

QUARTER HORSE

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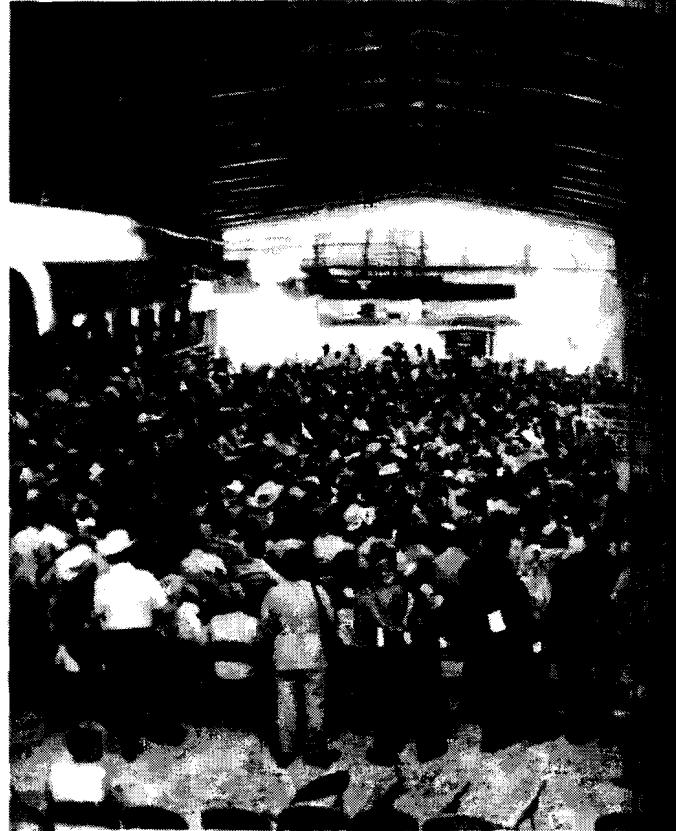
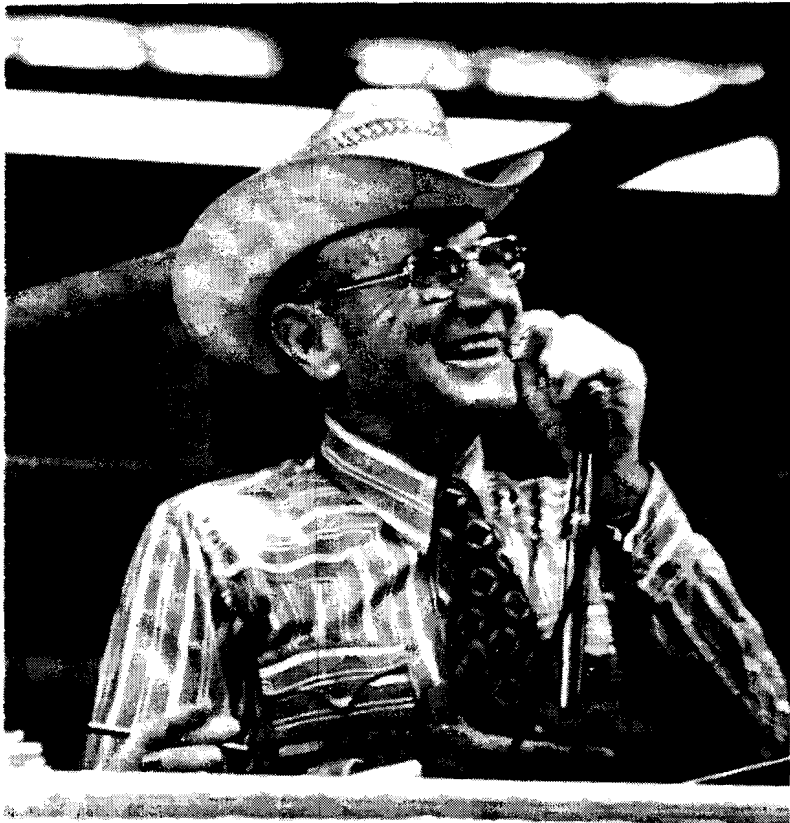


