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Return of the Appaloosa

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THE APPALOOSA is one of the fast growing breeds of horses in America today. Not many years ago a large majority of the people in this country had never seen or heard of the Appaloosa. Now the breed is becoming popular all over the country. It has been rapidly spreading east the past few years. Stockmen and pleasure riders alike have discovered that this even dispositioned, hardy horse is well suited for their needs and is a willing worker. Television, movies, rodeo and horse shows have all aided in promoting this breed.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of the Appaloosa horse is the distinctive and striking color. There are several color patterns, but the one which most people associate with the breed is the horse with a large white “blanket” over the hips and loin with small, dark spots in this area to match the color of the front quarters. There are other color patterns which are just as characteristic of the breed, but not quite as striking. One of these is the white horse with a few black or brown spots over the hips and possibly extending up over the loins. Another pattern is the type which can be described as mottled. This is a solid background with white flecks throughout. The remaining distinct color pattern is the “leopard”. This consists of a white background with small colored spots over the entire body. These spots are most often black or sorrel, or a variation between these. Of course there is a great variation in each color pattern as to size of the blanket, number of spots and location. No two Appaloosas are marked exactly alike.

Along with the color patterns, all Appaloosas show other characteristics which are common to the breed regardless of color markings. These consist of a mottled skin on the muzzle and often over the entire body. The eye is ringed with white and the hooves are vertically striped with light and dark. Quite often they will also show a sparse mane and tail.

As well as these outwardly visible characteristics, there are many others which one can observe only by working with the Appaloosa. They have a very good disposition, are easy to break and are easy to handle in all situations. They

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are sure footed and have a lot of stamina. They are noted for their speed. Many of the ranchers in rough mountain country use Appaloosas because of their sure footedness and stamina which allows them to cover a lot of rough country in a day and still not tire.

The background of the Appaloosa is quite interesting as much as it is known. Previous to their appearance in North America, very little is definitely known. It appears that these horses were present in quite early history, because horses with the color markings peculiar to the Appaloosa have been found on early Chinese and other far eastern art. Some of this art dates back as far as 500 B.C.

How the Appaloosa came to this country is also somewhat of a question. It is believed that they were shipped to Mexico from Europe or the Near East about 1600. From here they gradually spread northward until they came into the hands of the Nez Perce Indians in the early 1700's.

The history of the Appaloosa in this country seems to revolve mainly around the Nez Perce Indians of northwestern United States. This is the only tribe of Indians that had any number of these horses. In a period of about one hundred years they developed a very distinctive type of horse. Through a very selective breeding program they retained only the superior animals for foundation stock. Stamina, soundness, disposition, and speed were just a few of the characteristics which were looked for in the breeding animals. Through this sound breeding program they were able to produce a superior breed of horse. The area of the Palouse River Valley is very fertile land. It is located in western Idaho, the northeast corner of Oregon and the southeast corner of Washington. It was soon recognized by the white man that this would be good land for farming. This started the Indians farming and their saddle type horses were soon traded for draft animals. The change to farming began a period of decline in the Appaloosa. They became widely and thinly scattered over the west and the breed was almost to the point of extinction when the Appaloosa Horse Club was formed in 1938. This club was organized for the purpose of reviving the breed, to collect breeding records and trace the ancestry of the remaining Appaloosas. Since the formation of the Appaloosa Horse Club much has been done to improve the quality of the breed and to set up a desirable type for the breed. Through an annual national show, breeders over the country have been able to compare horses and ideas which help them to decide which horses to save for breeding stock. If the breeders keep rigid standards for their horses, the Appaloosa should remain a horse which is highly prized by its owner, even as it was by the Nez Perce Indians.

No story of the Appaloosa would be complete without giving the origin of its name. The area in the west where the Nez Perce ranged was known as “Palouse Country”. The horses raised by them were first known as “Palouse horses”. This later became “Apalouse”, then “Apalousie” and finally, Appaloosa.

The Effects of Prepartum Administration of Progesterone to the Cow. An experiment involving 186 dairy cows was performed to determine if progesterone administration for approximately one month prior to parturition would affect the expulsion of the fetal membranes, the length of gestation, the subsequent lactation, the body temperature, and other physiological mechanisms of the cows. There were no significant differences between the treated and control groups, as measured by these criteria. The progesterone apparently produced no untoward effects in these animals.


Teaching a dog to be quiet and contented when he is left alone is fundamental in the training of dogs.