

SPANISH HORSE

"There are many conservators of the Spanish Barb horses and in an effort to include the families who have dedicated their entire lives to this preservation effort we have included an article written by the recognized authority Dr. Phillip Sponenberg for the NM area and the list of nationally recognized groups who are also preserving this rare breed. We would like to stress, the importance of inclusiveness in the efforts of all the groups who continue to fight to preserve this wonderful breed. Also visit the website to learn more about the horse and the Baca family who are members of NMHCPL

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NEW MEXICO

New Mexico One important rancher strain from New Mexico is the Romero/McKinley strain. These are from a ranch near Cebolla, New Mexico where Spanish type horses were raised for generations. The Romero ranch passed to the McKinley family, who still maintain a few horses of the original strain. These are raised extensively in a nearly wild situation on large ranges. These horses figure heavily in some lines of Spanish Barb horses. Alan Bell of Texas was instrumental in acquiring and taming several horses from the has proven to be an interesting repository of several interesting strains. This in part reflects the importance of New Mexico in the early days of the introduction of horses into North America.

McKinley ranch in 2000; an effort which greatly boosted the impact of this strain on the conservation effort. These horses come in a wide variety of dark as well as dun colors. Another independent New Mexico line confusingly also involves a family named Romero, but is also associated with the Gonzalez and Marques families in the Rio Arriba County area. They were all involved in the active trade that New Mexicans had with the Comanche tribe for a period covering several centuries but most active in the 1800s. Some of these Romero/Gonzalez/ Marques horses were gaited and also had very flashy sabino paint patterns. This influence persists in some horses raised by Bob Ele and Gilbert Jones.

The family of Doroteo (Joty) and Virginia Baca have been instrumental in saving a unique strain of horses. Joty remembers these horses from his youth, and was able to assemble a personal herd in the 1950s. The original color range was very wide and included duns, dark colors, tobiano paints, greys, app patterns, and roans. Today's horses are generally sorrel, bay, black, grey, or varnish roan patterns. These horses have served Joty very well through the years. In early years they provided mounts for a tourist riding concession, but were also used by local ranchers and other people for hard work all day long.

One specific Baca horse, Little Jack, was known locally as a champion endurance horse. He was the horse of choice if it were necessary to file papers in Santa Fe. The first day would involve 100 miles to Santa Fe,

the second day for business, and the third day for the 100 miles back to Chililí. People had to be as tough as the horses. Most local folks, as well as outsiders, were usually disparaging of Little Jack, and could be convinced to match their larger Quarter Horses against him in an eight mile race. Joty would wager horse and saddle against horse and saddle, and picked up four nice saddles and four exhausted horses in such races.

Other Baca horses figured in some of the foundation of the registries, including Cedro, #28 in the Spanish Mustang Registry. This mare was from Griego, one of Joty's partners in the horse business. The intertwining threads of these different strains reflect the convoluted history of the horses and their breeders over many years.

The historically important Elkins ranch on Mount Taylor also maintains Colonial Spanish horses. The management of these horses is as wild horses, although Dan Elkins is diligently selecting the best Spanish type horses, returning them to the mountain, and removing the rest. The goal is a manageable population of the highest quality Mount Taylor horses. Most of these horses show a pronounced Colonial Spanish type, including some strikingly beautiful and very "typey" individuals. The frequent greys in the herd are somewhat masking a wide color variety including dark colors, duns, buckskins, palominos, and roans.

New Mexico is also home to a feral herd of horses on Forest Service land, the La Jarita herd. A few of these have been adopted out, and have found homes in conservation herds. A close inspection of these revealed that they deviate from the usually accepted Colonial Spanish type. This is consistent with the bloodtyping results, and these two (phenotypic and blood type) usually do indeed agree. These horses have some elements of good Spanish type, but also have short, thicker heads, and thicker fronts than nearly all other herds accepted as Spanish. They are also consistently very short. This, coupled with the history, leads to the conclusion that these are a stabilized mixture of Spanish and pony (likely Welsh) breeding. They are amazingly beautifully built. The herd includes roans and dark colors, but unfortunately has nothing to offer the conservation of Colonial Spanish horses. These horses do indeed have some Spanish blood types, but the ones that have more Spanish variants are so similar to the ones that do not that they serve as an excellent example of the principle that blood types, by themselves, are insufficient to drive meaningful conservation programs.

