

WESTERN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

HISTORIC SITE FILE: Rollingwood Farm
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib Manassas, VA

PROFILES

MAI

Wei

PN 11/12/86



By Steve Mawyer—Potomac News

Haymarket veterinarian Dr. John Aldred breeds and trains Arabians and Anglo-Arabs at his Rollingwood Farm.

Training takes the tender touch

By DENISE MAROIS
of the Potomac News

"Never approach a horse in a passion. For anger never thinks of consequences and forces us to do what we afterwards regret."

— Zenophon from the book "Horse-manship"

Those words were written by a Greek general 3,000 years ago. Zenophon believed them the tenet of horse handling, "to be inviolably observed."

To Haymarket veterinarian Dr. John Aldred, breeder and trainer of Arabians, those words are as important today as in Zenophon's time.

Dr. Aldred has been training horses since 1949. He breeds and

Horsemen explain their work

trains Arabians and Anglo-Arabs at his Rollingwood Farm on Log-mill Road.

The love Dr. Aldred feels for his equine charges is evident in his respect for their ability. They are a perfect machine, he said, and precious. "They jump to their feet at birth and run within minutes of being born."

He is particularly fond of Arabians because he believes they are the most intelligent and versatile horse. They have been known to live up to 30 years — the average lifespan of a horse is around between 20 and 25. Arabians also

have excellent endurance, jump, be used for pleasure riding and can show dressage, a formal style of equitation resembling a graceful dance.

Dr. Aldred breeds for all the best Arabian qualities, he said. Many of his horses pay tribute to his skill.

One mare, named Trishalana [which means Trish my darling in Gaelic], was so beautiful she is featured on Hallmark calendars this year.

In 1978, just 30 days after he first carried a rider, an Arabian named Alcore won the Futurity in Culpeper. The stallion R.F. Kestral won

eight major championships and has been rated one of five best Arabian stallions on the East Coast.

Dr. Aldred breeds for temperament, spirit and conformation — the measure of physical perfection. Those attributes include a well-placed head, an open triangle where head and neck join that means the blood flows unencumbered to the brain. Large, flaring nostrils, a short head, a wide forehead indicating large brain capacity and straight ears are desirable traits.

A well-bred horse sells from \$750 as a yearling to \$15,000 as a highly trained dressage or professional show horse.

— See BREED, Page E6

BREED / From E1

A good horse is also a well-trained horse, and a trainer's job is one of the most important, equestrians say.

The quality of a horse depends on the quality of training as much as on its conformation. A horse that is physically well-developed can become a perfect show or pleasure horse. Cruel or impatient handling, however, can transform a beautiful horse into a mean and stubborn animal with bad habits which no rider would want to deal with, according to horse owners.

Aldred takes training at a slow but steady pace, he said. He uses frequent but short repetitions. The biggest mistake many trainers make is to push a horse by repeating a technique over and over again until the animal becomes bored and testy.

