

## **National Day of the American Cowboy!**

In this year's effort to correct misconception of the Term Cowboy, I again mention a bit to highlight the correct reputation of the American Cowboy. I have lived and worked in the U.K. for over 30 years and have endured the disrespect shown toward the name /term "Cowboy". Therefore, I provide some accurate information in another effort to try and correct that image. I also provide a site address where readers can find a lot more information in this regard. The following Fort Worth Stockyards site provides a short slide show and more information:

**[www.fortworthstockyards.org/](http://www.fortworthstockyards.org/) &  
[www.americancowboy.com/national\\_day\\_of\\_the\\_american\\_cowboy](http://www.americancowboy.com/national_day_of_the_american_cowboy)**

This year the National Day of the American Cowboy is recognized on Saturday the 27th of July, 2013. This is the 9th "Nationally" recognized date in USA (and of course "Texas" my home state). This date is set aside to "Honor" the cowboy way. I hale from Ft. Worth, Texas which is nationally known as "Cow town". The Ft. Worth Stockyards saw more than 4 million head of cattle trailed from 1866 via the "**Chisholm Trail**" - which ran from Fort Worth to Chicago - then via rail following the implementation of the railroad in 1890. Currently and for benefit of tourism, the city has rebuilt the Northside Stockyard area to resemble the 1800 period and now provides a twice daily herding of 50+ Texas Long Horn Cattle down Main Street in mornings, to graze, then back in the afternoons. The "National Day" festivities include seven rodeos and riding events featuring top amateurs and professionals. You can also partake in fun contests for watermelon eating and seed-spitting, best moustache, most worn-out boots, and buckaroo coloring. When you get hungry, check out the many steak houses and restaurants, known for their juicy steaks, burgers & hotdogs. Kids love taking period photos at The Jersey Lily Old Time Photo Parlor and on a more tame Longhorn.

### **Equine facility & transport designs:**

Whilst I am standing on my soap box today, I would like to provide some advice on equine housing and transport equipment. I often see and try to politely as possibly comment on how stables and trailers are built so much differently than in the Southern USA (esp. Texas) and how they are too often built in a fashion that is not friendly nor helpful to horses. I recently ran into an extreme example of the stable construction problem, within an otherwise well designed Farm based equine facility. In this particular facility there were mostly well built stables, not too confining in size but were built without sufficient windows in order to (1) provide needed ventilation and (2) to avoid the natural problems horses face regarding claustrophobia. Their lack of binocular vision and the limiting close up view of their peripheral vision caused by being in stables without sufficient outside vistas; this generates the very stressful claustrophobic reactions which is natural to all prey animals --- especially horses. It is not an overly expensive job to provide sufficient windows cut into at least two or three side and in the rear and can be built small enough to prevent and damage to adjoining occupants. This easily prevents the "cave style" situation which is "hard wired" into all equine minds over many millions of years and wont be changed in our lifetimes. I have observed these claustrophobic problems, over the last 30+ years in

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the U.K., at too many of the livery and stud facilities / farms, which I visit in my dealing with problem horses. I have seen horses enduring higher than normal summertime heat without sufficient ventilation as well as the claustrophobic situations. I have seen them standing in their stables without these basic needs and as a result, of course, they were exhibiting extreme discomfort and acting in very agitated, potentially dangerous, poor habit forming manners. To me, this is cruel treatment and most folks should realize how detrimental it is keeping horses in these situations.

Staying with the subjects of windows and claustrophobia (for this issue), I consistently come across many trailer and truck carrier (aka "box") transport vehicles which generate loading issues and other problems caused, in large part, by the following construction problems. The two most common construction problems are lack of "sufficient" and/or "properly located" windows which causes the age old problem of claustrophobia stress for horses. Another major problem is the ramps used in cases where they are not really necessary (for trailers) and box ramps without sufficient stability to assure horses. I have often recommended adding more windows and / or changing the locations of improperly located windows, unfortunately most often my advice is ignored. Location of windows is important in order that horses can not only "see out of them" but as well so that they can "see" things pass by out of sight more normally. Many trailers have badly located windows which leave the horse in a situation where they see something coming from the front quarter only to then see it suddenly "disappear" from view which leaves them to worry about whether the "thing" is behind them afterward. When these recommendations are followed, the result is "always" positive. Unfortunately the Box and trailer ramp situation is often a matter of cost and the horses (and owners) are left with the problem. Back home in Texas, I very seldom ran across any trailer loading problems, as our trailers are generally very open design (as can be seen on links in my site) and not built as "caves" are so many I have seen in the UK and Europe. Also our trailers do not often use ramps to load as horses are just fine climbing up. Of course horse boxes in Texas generally are built to lower the bed and have longer and much more stable built ramps. I spend a great deal of time convincing horses the empty space under ramps is not dangerous to them. I have also found it best not to tie horses in transit as they need to be able to balance and if they actually fall they need to be able to move their head & neck weight in order to get up. A tied rope can keep them from being able to maneuver their head and neck using the counter weight as they normally would. Most often I travel this way with all horses especially race horses that are less well trained and more hyper.

**Note: when horses travel loose (without tie down) a jockey door is important to allow the attachment of a lead line (I always use 15 to 20 foot long lines for unloading) before opening the back door or any exit door.**

***Ya'll ride safely and Aware.***

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