

Greater Kansas City Arabian Horse Association to Host Show

Every child bitten by the horse bug has seen the movie or read the book "The Black Stallion" by Walter Farley. The story has introduced generations of children to Arabian horses. With their distinctive dished face and large, lustrous, wide-set eyes the average Arabian is a beauty. But you don't have to rent a movie to see beautiful Arabians in action.

The Greater Kansas City Arabian Horse Association (GKC) will be hosting their annual Spring Fling April 21st - 23rd at the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia. Arabians, the oldest breed of horse, are known for their unparalleled good looks, stamina and versatility in the show ring. From high stepping Park horses to reining horses doing sliding stops to the well know Arabian Native Costume classes, you will see a bit of everything at an Arabian show. Arabian and Half - Arabian horses from several states will compete in different divisions under 2006 Youth Nationals judge, Lewis McKim. Divisions include Park, English Pleasure, Country English Pleasure, Hunter Pleasure, Western Pleasure, Driving, Halter (in-hand), Show Hack, Trail, Reining, Showmanship and the crowd favorite, Native Costume.

Riders also compete in different divisions. Junior riders have the opportunity to compete in Walk-Trot classes until their 10th birthday in western, English or hunt equipment. In addition to Junior to Ride and Junior Owner to ride classes in all disciplines, Showmanship and Equitation classes in each discipline give juniors who have not reached their 18th birthday more opportunities to show their abilities. Adult riders and handlers compete in Amateur classes (some divided by age of the rider), and Open classes. Arabian shows truly have something for everyone.

But purebred Arabians are not the only horses GKC will host at the show. Half- Arabians, the offspring of a purebred Arabian and a non-Arabian parent, will also be prominently on display. Arabians are frequently crossed with Saddlebreds, Thoroughbreds and Quarter horses to produce outstanding show or work horses. In cavalry days, the US Army crossed Arabians with Army horses to improve the endurance of their mounts.

Long known as excellent war horses, Arabians have been the choice of generals from Alexander the Great to Napoleon. Bedouin tribesmen have bred Arabians for thousands of years. In addition to their athleticism in battle, an intelligent and kind temperament was highly

prized. Horses held such importance in the society they frequently lived in the tent with their owners.

Arabians are well known as the foundation for many light breeds of horses (and some not so light breeds) including the Welsh, Quarter Horse, Appaloosa, Trakehner and even Percherons. In the late 17th century and early 18th century Arabians were crossed with English horses to produce racing horses. Today 93% of all modern Thoroughbreds can be traced to one of three imported Arabian sires. To learn more about Arabians visit the Arabian Horse Association website at www.arabianhorses.org.

Riders and handlers competing in the GKC Spring Fling Class A show can earn ribbons, awards and qualifications to compete in Regional and National competitions in the US and Canada. Several winners of Regional and National Championships are expected to compete at the Sedalia show. Any horse registered with the Arabian Horse Association (formerly the International Arabian Horse Association or the Arabian Horse Registry) is eligible to compete. For more information on entries contact show secretary Ruth Charpie at RuthCharpie@kc.rr.com. Admission to the show and parking are free.