STARS, which is also known as the Stallion Showcase. Just below the green banner at the top of the USTA's home page is a black banner with the names of several different products. From left to right you will see Home, Online Services, Pathway, Race Programs, and Stallion Showcase. Click on Stallion Showcase. You may want to go ahead and add this page to your favorites or bookmarks, since I think you will find this to be a really valuable resource. As I had said, there is no charge to view the reports in STARS, since this product is sponsored by the stallion owners.

Near the top of the page you will see several drop-down lists. On the left is an alphabetical list of all of the stallions within STARS. If you know of a particular stallion you want to research, scroll down, click on his name, then click on the search button.

On the other hand, if you want to find stallions that meet certain criteria, then use the drop down lists to the right. These include state or province, the farm where the stallion is standing, gait, and stud fee. You can select these individually or in combination. For example, if you wanted to know the pacing stallions in New York that stand for a fee of \$5,000 - \$7,500, you select those requirements from the drop down boxes and click the Search button, with a list of 6 stallions being returned as the result.

Let's take a closer look at one of these, Artiscap. On the first page we find at the top a photo, a link to directory-style pedigree, stud fee, and contact information. Below this is racing information, including a summary by year and stakes placings. Breeders want to know more

than just a horse's record and earnings, and many place great importance on how he did as a two-year-old, so you can see that here. Then, at the bottom of the page, we have a summary of the stallion's prior breeding activity, if any, and a three generation pedigree chart.

That is just the first page of a STARS report on a stallion, but there is much more. Let's return to the top of the page, where you will see several navigational links. We are currently on the Stallion link; next to it are Sire of the Stallion, Dam of the Stallion, Crosses of Gold, Yearling Sales Results, Hypothetical matings, then on the next line Top Performers for the current and prior years and all-time. We'll look at these one at a time, starting with Sire of the Stallion. This shows a breeding summary for Artiscape's sire Artsplace and a listing of his leading money-winning foals.

Moving on to the Dam of the Stallion page, we see the full production of the first two dams, Delinquent Account and Al Dente. We give lots of attention to sirelines, such as the sons of Western Hanover, Cam Fella, and Artsplace, but the dam side can also be an important consideration in selecting a stallion. On this report of the dams, you are able to see not only records and earnings on foals, but if they also are producers themselves.

The next report is Crosses of Gold. This is just a small portion of what exists in the full product, which we will explore later, but it gives you an idea of the format of the report. There are numbers, and in most cases percentages or averages, for Foals of Racing Age, Starters, Winners, 2YO Winners, 2:00 and 1:55 winners, \$50K and \$100k winners, average and median earnings, and the leading money-winning foal. If a particular broodmare sire's daughters have produced at least 5 foals of racing age by our selected stallion, then the statistics for that sire/broodmare sire cross appear. In our example of Artiscape, 43 broodmare sires are included, plus a summary for all broodmare sires that have crossed with him. This is a really useful tool to compare how well different broodmare sires cross with a sire, and you choose which categories are the most relevant to you. The Sire/Broodmare Sire cross tables are especially valuable to stallion owners and yearling buyers for their decision making. As broodmare owners, you will probably find its companion, the Broodmare Sire/Sire cross product even more pertinent, but this is available only through the paid product Crosses of Gold. More on that later.

Staying within STARS, we move next to Yearling Sales Results. The program has defaulted to the current year, so you will want to select 2011. You can see a summary by sex of the yearlings that sold at auction, then a list of them in descending order of price. You are able to view the detail results for the last couple of years and summaries back to 2007.

Next in STARS is Hypothetical Matings, where you can see four generation pedigrees of the stallion and any mare you enter in the box. The report has a color-coded display of common ancestors, to give you an idea if the resulting foal would be too closely inbred, or at the other extreme an outcross.

The final reports for STARS are listing of the leading money winning and fastest record performers by age for the current year, the prior year and all time.

If we return to the home page of STARS, by clicking on Stallion Showcase in the header, you will also see lists of the leading money winning sires for the year by gait. There is a link at the bottom to Sire Statistics, which you can click. As an alternative, you can go to Sire Statistics by

clicking on racing (Entries and Results) near the top of the page, and selecting Sire Statistics midway in that dropdown list.

