

The Proof Is In The Pudding: An Impressive Track Record And A Diversity Of Great Sires Make DeGraff Stables The Obvious Choice!

by Delores Kuhlwein

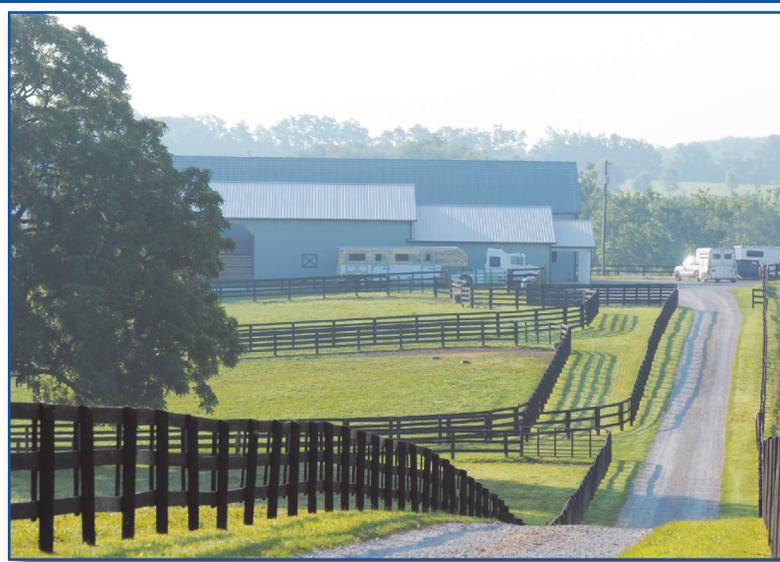
Support and expertise – those two words are music to any stallion or mare owner’s ears, especially for those who have been around the block, so to speak. Once owners of a stallion or mare talk to Robin DeGraff of DeGraff Stables in Midway, Kentucky, they realize they will get the kind of support and know-how they need. Not only do those concepts come across in Robin’s words, but owners quickly find that DeGraff Stables has the record to stand behind them.

“We really try to assure that the nuts and bolts of what we provide are good and solid. Our customers know they can get a hold of somebody when they need to. For example, if they are dependent on their semen order, they can get it, and track their shipment; we have an excellent service record. Many mare owners will call us and see who we are standing that year. A lot of times they choose to do business with us, as our focus is first cycle pregnancies,” Robin explains.

Boasting breeding statistics such as an average of 88% in foal as a result of on-farm breedings, 79% in foal via shipped cooled semen, and 80% embryos recovered, all since they began tracking the data in 2006, certainly doesn’t hurt their extraordinary reputation, either. Their first cycle pregnancy average is also an impressive 59%.

Along with such a great record, the the DeGraffs have an exciting philosophy. They don’t view their business of breeding as a job, but as a passion, and one to be done well. They still own their original breeding facility in Ohio that was founded in 1985, and both the Kentucky and Ohio facilities are USDA certified for shipments of frozen semen to the European Union, Australia and New Zealand. “I’m a mare owner, too, and I have worked with other farms over the years for myself and our customers, and I know what’s important to me to get my mare bred. I love the whole cycle of it; it’s so fun to be able to see these foals when they arrive and work through their progression,” says Robin.

Other numbers that add up to the right equation: DeGraff Stables of Midway, Kentucky, is halfway between Lexington and Frankfort and is nationally and internationally known for their focus on safe breeding and man-



The DeGraff Stables Kentucky facility is located in the heart of Bluegrass Country on 127 acres.

agement of the horses in their care. They are located on 127 acres, the mares with foals are currently housed in two barns with 37 stalls, all 12 X 12 or larger, and they have over 26 paddocks and pastures that offer individual or group turnout. The stallions live in an 18-stall show barn of large, airy 14 X 14 stalls, and each stallion is carefully groomed, exercised and monitored daily.

