

Thunder Hill Equine, cont.



trail horse Willow (Percheron x Fjord x Morgan) as he has perfect feet (I really mean perfect) for a mountain trail horse. Archie's and Willows foal will be kept to replace my husband's aging trail horse. Fonzie and all colts produced will be for sale, any fillies will be evaluated for our breeding program or possibly sold. I hope in the future that people will be proud to say that their horse has Thunder Hill bloodlines in its pedigree. We do not have a website at this time, but hope to have one not too far into the future. Thunder Hill Equine does have a Facebook page where I hope to hear from other Drum Horse enthusiasts' in Western Canada so that we can form a breeding pool and talk about a show. I would also love to meet other Drum Horse owners worldwide.



Never Too Early to Start! By Kelsey Kempton



There is an ongoing debate in the equine industry about when you should start handling and training foals. We believe the question is not so much when, but how. It is never too early to start handling your foals as long as you keep in mind that they are babies, they have short attention spans, and they can get overwhelmed easily. Here at Horse Feathers Farm we start handling our foals the moment they are born to

take temperatures, dip the naval, and administer enemas if needed. After we are sure mom and baby are healthy and happy, we leave them alone (under the watchful eye of our cameras) to bond for the night, but handling starts right up the very next day! At day one you will start to see your foal's personality. Some are inherently friendly, so handling starts off being very easy. With the friendly ones you can quickly become their best friend by finding the "itchy spot," usually on the rump or chest. These scratchy sessions are actually the foundation of all your foal training! They get the foal used to you touching them and teach them that

humans don't have to be scary. With the more timid foals, you will have to start slower. Foals are very curious, so just going into the stall and mucking, grooming mom, or sitting on bucket for a while will encourage the shy foal to come and investigate. Don't try and touch them right away when they come up, let them touch you, then you can slowly move in for a scratch. Once again, if you find the itchy spot, even



Drum Beat

Never Too Early to Start!, cont. By Kelsey Kempton

a timid foal will usually stand for scratches. Leading is the first big training hurdle to tackle. We like to start by taking a long lead rope and creating a figure eight around the foal's chest, over their back, and around their bum. This is the easiest and safest way to start teaching your foal to lead. A foal's first reaction to pressure from a halter and lead is usually to pull back and rear. Young foals have very soft polls that can be easily damaged if the foal pulls too hard or flips over, this can lead to serious spinal injury or death. After a few weeks of the figure eight you can start putting a halter on and just using the lead as a bum rope. Don't put any pressure on the halter the first few times, just use the bum rope to keep them moving forward. Then you can start using pressure from both the bum rope and the halter lead. Soon you won't need the bum rope at all! All of our foals lead by 3 months old. Worming and trimming are also excellent things to start

before your foal is weaned. They are both simple tasks that are going to occur throughout your horse's life, and if started early can lead to a much more manageable horse. Both begin by getting your foal used to being touched, for worming it's sticking a finger or two into the corner of their mouth, and for trimming its touching their legs. If you have a foal that likes to kick, use a lead rope to get them used to something touching their legs first. Once they are used to you touching their legs, ask them to pick one up and then release the leg as soon as they do. Next you can hold the leg for a few seconds, and then start patting and picking out the foot. If you do all of this before your farrier has to trim your foal, then trimming will be much less stressful on you and your foal, and your farrier will appreciate it! Once your foal is weaned you can progress to tasks like trailer loading, obstacle courses, and basic groundwork. Use your foal's curiosity and energy to your advantage, but keep

sessions short (10-20 minutes) to avoid overwhelming your foal or losing their focus. Remember a well handled foal makes for a more manageable and confident horse!



News from Scotland — Zoe Urquhart-Cormack

Swordale Knockandhu Dark and and Swordale Knockandhu Son of a Gun produced an outstanding leggy piebald colt on the 13th of May, the number 13 is certainly unlucky for some but for us it brought what felt like a lottery win as Swordale Knockandhu Haggis Mactavish turned out to be homozygous. For us the long term plan is to keep breeding up in height but keeping the colour and conformation that makes a drum horse the amazing animal it is. I'm hopeful he'll make 16 hands so an ideal foundation sire for our clydesdale herd.

**On a separate note....we at the IDHA want to wish Zoe congratulations on her recent wedding! Lots of good things happening in Scotland!

