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A Visit with Smarty Jones, the *Unremarkable Remarkable* Athlete

Getting up close and personal with most Thoroughbred stallions is like playing with a rattlesnake. Not with Smarty Jones. He likes people.

We were privileged to examine this famous stallion in August 2004, a week after he arrived at Three Chimneys Farm, in Midway, Kentucky, where he will stand at stud. At the same time we met with Sandy Hatfield, the Farm's stallion manager.

The most remarkable thing about Smarty Jones is that he is so unremarkable. Standing just 15.2, this "Plain Jane" sorrel definitely does not stand out in a crowd.

During the examination, one of my colleagues commented, "Smarty seems more like a good 4H project horse than the sire of a potential Derby winner."

Sandy Hatfield, who has over 20 years' experience in the business, was quick to challenge the comment. She responded with a long, enjoyable lecture about Smarty's attributes... attributes that brought him within one length of becoming the first Triple Crown winner since 1978. Her remarks can best be distilled to: "Don't judge a book by its cover."

"All horses have the potential to be great," she said. "But some are able to put more of the components together to achieve greatness. These are inherited components like physical ability and mental attitude."

Step One to Outstanding Performance

At the end of the trip, we reflected on Sandy's comments and those of the trainers and veterinarians visited in Kentucky.

Over millions of years of evolution as prey species, and hundreds of years of selection by man, the physical traits we admire most (speed, endurance, strength — and to a lesser extent — mental attitude) are blueprinted into most horses.

The difference between consistent, outstanding performance and a "hope for the best" is how we nurture and develop those qualities.

Ask the average horse owner where one should start in order to maximize athletic performance and most will say physical conditioning, i.e., training. But that's not the right answer. Unless you have the physiologic framework on which to build a training/conditioning program, you are bound to fail.

In the last five years, much progress has been made in understanding how the horse functions during exercise.

For example, we now know that fat is more metabolically efficient and safer to use as an energy source than carbohydrates commonly found in grain-based feeds. This makes sense. The horse in a natural state rarely gets to eat small grains in any great quantity.

It's the fatty acids produced by bacteria in the large bowel that supply the natural and most effective metabolic energy during exercise. Horses also are relatively efficient at gluconeogenesis, the ability to effectively convert certain amino acids to blood sugar and thus to energy. It is hindgut bacterial fermentation that serves as the key source of these important amino acids.

Programs for the equine athlete must be based on this fundamental concept:

***Step One to maximum athletic performance begins
with maximizing access to natural metabolic pathways.***

While in Kentucky, we shared our positive results with ReStore™, the patented oral supplement that enhances the natural digestive processes of the horse.

Call Biovance at 877-246-7500 to place your order, or you may order via the website: www.restoreforhorses.com.