A project called the New Mexico Horse Project is working to conserve Colonial Spanish Horses of New Mexican origin. Carlos Lopopolo, a historian from New Mexico, has assembled conservation herds from a variety of feral, rancher, and Native American sources. Some of these sources are widely accepted as being Colonial Spanish, others are more controversial. All horses are bloodtyped, but unfortunately the bloodtype information is taken as revealing the proportion of Spanish breeding in an individual horse - and bloodtyping cannot do this.

REGISTRIES

The situation of the registries for the Colonial Spanish Horse can be confusing. There are numerous registries, and each is slightly different in history and outlook from the others. Many horses are registered in multiple registries, however some specific horses or bloodlines are barred from one or the other of the registries. Most of the registries operate from very similar goals and philosophies, and with very similar horses, which makes some of the differences difficult to appreciate. In some situations the fragmentation of the Spanish Colonial horse into these subgroups may be hindering conservation rather than helping it. However, most of the important substrains are not divided, and find a home within one or the other of the registries. Some mechanism that provides for conservation of the various substrains as well as the composites based on them is desperately needed for this genetic resource. The great antipathy that is present between some of the registries is probably more of a hinderance to conservation than an aid to it.

The following list is likely to be incomplete.

The Spanish Mustang Registry (SMR) was founded by Bob Brislawn and others. It accepts only Spanish horses, and the books are open to newly discovered horses that pass a visual inspection and consideration

of the horse's origin and history. The SMR has foundation lines from many strains. Most of the SMR horses are of feral or Brislaw origin, although many are of Indian Tribal or Rancher bloodlines as well. The SMR has recently disallowed registration of the tobiano pattern, which is at variance with some of the other registries.

The Spanish Barb Breeders Association (SBBA) began as an offshoot of the SMR. Many of the foundation horses of SBBA were SMR horses, although some were renamed and therefore difficult to trace. The SBBA philosophy is that all horses must be tested by evaluation of their type as well as the offspring they produce. Most SBBA horses originally were SMR horses, and some still have solely this blood in them. The SBBA is also an important reservoir of the Belsky and McKinley bloodlines. The SBBA also recently included the Wilbur-Cruce Mission horses in a special section of the herdbook apart from the other horses they register. This action was taken to acknowledge the history of the Wilbur-Cruce strain and to keep those horses identified so that they could be followed and evaluated.

The Southwest Spanish Mustang Association (SSMA) begun by Gilbert Jones is similar in goals to the SMR. Many horses are registered with both the SSMA and the SMR. The differences between the horses registered with the two registries is subtle in some regards, but the SMR horses are largely of Brislaw origin (along with many others as well), while the SSMA horses tend to have more Choctaw, Cherokee, and Jones breeding in them. These latter strains as distinct founding strains are generally limited to the SSMA at this point. SSMA also includes Wilbur-Cruce and Belsky horses.

The Horse of the Americas (HOA) registry has recently revived as a sort of umbrella for all of the other groups, meaning that they will accept horses that are accepted by the other registries as well as horses submitted for inspection. They are probably the most inclusive of the registries. They have a very useful tactic of recognizing strains within the overall breed so that the component pieces retain their identity and can be effectively conserved.

SMR, SBBA, SSMA, and HOA all have the goal of conserving the purely Spanish Colonial type, and all have defined this broadly to include both the rangier and heavier types of horses within the Spanish type. Both the SMR and SSMA fully register horses by inspection and history, which is different than the approach used by the SBBA. The HOA has the most broad and inclusive strategy.

The Society for the Preservation of the Barb Horse (SPBH) operates under the care of Robert and Louise Painter. These breeders have succeeded in concentrating on a very Barb type of horse, carefully selected for consistency of type and performance. Their foundation includes horses from a number of sources, including many in the SMR.

The American Indian Horse Registry (AIHR) began long ago as a registry for a variety of types of horses connected in one way or another to American Indians. The AIHR currently registers Spanish type horses as 0 (original) animals, and has separate sections for nonSpanish types and crosses. The AIHR does diligently preserve the 0 type as a separate category. The Colonial Spanish Horses in the AIHR tend to be mostly of Choctaw breeding, although there are many others involved. Horses are only taken into the O section if they meet rigorous historical and conformational requirements.

The Kiger Mesteño Association registers Kiger mustangs. Most of these are from the Steen's Mountain area, but outside horses are allowed if of correct type and dun color. The Steen's Mountain Kiger Association limits its registry to those horses off of Steen's mountain, and specifically Steen's Kiger, and his descendants. The Kiger breeders tend to favor a larger horse than the other associations. Many Kiger horses are also conformationally different than those of the other associations, or a result of past selection decisions. A Mid-West Kiger Mustang Registry also exists.