There is plenty of useful and interesting data in Sire Statistics. Since we are so early in 2012, you may want to look at last year's data, by clicking on the link that says Past Year Stats (2011). Here you will be able to see the top 20 sires by total and average earnings by age and gait. The product also contains a list of all record two-year-olds for the year, grouped by gait and sire. For example, if you wanted to see all of Andover Hall's two-year-old record performers in 2011 select Trotters and click on the A-H link. His 33 winners, with their earnings and dams, appear there.

Now we are going to turn to Pathway, the USTA's principal online information service. You can enter it from the USTA's home page by selecting Pathway, a couple of positions to the left from Stallion Showcase in the black header. There are fees associated with most Pathway reports, so if you don't have an account, you will want to create one. The Pathway home page has links for creating your own account, or you can have the USTA staff assist you by e-mailing [pathway@ustrotting.com](mailto:pathway@ustrotting.com) or calling the Information & Research department during business hours.

Pathway is grouped into three broad subject areas; horses, people, and tracks. For our purposes today, we will be sticking with some of the Horse reports. If you click on Horse Reports at the top of the screen, you will see that there are three grouping; Basic, Performance, and Breeding. We will be concentrating on the Breeding reports.

Each of these Pathway Reports is about a single sire, dam, or broodmare sire. You would select the type of report you want to see and the name of the horse whose information you need. For example, if you selected the Sire Breeding Report for Western Ideal, then you would see a wide assortment of information. The Activity Summary at the top shows by crop the numbers of mares bred, registered foals, yearlings sold, horses starting in races and winners in 2:00 and 1:55, and total earnings. You will note that the counts of mares bred, registered foals, and yearlings sold are links; by clicking on a link you can see all of the horses associated with that activity.

Using the Activity Summary and the detail in the links, you can explore these concerns:

Does the stallion have fertility problems? By comparing the numbers of registered foals and mares bred, you could spot low rates, which could be, but aren't necessarily, an indication of less than ideal fertility.

Who is breeding to this stallion? By clicking on the mares bred link for the most recent year, you can see if major breeders are supporting this stallion.

There is a link next to the list of Top Foals which will take you to the Foal Listing for Sire Report, or you can select this report from the Main Horse Menu. This report shows all registered foals, which you can sort in several different ways. That is a lot of information; Western Ideal, for instance, has nearly 900 foals, but if you have narrowed your choice to 2 or 3 stallions, this detail could be really useful.

The next two reports in the Breeding section of the Horse Reports are among the least used, but for broodmare owners, perhaps the most important reports in Pathway. These are the

Broodmare Sire Breeding Report and the Foal Listing for Broodmare Sire. You already have a mare and you know who her sire is. The Broodmare Sire Breeding Report will show you the number of foals produced by the daughters of this broodmare sire, to give you an idea if there is enough information to research.

By selecting the Foal Listing for Broodmare Sire, you are able to see what other daughters of your mare's sire have produced, with several useful ways of sorting and organizing the data. For example, if you chose this report for Artiscape, you would see that his daughters have produced four foals by Western Ideal with earnings greater than \$250,000. That is four of the top seven from daughters of Artiscape, including the top two, each of whom earned more than \$800,000.

The remaining breeding reports in Pathway include two showing the complete production of individual broodmares, and a Hypothetical Mating report. This last report is identical to the one you saw in STARS, but is not limited to stallions appearing there.

The final online tool that you may want to consider using is the pay version of Crosses of Gold. A full year's subscription price is \$34.95 for USTA members. This will give you access to hundreds of Sire/Broodmare Sire cross reports like we saw in STARS. The other component in Crosses of Gold is the Broodmare Sire/Sire report and there are hundreds of these reports as well. This report, if there are enough foals to be statistically meaningful, could be the most important product we offer to you.

In both categories there are dropdown lists sorted by gait, with the pacers first. You would select the sire of your mare. The resulting report displays the categories I mentioned earlier, including percentages and averages. This allows for a more balanced comparison among sires that have crossed with this broodmare sire. It neatly summarizes the most important criteria of racing success.

We invite you to contact me or others at the USTA if you have questions about any of this or need additional information.

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