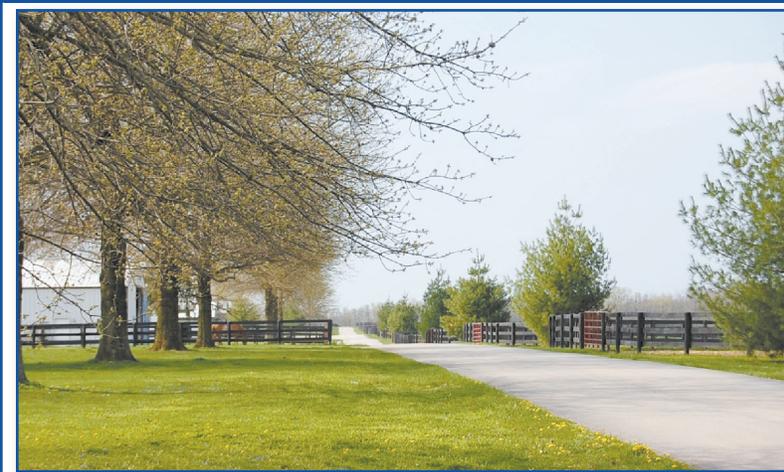
If Robin’s words and all the right numbers by themselves are not enough to convince an owner looking to get a broodmare in foal, then the impressive list of stallions might be the incentive. Owners of both world champion stallions and young, up and coming sires have chosen DeGraff Stables to stand their valuable horses.

In 2012, DeGraff Stables will welcome back all these sires: DGS IndyGo (AQHA), DGS Vestastic (AQHA), Frosty The Goodbar (AQHA/AHRA), HBF Iron Man (AQHA/APHA), Hesa Cool Hotrod (AQHA/APHA), Hot Lopin Sensation (APHA), Indian Artifacts (AQHA/AWR) and MDR Impulsive (AQHA/APHA).

They also prove their dedication to fostering up and coming sires by standing two stallions new to the farm in



DeGraff Stables provides over 26 paddocks and pastures that offer individual or group turnout, along with two first-class mare barns and an 18-stall show barn for the stallions.



DeGraff Stables is also well-known in the community for hosting onsite clinics at their welcoming facility, as well as charity involvement and outreach.

2012: Invite The Artist (APHA), and PR Tells A Tale (AQHA). (A Handy Stallion & Owner Quick Reference Guide can be found at the end of this article.)

DeGraff explains the strength of the strong line-up of stallions. “We have quite a bit of diversity for mare owners. We have proven sires and some young up and comers. When owners are making their choices on sires, they look for horses that have done well; for example, they may choose the sire that is already performance quality or has sired what they are looking for.”

The impressive aspect of having that diversity for mare owners is having a choice, and knowing that DeGraff Stables likely stands a stallion to cross with their mare. “If I’m talking to someone that is looking to add height to their program, we have several we would promote. If someone is looking to shorten the back, or they want to improve upon the jog of their mare, or improve a shoulder or hip, we discuss each one of the stallions with the mare owner. I don’t make the decision for them, but help by offering the considerations of what is most important to them,” she reveals.

Robin DeGraff clarifies their ideas behind the partnerships they form with stallion owners: “We develop a marketing plan with stallion owners, where they want their



DeGraff Stables boasts an exciting combination of experienced staff, traditional values, progressive ideas, hands on management, licensed veterinarian technicians on staff, and a state-of-the-art lab and breeding shed.



DeGraff Stables also helps market the offspring of her clients’ stallions.

horse to fit, and their budget. With each one, we figure out where we’re going to get the most bang for their buck. Our promotion usually starts in October, but Congress ads get published in July and August. It’s really a year-round business for the horses.”

DeGraff Stables’ website offers a comprehensive highlight page for all their sires, and it includes the stallion’s biography, as well as an information page, pedigree, videos, breeding documents, applicable test results, a link to the stallion owner’s website and a link to their Facebook page.

“While it’s never easy to promote any of them, it’s always better with one that has a performance record, and later in years a record as a sire. The up and coming stallions have to prove themselves through their progeny, and the proof is in the pudding. That’s a 5-7 year process. Having said all that, I’m a firm believer that in horses and anything to do with genetics, you’re breeding not just to the individual, but to the whole family. That takes away some of the gamble,” DeGraff states.

