

## Bittersweet Resolution For Nebraska Corn Farmers Turned World-Renowned Quarter Horse Breeders

Perfectionism is demanding.

Dan and Carol McWhirter are perfectionists.

That is the reason they are dispersing their Nebraska farmer turned world-renowned Quarter Horse breeding business.

"We are so particular about our horses that if we don't have the time to do it the way we think is right, we aren't going to be in the breeding business," explained Carol McWhirter emphatically last week at their Doniphan, Nebraska, corn farm now doubling as a horse operation.

It'll be a terribly sad day for the seemingly quite common, humble couple when the final gavel drops on the auction block for the complete dispersal sale of Dan McWhirter Quarter Horses on Saturday, Sept., 18, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Notwithstanding the McWhirters' depressed feelings, it will be a day of good luck for those in the buyers' seats. Others will have the opportunity to take home and uti-

ers, performance class winners and performance halter class winners.

Born, raised and always a true farmer where they are now, Dan McWhirter operates the 1,800-acre irrigated farm that his grandfather moved to in 1889.

"We will continue with the farming operation, but we won't have the horses," Carol explained. "We want to travel, look at and watch some of the horses we've produced and spend winters in the Southwest.

"We'll still be involved in the Quarter Horse business, just not with our own mare production operation," she continued.

However, Carol quickly emphasized, "This is a complete dispersal, with the exception of Absolute Investment, all of our horses will be sold to the highest bidder.

"Absolute Investment will be sold if the bid meets our reserve," she pointed out, "but if he doesn't, we will continue to stand him in with Gumz Farms in Kentucky."

in order to reach the climax.

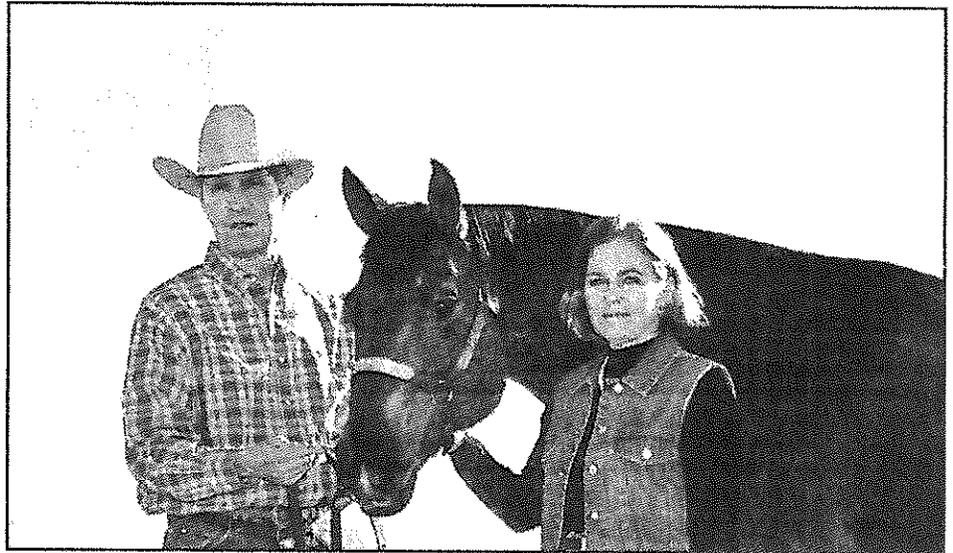
"I was raised in Chicago, always loved horses and fortunately I was able to have a horse," Carol recalled. "I worked hard with my horses, but I was never very successful because the horses weren't talented enough. They just did not have the conformation and bred-in, natural ability to do any better than we did."

It was through that youthful experience that Carol realized the essential importance of "form to function and that has been the basis of our breeding business," she clarified.

Likewise, Dan and his father, Robert, who passed away a few years, along with other McWhirter family members, were involved in various facets of the horse business.

Consequently, it was a natural evolving that Dan and Carol would be in the industry, although the extent and height of success might not have been forecast.

In 1985, the McWhirters began their determined breeding phi-



Dan and Carol McWhirter, Doniphan, Nebraska, are shown with their great Quarter Horse mare, Miss Rebel Rita. They are dispersing their world-renowned Dan McWhirter Quarter Horses.

of our horses be level and preferably higher at the point of the withers compared to the point of the hip. If the topline is correct, then a horse will have overall balance," Carol critiqued.

Enormous emphasis has been placed on the superior mares that the McWhirters bred to their stallions.

"All of our breeding horses have been out of the best dams, because it is our belief that a stallion breeds back to his mother," Carol philosophized.

The McWhirters' son, Daniel, has graduated from college and is presently involved in the

does not have a dedicated interest to the horse breeding.

"Despite our success, there isn't any profit in raising horses anymore, other than it is a labor of love, so we've decided to disperse completely," Carol re-evaluated the bittersweet resolution.

Because they have been so busy in breed-

ing horses at their immaculate operation, with a highly-credited assistance crew, the couple has not had the opportunity to even ride their own horse.

"We will be out of the horse business after the dispersal, but it could revolve back to we start riding again," Carol concluded.

dedicated and energetic horse breeders.

"I was on a flight last spring looking at the Quarter Horse Journal and saw that we were listed among the top breeders in several divisions. I decided it was a good time to step aside, when you're at the top of your game," Carol related.

"We put a lifetime of effort into breeding Quarter Horses. Being recognized as a leading breeder by the largest horse registry in the world lets us know we have achieved our goals," she analyzed.

Dan McWhirter Quarter Horses was recognized by the American Quarter Horse Association as a 2009 Leading Breeder in five categories, including top five in performance point earn-

would winter at his home in Nebraska, Absolute Investment would be in Kentucky for public service for two reasons, Carol related. "The lucrative Kentucky Breeders Futurity can be profitable, and there is the opportunity to ship frozen semen around the world," she said.

Additionally, Carol recognized, "Unlike some breeders, we've always sold our best horses. We've been fortunate that the purchasers have taken them to the show ring and been successful with them."

The whole story is a book and relating the intimate details requires more than this short writing, but it would be remiss not to go back to the beginning of Dan McWhirter Quarter Horses

an extraordinary impact on the nation's pleasure horse industry. A multitude of winning pleasure horses in the show ring today can trace their pedigree back to either a mare or stallion that was bred, born and/or raised by the McWhirters.

"To get where you want to go, you have to have a picture on the wall," Carol quoted another breeder.

"We set out to breed that 'ideal' pleasure horse," she described. "One with a strong, driving hock, a flat knee, cadenced, clean rhythm to the gaits, correct length of stride with natural suspension at the lope and a level neck that does not bob, because the horse is upright in the withers."

After the untimely death in 1986 of her first stallion, The Big Investment, the McWhirters searched and found The Investor, which moved the program into high gear. Four of the stallions on the AQHA leading performance sire's list can be traced to The Investor.

The couple continued to produce influential horses, and every one had that main trait, a level topline, the basis for their "Designer Genes" breeding program.

"We demand that all