

National Day of the American Cowboy!

In this year's effort and for my ongoing efforts to correct UK's misconception and misused Term Cowboy, I write again to highlight the correct reputation of the American Cowboy, of which I have been a Proud Member for most of my life. I have lived and worked in the U.K. and Europe since 1982 and have endured the disrespect shown toward the name / term "Cowboy" much to my chagrin. Therefore, I continue to provide accurate information in my effort to try and correct that image. I also here provide three internet site addresses where readers can find information in this regard as well as some slide shows & other information about my home town Fort Worth, Texas and I hope ya'll take the time to access them.

www.fortworthstockyards.org
www.stockyardsstation.com/event/detail.php?id=27
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cowboy>

This year the National Day of the American Cowboy was recognized on Saturday the 26th of July, 2014. This is a "Nationally" recognized date in USA (and of course "Texas" my home state). This date is set aside to "Honor" the cowboy way. Fort Worth, Texas is nationally known as "Cow town". The Ft. Worth Stockyards saw more than 4 million head of cattle conventionally "Trailed" by Cowboys from 1866 to 1890 via the "**Chisholm Trail**" - which ran from Fort Worth to Chicago - then cattle began to be transported via rail following the implementation of the railroad in 1890. The Cowboys still "Trailed" them to Ft. Worth for many years after the railroad began, then "Trailed" cattle to trucking depots scattered around the states of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas to get them on to Ft. Worth and the trains. Currently and for benefit of tourism, Ft. Worth 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 the Stockyards, then back in the afternoons to their grazing. The annual "National Day of the American V Cowboy" 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. These festivities go on for most of the year as well.

Equine facility & transport designs:

Whilst I am rattling on from my soap box today, I would like to provide some advice about equine housing and transport equipment. I often see and try to, as politely as possible, comment on how much stables and trailers are built so much better and horse friendly, in the USA (especially in Texas). I see far too many facilities and equipment in the UK and Europe built in a fashion that is not horse friendly nor taking into account the natural claustrophobic nature of horses. Most stables and transport equipment are built in much too confining style and size 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 limited view of via their peripheral vision caused by being in stables without sufficient outside vistas;

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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 facilities and equipment. One or two windows are not sufficient. Three or more are needed and can easily be built in a fashion which prevents any damage to adjoining occupants in stables or problems in transport trailers and boxes. Multiple windows 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 my years in the U.K. & Europe, at too many of the livery and stud facilities / farms and in trailers and boxes. I see these situations as I visit problem horses. I have seen far too many 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.

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. Horses don't generally mind stepping up into trailers if the step is not too high (12" to 18" is fine). 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 when travelling.* 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. 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" as are so many that I have seen over here. Also our trailers seldom use ramps 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 for higher trucks. 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 halter & lead line (I always use 15 to 20 foot long lines for unloading) before opening the exit door(s).

Ya'll ride safely and Aware.

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