The Pryor Mountain Horse Breeders Association is organized to keep records on horses adopted off of Pryor Mountain, as well as descendants of those horses. The PMHBA is especially interested in fostering the classic Spanish type horse off the mountain as a genetic reserve in case it is needed to strengthen the feral stocks on the mountain.

The Sulphur Horse Registry concerns only horses from the BLM Herd Management area of the same name.

The American Sulphur Horse Association has slightly different goals, and works with horses adopted from the same region.

The Florida Cracker Horse Association documents and registers Florida Cracker horses. They are actively preserving the Florida bloodlines that still remain, and are doing this with knowledge and appreciation that these are Spanish in type and origin. They register on the basis of history, conformation, and ability of the horses.

The Chickasaw Horse Association registers horses that resemble the type kept by the Chickasaw tribe. These were very popular horses in the 1800's. Most of the present horses in this association trace back to horses from the Blood Indian Reservation, and are therefore not lineal descendants of the historical Chickasaw horse.

The Galiceño Horse Association was originally founded to conserve horses of Iberian type that were imported from Mexico, Central, and South America. This registry is very small today, although various bloodlines do persist.

The Nokota Horse Registry is specifically for horses from the Teddy Roosevelt National Park. These include different types, and crossbred type Ranch horses outnumber the more Spanish traditional type. The original Spanish type is being maintained as an unique strain within the Nokota horse, though, and so effective conservation of this strain is occurring, although the resegregation of this type from the park herd is perplexing.

I am less familiar with the fine points of distinction for some of the other registries: American Mustang and Burro Association, American Mustang Association (these two are less focused on Spanish type than on feral background), McCurdy Plantation Horse Registry and Association (for a generally gaited strain based on Marsh Tackies), Sorraia Mustang Studbook (focusing on duns of Sorraia type), and the Wilbur-Cruce Mission Horse Registry for horses of Wilbur-Cruce background.

Finally, there are a number of registries for Spanish types that come from further South or from Europe. These include the Galiceño (Mexico, Central America), Paso Fino (Colombia, Caribbean), Peruvian Paso (Peru), Criollo (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay), Mangalarga Marchador (Brazil), as well as the Lusitano (Portugal), and Andalusian (Spain).

The short list of the registries, breeds, and strains of conservation interest follows. Important identified substrains are listed where appropriate, and omissions are likely but unintentional.

Registries

registry name	contact information	comment
American Indian Horse Registry	9028 State Park Road, Lockhart, TX 78644	The "O" type horse is Iberian, other sections are not.
American Mustang and Burro Association		Iberian type is not distinguished from others.
American Sulphur Horse Association		Limited to Iberian type Sulphur horses.
Chickasaw Horse Association		A small registry limited to a few horses, generally from Northern bloodlines.
Corolla Wild Horse Fund		Works to conserve Banker Ponies from Corolla
Florida Cracker Horse Association	P.O. Box 186, Newberry, FL 32669	Actively registering and seeking out various bloodlines of Florida Cracker Horses. Includes some Marsh Tackies.
Foundation for Shackelford Horses		Works to conserve Banker Ponies on Shackelford Island.
Galiceño Horse Breeders Association		Founded from Central American horses.
Horse of the Americas		An umbrella group that is inclusive in outlook and

		philosophy.
Kiger Mesteño Association		Limited to Kiger horses or inspected horses of similar type.
McCurdy Plantation Registry and Asscn		Limited to plantation type horses.
Nokota Horse Association		Limited to horses from Teddy Roosevelt Park. Different types are identified and kept separate, including traditional type.
North American Mustang Association and Registry		Not limited to Iberian type.
Pryor Mountain Mustang Breeders Association		Limited to horses of Iberian type from Pryor Mountain.
Sorraia Mustang Studbook		Limited to solid colored dun and grullo horses of Sorraia type.
Spanish Barb Breeders Association International	P.O. Box 598 Anthony, FL 32617 www.spanishbarb.com	Includes several strains, notably Belsky, McKinley, Wilbur-Cruce, and others.
Spanish Mustang Registry	Jane Greenwood 11790 Halstad Ave Lonsdale, MN55046	Oldest registry, mostly Brislawn and Cerbat horses.
Society for the Preservation of the Barb Horse		Horses of consistent Barb type from several foundation strains.
Southwest Spanish Mustang Association	P.O. Box 948, Antlers, OK 74523	Includes several strains, notably Jones, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Belsky.
Steen's Mountain Kiger Breed Registry		Limited to Kiger horses from the original group tracing back to Steens Kiger.
Sulphur Horse Regsity		Limited to horses from the Sulphur Herd Management area.