

From The Auction Block

After two and a half decades of selling **Arabian horses** at auction, we have seen many different market trends. In that time we have sold over 5,000 head for over \$13,000,000.00. Over the years, we have been given much advice telling us what we need to be doing and that we need to produce a certain type of auction, etc. We have been told that the industry needs a select sale with just higher priced horses. We contend that the top end horses sell themselves via private treaty. The proof of that has been in the number of auctions where a tremendous amount of effort is put into trying to sell just the top end and those auctions seem to fall by the way side in time. We were told that we could not sell more than 30 or so head at one auction. We proved that theory wrong by producing auctions with over 300 head in a 2 day auction. So, we keep doing what we feel best **which is to sell the horses that are hard to sell privately off of the farms.**

As time goes on we have seen a change in the ownership of horses in general. In the past, an owner of a great horse took pride in sitting in their box seats entertaining their friends while watching their trainer show their horses. Horses were shown for years to advertise their breeding program, whether in hand or in performance. Not so many years ago it was common place for a horse that won a national championship in a division to never be seen again in the show ring because the breeder was on to their next 'champion to be'. The purpose of a show horse was to showcase your breeding programs, period.

Horses today, in most of the breeds, that compete in the show ring are playing a different role than only advertising their breeding programs. Today, the majority of horse owners simply want to have fun. **Americans work more hours per week than in almost any other country.** So, lord knows, they want a break from their everyday stress, both mentally and physically.

With our latest method of producing auctions online, we have been able to have a better idea of the demographics of who is buying horses today. We have found that **the largest numbers of buyers are women between the ages of 36 and 62.** The common denominator - these ladies simply own horses to have fun. They want to be hands on and ride their horses themselves. With the cost of producing horse shows today, compounded by the drop of entries in many places in the U.S and the current economy, **it has the main ring shows becoming cost prohibitive for many of the working class.**

We have made our living by selling horses on a commission basis for all these years. It has us always looking to sell our consignor's horses for more money and expanding the market for the **Arabian horse.** A few years back, I stumbled upon an event at the **Oklahoma State Fair.** I really can't remember what the actual name of the event was but I did notice that it looked like it would be a heck of a lot of fun. The activity was made up of 2 connected 60 foot pens with a 12 foot gate in the middle. They put 11 head of cattle on one side. They had numbers on the cattle from 1 to 10 and when it was time to start, the judge called out a number. Let's just say he called out the number 3. A 2 person team had to start with number 3 and sort the cattle through the gate in numerical order to the other pen. They had 60

seconds to get the job done. **The team who sorted the most of the cattle in order in the fastest time under 60 seconds wins. Pretty simple.**

What I thought was cool about it was that sometimes the slower and steadier team went faster because they did not spook the rest of the cattle and were able to send more cattle to the other pen.

The next May, after my first exposure, I talked to the show community of the Oklahoma Arabian Horse Club to include this class in the show since they already had leased the cattle for the working cow horse class. It ended up being the largest class of the show and the best money maker.

A few years had gone by and the May Oklahoma show went by the way side as many other smaller Class A shows have and I put the sorting on a back burner.

Two years ago, the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds and the AQHA started an event called The Battle in the Saddle. It is made up of Tie Down Roping, Team Roping, Barrel Racing, and Cowboy Action Shooting. This year they added, for the first time, **RANCH SORTING**. In a conversation with the Equine director at the OKC fairgrounds, Marc Pankow, she mentioned that the Ranch Sorting was a big asset to the event **and brought in 6,000 teams**. I asked her to tell me that again as I thought she meant 600 people. No, I heard right the first time, there were 6,000 teams. Marc was kind enough to tell me who the organization was that produced the sorting, The Ranch Sorting National Championships association out of Wellington, Colorado (right up the road from the AHA offices). I gave them a call and it may be one of the best calls I have made in years.

Many times when you make a cold call it is met with some condescending person letting you know how stupid you are because you don't know the lingo. I called and left a message and in a short while the **President of the RSNC** called me. **His name is Dave Wolfe**. He bent over backwards to be accommodating. He proceeded to tell me how he started the RSNC in 2007 and how it has grown from zero members to over 18,000 in this short period of time. Just a note, it is now the fastest growing division of the AQHA.

I told Dave that my goal is always to **raise the value of the Arabian horses** we sell for our clients and I thought this may be a secondary market that has been untapped for our horses that may no longer be competitive in the main show ring or may not be show-ring quality but good individuals otherwise.

Mr. Wolfe went on to say that they were wanting to expand out to other breeds of horses and that they currently had a few Arabian horses who were already competing in the over 400 RSNC events currently sanctioned across the country. The other thing that perked my interest was the fact that their demographics were almost identical to ours, 36 to 62 year old women. A person or family can go compete, tie their horse to the trailer, and **play cowboy for a day**. Don't tell me everybody doesn't have a little Gil Favor or Rowdy Yates in their blood. Yeah, you know who those guys were. **You can have a great time at a sport that is in-line economically with other outdoor activities and not break your bank account.**

I then called AHA and had a good visit with Glenn Petty, AHA's executive director. There was a meeting arranged between Glenn, Stan Morey and some of the committee members of AHA, Dave Wolfe and Don Goddard of RSNC. Everyone agreed this may be something that would benefit the entire membership of AHA and provide an event for the Arabian horse owners to do with their horses.

The RSNC has more than 400 sanctioned events across the US. They already have software to track dollars earned for the Arabian horses. It is very family oriented and user friendly for the novice.

Here is what I would like you to do. Click on this web-site and join the RSNC today and see what it is all about. First year membership is Free. Ranch Sorting is the number 1 fastest growing equine family sport in the U.S.

After you join the RSNC you will receive weekly emails letting you know where there will be a sorting in your area.

[Click Here To Join Now](#)

For Free



In closing, I want to thank Cynthia Richardson, our new AHA President, Glenn Petty, and Stan Morey for having the vision and the initiative to see the opportunity for welcoming this new discipline for our beautiful Arabian Horse and to move us forward in the future.