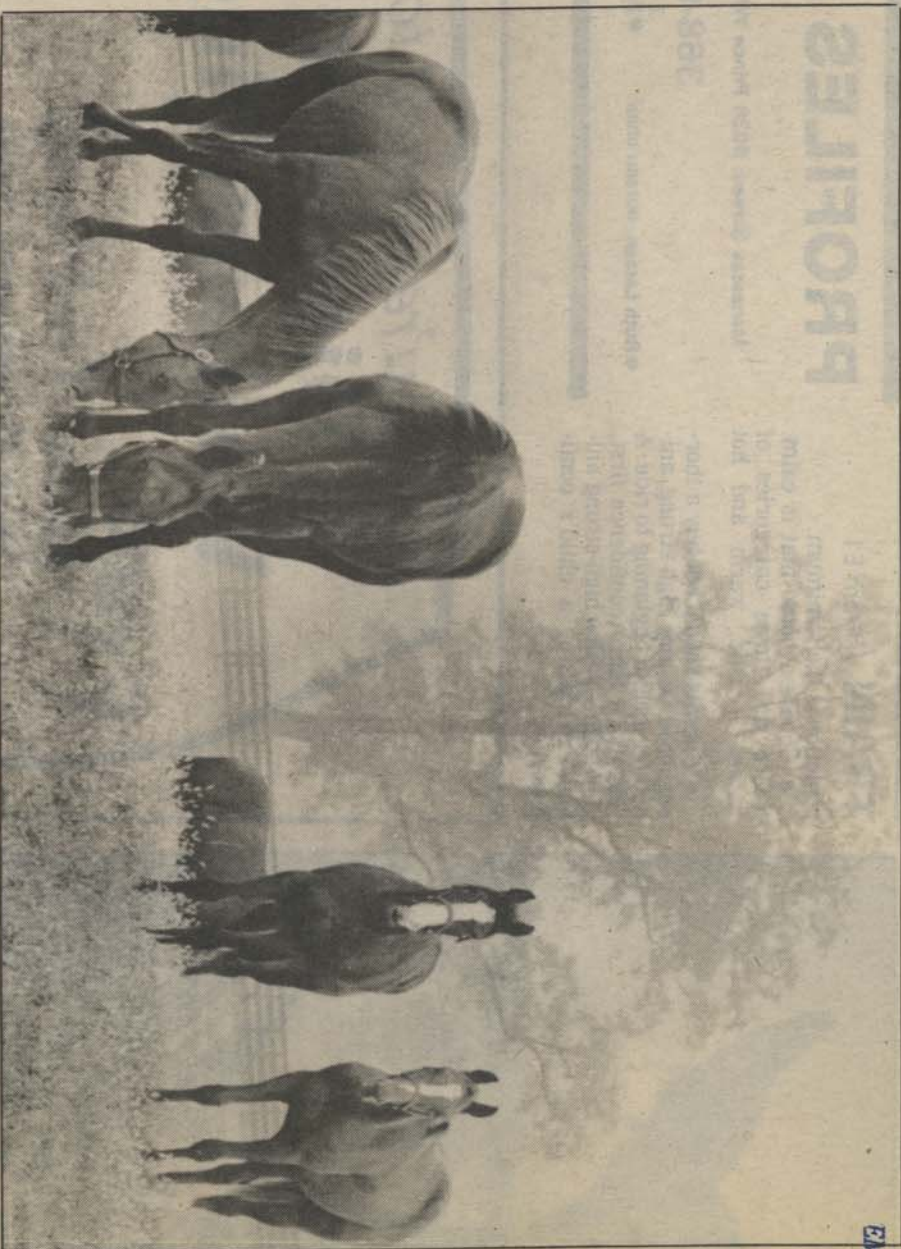
"When you lose them, it's time to quit. You are out to win the war, but you won't win all the battles," Aldred said.

There are three stages involved in turning out a good horse, Aldred said. They are breaking, which includes gentle handling, training, or getting the horse used to a rider, and schooling, where refinement takes place.

The foals on Rollingwood Farm are handled from birth so they become used to the human touch early, he said. Imprinting takes place at a young age when Aldred begins gently pressing his fist to the horse's side so it will eventually become accustomed to the pressure of the rider's leg.

Eventually the halter goes on, and the young horse is led around on a lead line. A small bit is later placed in the mouth.

To get the horse used to the feel of weight on its back, Aldred starts places a blanket there. Then a person drapes across the horse a few seconds at a time.



Horses graze in a field at the Buckland Farm on Va. 215 near Gainesville last weekend.

By Mike Hickey—Potomac News

Next comes training in which the horse learns the three basic gaits — walk, trot and canter.

While horses at Rollingwood are bred to become outstanding show and pleasure horses, horses at the John Marsh Thoroughbred Farm in Gainesville are bred for a different purpose — speed.

A good racehorse has three attributes — heart, conformation and the desire to win.

Heart and the desire to win are perhaps the most important, Marsh said.

"Sometimes they do it in spite of conformation," he said.

A good racehorse is built like a good athlete, Marsh said. "Head put on in the proper place, intelligent eyes, well-proportioned legs."

Lester Cockerille, 57, Marsh's longtime friend, trains the racers at Marsh Farm. His training techniques are similar to Aldred's but the emphasis is different. Cockerille's job is to instill a desire in the horse to win and to get the horse conditioned to run long and hard.