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BREED 'EM, FEED 'EM AND SELL 'EM

Guy Ray Rutland is unique in the Quarter Horse business. He breeds his own, raises his own and sells his own. And he stays mighty busy doing it.

by JERRY McADAMS

It was almost dark when Guy Ray Rutland started past the first row of stalls. Walking briskly down the long aisles, he quickly surveys each horse, occasionally making notes on a small blue card.

"I just have to make my rounds right quick," Rutland says, as he moves through the sprawling barn. As usual, he has been up since 6 a.m., skipping breakfast and getting down to horse business in the big barn.

A rancher and trader all his life, for the past 15 years Guy Ray Rutland has made his living with Quarter Horses. His 300-acre ranch at Independence, Kansas, accommo-

dates 200 of his own broodmares, his own stallions and his own production sale. That annual sale is one of the biggest of its kind in the country and preparation for it keeps Rutland even busier than usual.

Continuing his rounds, Guy Ray checks each of the 125 weanlings and yearlings that will pass through the auction ring the next day.

Along the way, he chats with visitors in the barn. They have come to look over the sale stock and most of them have been here before.

One of the past customers proudly displays a trophy belt buckle his

daughter won with one of Rutland's horses. Guy Ray is genuinely proud.

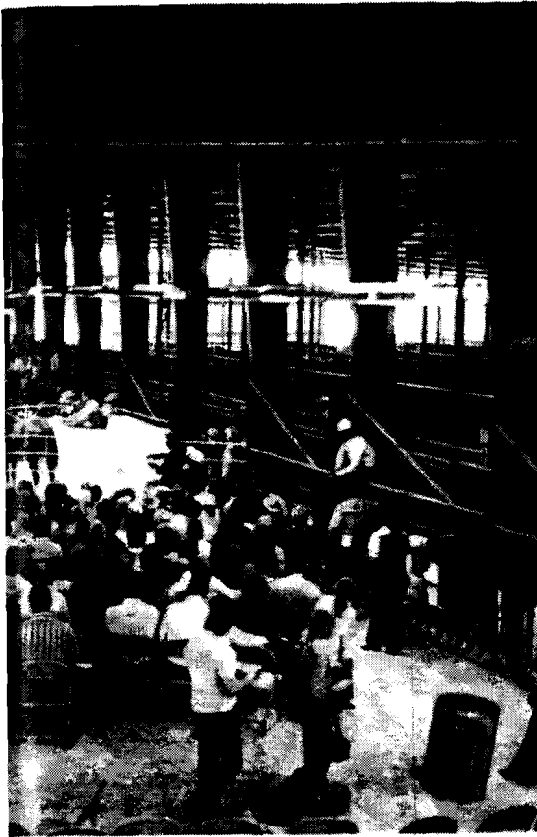
Every few minutes the phone rings and Guy Ray runs to the nearest extension, trying to be the first to answer the call himself.

There are 148 stalls in the warehouse-size barn. Each stall is made of concrete blocks and steel pipe. Between the stall rows is an open area big enough to stage a small rodeo. And the whole thing is enclosed in a steel structure that measures 252 feet by 320 feet.

The barn serves a variety of functions. At sale time, the stalls are neatly numbered and the current colt crop is brought in for display.

A few weeks earlier, small groups of the weanlings had been isolated in stalls and halter broke. For the most part, that is the only special treatment they receive for the sale. Rutland's colts aren't decorated when they enter the sale ring, but they are all strong and healthy.

"I just brought them in out of the pasture," Guy Ray says, reaching into one stall to straighten some hay into place. "I try to creep feed my colts and we feed the old mares and colts out in the pasture.



