



by Meriruth CoHenour, editor

Wolf Point Ranch use their Arabian and Half-Arabian horses to work nearly 1,300 head of cattle on their historic Texas ranch. The inquisitiveness of Arabians, they say, helps bring out their cow working abilities.

When you think of classes related to traditional western riding such as cutting, working cow horse and reining, you probably conjure up thoughts of a short, stocky, ranch-bred horse, digging into the dirt with powerful hindquarters and a chest that could say Peterbilt. But, what if the horse you think of is slighter made, has a dish face and carries its tail high?

If a horse with Arabian bloodlines doesn't fit your idea of a working ranch horse, it might be time to re-think the stereotype. Terry Hatfield, Port Lavaca, Texas, is actively doing just that.

"Arabian and Half-Arabians are well suited to working cow horse,

cutting and reining, however, they are less powerful in the hindquarters than Quarter Horses and have a different style in the cattle pen," said Hatfield. "As far as their disposition, the naturally inquisitive nature of the Arabian horse only serves to bring out their cowiness."

Wolf Point Ranch owner, Dianna Stanger and Hatfield know first-hand the ability of Arabian and Half-Arabian horses while working cattle. They routinely work nearly 1,300 head of Brangus cattle on the historic Gulf Coast ranch.

"My second Quarter Horse was a professional cutting horse and he got me hooked on the speed factor," said Stanger. "When you sit on a good cutting or working cow horse

you can feel the power beneath you and it can throw you back in the saddle or over the horn! Couple that with the fact that it is you and your horse working together; not just doing a class where you do three gaits



Terry Hatfield showed Wolf Point Colibri to a Congress Championship in an open halter stallion class. Wolf Point Ranch participated in the 2007 Pinto Congress and Futurity Horse Show in the open cutting as well as halter, color and western pleasure.

each way. My adrenaline rushes each time I am on a good work horse and wish that more people could experience just how much of a sport it is."

Hatfield got an early start showing stock horses in cutting and has spent his entire life in the equine industry raising, training and marketing many different breeds of horses.

"I became involved with the Arabian in the mid 1980s and have been devoted to the breed ever since," said Hatfield. "I have shown in nearly every discipline that Arabians are shown in with a personal emphasis toward English and driving horses."

An appreciation of Arabian athleticism and roots in the cutting pen puts Hatfield in the perfect position to advocate for the working cow horse with Arabian influence. He is a founding member of the Arabian Working Cow Horse Association and currently serves as president of the Arabian Cutting Horse Association. Susan Hatfield, Terry's wife, is also an active supporter of the working Arabian and serves as the secretary of the AWCHA.

Hatfield says the Arabian Horse Association is starting to include added money in the new events as well as introduce reined cow horse classes to the U. S. National Show.

Wolf Point Ranch is pushing the stereotype just a little further by competing with spotted Half-Arabian horses. At the recent Pinto Congress and Futurity Horse Show, Hatfield rode Smoke N Mirrors, a 1999 pleasure type tobiano mare in the open cutting class and he says he hopes to bring more talented horses to the Pinto World Championship Horse Show in June.

"Now is such a great time to be in on the beginning of the working Arabian horse," said Hatfield. "Most of the people that I have talked to think that the working horses look like a lot of fun. They can see themselves on the back of a cutting horse, going head-to-head with a cow and experiencing the excitement of a good cut."

Hatfield, who also holds a judging card with the Arabian Horse Association, says conformation is an important part of choosing a working horse.



Wolf Point Ranch is breaking the mold for working cow horses. As a founding member and current president of the Arabian Working Cow Horse Association, Terry Hatfield has found a place to continue to bolster the awareness of a new style.

"Whether you get a finished or a green horse, some of the traits of a good cutting horse include speed, sufficient strength in the back, loin, hip and stifle to stop hard and a longer flexible neck," he said. "I look especially at hock placement. They need to have their hocks close to the ground so that they can get down eye to eye with the cow."

Hatfield has high hopes for the future of the Arabian influenced working cow horse. From the looks of things, he might even stand a good chance of changing some horse industry perceptions.

"I see a great future for Arabians and Half-Arabians in Cutting. As we increase the visibility of our sport, we increase the interest of potential owners and exhibitors." ❧



Terry Hatfield looks for cutting horses that have speed and strength. He also looks for hocks close to the ground so the horse can get "eye to eye with the cow."