



## *Dr. James McCall Heads U. of Md. Horse Program*

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Everything about the horse program at the University of Maryland is young and vital. It has a 29-year-old director, Dr. James McCall, who was hired for the express purpose of upgrading this department. He is supported by a group of enthusiastic students. And not to be overlooked are the young foals that are arriving at Otten Farm which is the university's horse research center.

Probably the most innovative part of the whole arrangement is the help being given McCall by the Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse breeders in Maryland. They have donated the services of their stallions to help upgrade the stock. And they have given the students opportunities to work on their very well-run farms where they get valuable experience.

Drs. McCall and Bob Lawrence who are both faculty members, believe Maryland and Kentucky to be the only states where Thoroughbred breeders and the state's university have worked out such a cooperative system.

Dr. Lawrence credits McCall with all the progress when he says, "Jim has only been here a little over a year, and he's made phenomenal progress."

Undergraduate Richard Anderson, who is stable manager at the barn in College Park, says, "He pushes until he gets what he wants."

Just what Dr. McCall wants is a complete horse program where research is carried on at a farm devoted entirely to horses. He plans to have his students raise, break and show the home-bred horses.

Young Dr. McCall is founder and director of the academic program. Although not a veterinarian, he has a Ph.D. in animal science. He majored in this subject at Texas A and M where he received his doctorate for work in progesterone priming of mares. A native of Texas he and his wife Karen, have three children, Jimmy III, Sean and Katherine.

Otten Farm consists of 150 acres located off the Waterloo road near Columbia.

"Here we are able to apply research," he said, "monitor activities of a horse breeding operation and work on problems of the industry, such as reproduction efficiency. We can also make a small profit to help support all of this by selling some of the Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse yearlings we raise."

Standing at stud are Pro Brandy, a son of Double Brandy, which was given to the university by Mrs. O. W. H. Robertson and Many Calls who was bought from McDonogh School last year.

A band of 12 mares, half of which are Thoroughbred (the rest are Quarter Horse and grade stock) graze in the pastures. Some of these have been given to the university because their owners couldn't get them in foal. McCall is using his method of progesterone therapy on some, the others make up a control group.

He has made different arrangements with their various owners. Some will be returned if they get in foal, like the mare by Better Self who was recently returned to her owner in foal. The university will receive a set fee for its work.

A few sheep and steers can be seen on the farm but as Charlie McCullough, a graduate student and teaching assistant, said, "We are moving these out to make room for the horses."

Quarter Horse breeders have donated the services of their stallions and the results are beginning to caper around the paddocks of Otten Farm.

McCall said, "Heidi's Lady, our registered Quarter Horse mare, had a filly this year by Teddy's Flash which belongs to Shirley Harris.

"Her yearling filly by Ellsworth Boyd's Poco Caz won a first and fifth ribbon at the American Quarter Horse Association shows which were held in Harford county last month.

"We're sending our Thoroughbred mare Madonna Bella to Exclusive Nashua which belongs to a syndicate headed by Fendall Clagett.

"Our stud manager is Steve Johnson who worked at Glade Valley Farm to get experience. He lives on the farm, handles the studs and goes to school on a part-time basis.

"Six or seven of our students spend the night in the foaling barns at Harold Herman's and Milton Polinger's farms.

Asked how the students help, Mrs. Polinger said: "They check the mares every fifteen minutes. If they notice any sign that the mare is going to foal, they call Sonny Sims, our manager. This arrangement helps him a lot and

the students benefit from watching the mare foal."

How did McCall make his contacts with the breeders to let them know what his needs were?

"Through Dr. Lawrence, Jerry Becker and the stud managers' course," he explained. "We offer short courses and other non-credit ones. Even though we didn't publicize it, 24 people showed up for a course which was open to stud managers only. We could handle 20 people, so we had to turn the rest away.

"Billy Boniface has been particularly interested in what we are doing here. He attended the course and lectured (along with other breeders) at the seminar which the university and the Maryland Horse Breeders Association put on at Timonium a couple of years ago.

"We offer these courses to help keep the industry informed about the latest research. I believe that in research we should keep pushing ahead of the field. We also need good research to have good teaching.

"Our undergraduate courses cover a wide range of subjects from functional anatomy to horse economics. In addition, we will offer a course called Science in Horse Training which will deal with basic principles and in the spring we'll offer one that will give the student first-hand experience in herd management."

Dr. McCall also uses special research projects on subjects like weanling nutrition and parasite control to help his students learn about horses.

He says, "The student is on a one-to-one basis (one student to each project). We try to find something he's interested in and let him work in that field."

On a more advanced level, McCall's graduate students work on their masters or doctorates and teach also. These teaching assistants are presently doing research in hoof composition, parasite control, lactase production in the foal, progesterone therapy for barren mares and studies in the rate of growth.

He credits his students for much of the progress made in the horse program.

"There is so much enthusiasm that, in some cases, we have to limit it. An operation on the inverted uterus of a mare was scheduled. So many people turned up to assist we had to turn some away."

The students have two horse activities that they handle themselves. These are the Equestrian club and show team.

Tall, slender Karen Hummel, one of McCall's most enthusiastic students, explained about the club of which she is president by saying, "About six or eight years ago it was started as an interest group by a dozen students. At that time there were no horses on campus so they held discussion groups, joined farm tours and those people who had horses of their own went on trail rides.

"Then, in the spring of my sophomore year (1970), we started to get horses. Many were given to us by very generous people like Mrs. Robertson, Russell Brown and Mr. Eyer. Now we have 19, including a couple of Thoroughbreds, a Cleveland Bay, some Morgans, Quarter Horses, Arabians and a few with a little bit of everything in them.

"Probably the most important part of the club is the teaching. We have a few students who teach the rest in their spare time, in exchange for other instruction and a chance to ride. We all share the work around the barn."

The club has elected Steve Murphy, vice-president; Richard Anderson, stable master; Jay Oberfield, treasurer, and Adgi Scheck, secretary. Dr. McCall is their faculty advisor.

Richard, Karen and four other students: Wendy Irani, Sue Keyes, Kathy Carroll and Lyn Bera make up the show team which has been showing at the Columbia Indoor Arena this winter. The team received official recognition from the Animal Science Department at the insistence of Dr. McCall.

The success of these horse activities, according to the students, hinges on McCall's organization and ability to get things done. Since he came to the university, the academic program has been formed, the number of horses has grown from nine to 19, the show team has been recognized and, recently, the department bought a trailer which was badly needed. It is bright red with a white trim and will be seen at trail rides and horse shows this summer as students have a little fun with all the horses they have taken such good care of this winter.

The Maryland horse industry should feel a certain sense of pride in all these accomplishments. At least, they should be glad to have had some part in it. □

Bottom picture, Dr. McCall (left) and Steve Johnson, stud manager at Otten Farm, with the stallion Many Calls, who stands there. Below, Heidi's Lady, a registered Quarter Horse mare, and her filly by Teddy's Flash.