Congenial Guy Ray Rutland is as much a part of his sale as the horses themselves. Rutland is also an acknowledged horseman. His success is evidenced by his breeding records and the incredible barn around which all activities at the ranch are centered. Photos by Jerry McAdams

ing in someone else's mares. I'd rather something happen to one of my own mares than to one of my customers."

Most of Rutland's customers during the breeding season bring mares to resident stallions Pacific Bailey AAAT and Jet Stop. But Guy Ray is also standing Bar Money this year and Carrara Marble (TB), a 30-year-old wonder Rutland says is "still going strong."

Rutland was born and raised on a cattle ranch at Okemah, Oklahoma and moved to Independence in 1950 when he and his wife Mildred bought the ranch. They still live in the original farmhouse, although several expansions have been made to it.

As one might imagine, Mildred Rutland doesn't always see a lot of her husband during the day. "He doesn't leave things to the other fellas," she says. "He likes to be in on everything. Overseeing everything. He's up early every morning and during the breeding season, he'll be up till after midnight cleaning things up in the barn."

As the production sale approaches, even the sale catalog is written by Guy Ray personally, with casual little comments included for each horse. "And you don't change a word of the catalog after he writes it," muses Mrs. Rutland. "He likes those individual remarks."

The least busy days for the Rutlands come between the October sale and the breeding season work which begins in January. "Guy Ray doesn't really have any hobbies. He doesn't fish or hunt or play golf. And we don't go to ball games," says Mrs. Rutland. "To relax, he'll usually just go and look at other horses."

When sale day arrives, things are calm. The preparations have been thorough and the crowd is another large one.

As the auction begins, Guy Ray is seated alongside the auctioneer for his now famous running commentary on each horse. His testimony is frequent, but sincere and the audience enjoys it.

The Rutland production sale has been an annual event since 1967 and it has been growing every year. Auctioneer Dean Parker has officiated at all but one of the Rutland sales. He says the event, like Rutland himself, is unusual.

"It's totally unique," Parker states. "There's not another sale like it anywhere in the world. Selling a total production of weanling colts. Here's a man who has made himself the leading breeder in the world and he is willing to put all these colts on the auction block.

"Nobody else is willing to do it. Sell this quality of colts as babies. And the fact that he sells them is what makes it successful," Parker concludes. "Buyers come here knowing they can buy the horses."

At age 58, Guy Ray's success is a matter of record. In 1974 he was the leading breeder of Register of Merit qualifiers. But his accomplishments have not come about by accident.

"I believe a man has to have goals. I guess if it wasn't for goals, a fella wouldn't do anything.

"My first goal was to be the leading breeder of winners. And we accomplished that. Then my goal was to be the leading breeder of ROM qualifiers. And we accomplished that. Now I want to breed the winner of the All American." Reflecting on that statement a moment, Rutland smiles and adds "Of course it would be better to be the owner of the All American winner, naturally."

That's not an impossibility either for Guy Ray. He and his son Cliff run several two-year-olds each year at local Kansas and Oklahoma tracks. And if one shows enough potential, Guy Ray promises he'll get a chance at the All American.

"After he's three months old, a colt needs more than a mare's milk. I know these colts have fattened on my feed since I weaned them," Rutland continues, referring to a special grain formula he developed and is now marketing commercially.

During the breeding season, the big barn provides light and heat for mares awaiting stud service. "The temperature can't get any colder than 60 or 65 degrees, whatever I set my thermostat on," Guy Ray says. "That really helps keep a mare's cycle regular. If I had to do without my lights or my heat in here, I'd do without lights.

"When I started this barn, I was gonna make it a pole barn. Build some shed rows for mares. But this ol' boy came along and said he had some concrete blocks he'd sell me. So I started planning and designing and just kept expanding. I knew I might as well close it all in for the mares to foal in bad weather. Anyway, prices got right and I figured in due time it would all work out all right.

"I'll tell you why I built this barn," Rutland grins. "It wasn't for myself, it was for my customers. I'm really conscientious about tak-