Striking a balance between promotion of their customers’ stallions and their own stallions is a mission of DeGraff’s, who takes responsibility for her owners’ sires as if they are her own. The DeGraffs have their own breeding operation, but believe in the promotion of all the stallions that stand at the facility. “We try really hard to make sure the stallion owners get a fair shake at our place, as I’m a



Educational outreach, clinics, and community involvement are part of the culture of DeGraff Stables.



The world-class stallions and mares entrusted to DeGraff Stables are supported with expertise, a great location and a first-class facility.

stallion owner, too, and I work hard to make sure they are all promoted for their attributes," she tells.

DeGraff keeps this same philosophy when helping to market the offspring of her clients' stallions. "They can come to us looking for one we bred and raised, but I try to promote them all equally. I feel like I'm an extension of the stallion owner. If they're not selling foals, they are not successful. If someone comes looking for a certain thing, I'll show them what we have, and I'll refer them to the stallion owners. Mare owners are purchasing breedings to our stallions, and I try to help them promote their foals as well," she tells.

Another plus for stallion and mare owners, particularly those registered Paint and Quarter, are the Kentucky breeding incentives that are available if owners have both the stallion and mare in Kentucky, and the foal is born there, too. "It's definitely a positive for anybody showing. When it comes down to it, even if someone evaluates two horses, one KY bred and one not KY bred, the KY-bred could get you the sale," DeGraff tells.

The DeGraffs stand more than one stallion that is double-registered APHA / AQHA, which can offer those inter-



The DeGraff Stables' employees, who are just as passionate and dedicated as the DeGraffs, interact with the foals on the farm daily, as well as provide a nutrition program that took 25 years to develop.

ested even more potential. She says, "The big advantage of a double is your possibilities; you're not restricted to one breed. As that horse grows and matures, you have more than one market for it. There's no downside to that. If you take a look at ours, we have a lot of different stallions with special characteristics, and you're always looking for the attributes that will set your horse apart a little bit."

DeGraff Stables definitely stands apart as much as the sires they represent. Their staff has the same enthusiastic approach to breeding, and they interact with the foals on the farm daily, as well as provide a nutrition program that took the DeGraffs 25 years to develop. Their extended support system includes an equine dentist, veterinarians, and blacksmiths, just to name a few. Robin DeGraff exclaims, "It really is a combination of all the different field of experts that gets a horse ready. The whole culture of your farm is what ends up in the resulting foal. The quality of the research nearby and the hospitals for every field imaginable are located right near where we're at in Kentucky. Ultimately we're happy with our choice of our Kentucky location because of this!"

The uniqueness of this facility in Kentucky, where horse owners send their beloved horses, is also community and civic oriented. DeGraff Farms supports the Black Stallion Literacy Project, the Audrey Grace Children's Home and America's veterans on a regular basis. "The farm is the only place I have that gives me a platform or venue that lets me do some good for others. If we don't help somebody every day, then what good have we done?" Robin asks. They also hold clinics on breeding and other helpful topics for their clients and others in their area.

All in all, DeGraff Stables may just well be the place for stallion owners, mare owners and buyers to turn. The culture of their facility is the difference. "I think it takes and sets our animals apart, because there are only so many here to choose from, and we are in a fantastic location. If I had my druthers, I wouldn't be anywhere else. The Lexington



The DeGraff Stables' breeding program combines experience, daily care, highly educated staff members and reproductive veterinarians.

area is within a day's drive of 80% of the population. The majority of our customers can get here in a day," says DeGraff.

The outreach and support of DeGraff Stables is all part of the values of the owners and their belief in trying to build a certain successful culture of their facility. DeGraff looks to 2012 just as optimistically as she does for her clients each year: "We have some exceptional people we're dealing with, just like we always have had, and we just hope each and every year will be even better for them. We're looking forward to a great 2012 for all our stallion and mare owners." □

2012 STALLION & OWNER QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

For a full stallion resume', photos and videos of each sire, please visit: <http://degraffstables.com/>

DGS IndyGo (AQHA) & DGS Vestastic (AQHA):

Futurity Champion and earner of \$16,000, DGS IndyGo (Indian Artifacts X Taking Invitations), homozygous for the black gene and DGS Vestastic (Vested Pine X Krymsun Hot Invite - full sister to One Hot Krymsun) are both DeGraff Stables homebreds. **Owned by Degraff Stables.**

