

## Special training required for endurance races

By Frank Buchman

Endurance riding is nearly a full-time job for Dennis and Linda Tribby of Madras, Ore.

"I've been competing in these rides for nearly 22 years," said Dennis Tribby, when the Great Santa Fe Trail Endurance Race stopped last Wednesday in Council Grove.

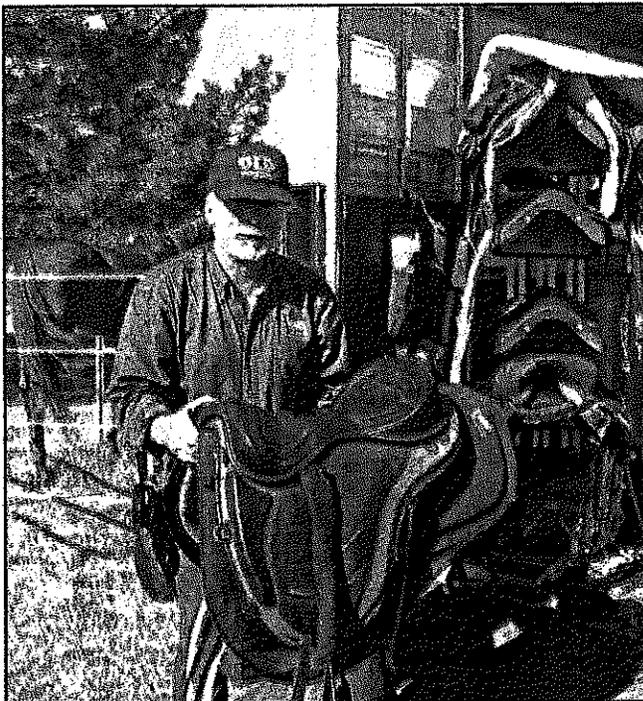
"This is a year-round thing. We don't just load up and come here for a vacation. We condition our horses at least 10 months of the year," stressed Tribby, a former national American Endurance Ride Conference champion.

However, this time, Tribby served as the crew for his wife, Linda, and the three horses they brought for the competition. He participated in the 1,450-mile Pony Express Race several years ago. "I did 1,250 miles on one horse," Tribby added proudly.

His wife participated as an individual and also as a member of a West Coast team of four at last week's race. "Her main goal is to finish the race, although our team was in the lead yesterday," Tribby recognized.

Most of the race is done at a trot with some cantering. "I did do one 30-mile race in less than three hours, but generally we ride at a controlled speed," Tribby pointed out.

An Arabian-Appaloosa cross, another purebred Arabian and an Arabian stallion are included in Mrs. Tribby's riding team. "A lot of



Dennis Tribby of Madras, Ore., shows the seven-pound synthetic centered-riding saddle his wife uses in cross country endurance rides. A former national champion, Tribby explained how endurance horses must be cared for during a stop of the Great Santa Fe Trail Endurance Race.

riders are on stallions. You have to be aware with them, but ours doesn't usually cause any problems. He is a top endurance horse," credited Tribby, who uses the nine-year-old stallion, John Henry, for public service as well.

"A horse needs to be at least five years and in training for at least three years to participate in a 100-mile race," Tribby contended. "We ride our horses 10 to 15 miles, about two hours, at least two or three times a week."

Horses can continue to be

used for endurance riding for many years. "I'd say horses are just getting to their prime at 13, but world champions have been 19 years old. I know of one horse who is 26 years old and continues participating in endurance rides," Tribby recalled. "He has a job, and that's the reason he's still going."

High-energy feed is essential in the endurance horse's diet. "These horses are expending a lot of energy," Tribby acknowledged.

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Quality hay is key to the ration. "We've had a difficult time getting good grass hay on the ride," Tribby said. "Beet pulp makes good feed for endurance horses on the road."

Water is an important item on these rides. "We are using over 50 gallons of water a day for just six horses," Tribby noted. "They have water every five miles on the ride, which is very generous. On the Pony Express Ride, one day we only had water every 25 miles."

Owners have different opinions about hoof care. "I do my own farrier work and also assist some other riders with their horses sometimes," Tribby recognized.

"I use a flat plate on the front and rim shoes on the back. I place a special pad and filler under the shoe.

"Sometimes a set of shoes will last several days, but day two of this ride was on extremely hard surfaces, and I had to reset shoes earlier than usual," Tribby explained. "A horse can usually go 250 to 300 miles on a set of shoes."

Endurance riders also use a variety of tack on their competition horses. "Linda has a seven-pound synthetic centered-riding saddle which suits her quite well," stated Tribby, as he showed how the Velcro construction allowed use of interchangeable seats and other parts of the saddle.

Standard bridles are typically used, but they are often

designed for convenient dropping of bits at checkpoints.

Although Tribby has limited agricultural operations and a total of 18 horses on his 300-acre farm as well as some income away from the farm, emphasis is on producing and conditioning endurance horses for participation in rides throughout the United States.

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