Indian Artifacts (AQHA/AWR): Earner of AQHA World Championship, two Congress Reserve Championships, an AQHA Superior and multiple Open and Non-Pro Championships. The only breeding stallion with an AQHA World Title and an AWR Inspection Championship. Each foal of his that have been submitted for scoring and evaluation prior to registration with the AWR have ALL outscored their dams, thus demonstrating that he improves the breed. Sire of World and Reserve World, National and Inspection Champions in five breeds and the NSBA. Offspring have won USEF, USDF and AWR year end awards, circuit championships in USHJA competitions and excel in HUS, Over Fence, Longe Line, All-Around events, Hunter Breeding, Dressage and Eventing. **Owned by Degraff Stables.**

HBF Iron Man (AQHA/APHA): 5X World Champion and multiple World Champion sire. Winner of five Titles in five attempts, and is the only breeding stallion today who is an APHA World Champion in both Hunter Under Saddle and in Western Pleasure. Earner of multiple Superiors with 923 points in seven events, winner of over \$20,000 in Futurity winnings, an AQHA ROM and an AQHA World Show Qualification in Senior HUS. He has sired multiple APHA and PtHA World and Reserve World Champions.

HBF Iron Man is the leading double registered sire of Hunter Under Saddle horses for APHA!

Owned by the HBF Iron Man Partnership LLC.

Frosty The Goodbar (AQHA/AHRA) and MDR Impulsive (AQHA/APHA):

Leading sons of Zippos Mr Goodbar and A Sudden Impulse. These great stallions are sires of multiple World and Reserve World Champions, Top Five and Top Ten placers and Finalists, as well as qualifiers for the Select World, AQHA Youth World, NSBA World, APHA World, APHA Youth World, Pinto World, Quarter, Paint, and Pinto Congress. They have also sired APHA Honor Roll Leaders, Futurity Champions and Reserve Champions in Western Pleasure and Longe Line in AQHA and APHA. Earners of Superiors and ROMs in WP, HUS, Equitation, Horsemanship, Showmanship, Halter, Trail, and Western Riding in Open, Amateur, Youth, and Novice Divisions of AQHA, APHA, and PtHA. **Owned by Ironwood Stables.**

PR Tells A Tale (AQHA): Judy Pryor of Pryor Ranch brings this promising young stallion to stand at DeGraff Stables for 2012. Judy has good taste, as she was the original owner of Deck Of Stars. Deck's incredible heritage provided for Pryor Ranch, earning 37 multi-breed World and Reserve World Championships, a Supreme Champion, AQHA Champions, an AQHA Reserve High Point and many Superiors. Deck Of Stars sired 715 foals that earned 15,102.5 points and earned \$141,734 in Incentive Fund Earnings and \$10,964 in World Show earnings.

Owned by Pryor Ranch.

Hesa Cool Hotrod (AQHA/APHA): Crowned an unanimous APHA World Champion and excitingly, his first full crop of foals produced two APHA World Champions - Shes Perfectly Hot and Hands Off My Hotrod, and the Top Five finisher - Hes A Special Hotrod! This year, Hes Perfectly Hot is #2 on the APHA Honor Roll in Open Hunter Under Saddle with Kate Emnett and is #7 in Open Green Western Pleasure with Drew Emnett.

Owned by Seabreeze Farms.

Hot Lopin Sensation (APHA): An APHA Reserve World Champion with a Superior in Junior Western Pleasure, sired by NSBA Hall of Fame Inductee, Zippos Sensation.

Owned by Seabreeze Farms.

Invite The Artist (APHA): 2011 World Show 3Year Old Western Pleasure Slot Class Champion! "Johnny" has superior bloodlines, movement, conformation, a show record and a great disposition - plus he is homozygous for Tobiano guarantying color every time! He is a 2008 Bay Tobiano by Special Invitation and out of Ima Rap Artist who has a Superior in Western Pleasure. Ima Rap Artist is by Arapadude who is a multiple World Champion in Western Pleasure! **Owned by Wilson Paint Horses.**