The Best Remuda Exhibit Theme Report

The American Quarter Horse Association is dedicated to maintaining the integrity of the American Quarter Horse breed. They do this in many ways, but one way in particular is by giving the Best Remuda Award each year to a chosen ranch whose working American Quarter Horses are of exceptional quality.

A Remuda is a group of horses on a working ranch from which the cowhand chooses his working mount for the day. The Remuda is gathered up each morning and consists of horses with special working skills. Those skills vary from extreme cattle work to being a loyal fence repair companion. Each mount is chosen based on what their specific job will be that day.





Working ranches have various jobs similar to what one may think about from old west movies...watching cowboys drive cattle across the country or working the ranch lands, repairing fences, roping and branding cattle, or finding lost calves. Each ranch may

have different techniques, traditions, or styles of working their ranches and herds, but they all have one thing in common....their horses.

The stories of the first 15 Best Remuda Award winning ranches are told by Jim Jennings in his book, *Best Remudas*. He notes that "all the ranches agree that they could not do their work without their horses, and a lot of planning goes into the breeding and training of the mounts in their remudas. Some of them say that they are able to keep good cowboys because of the quality of their horses." With this being said, it is obvious that the horse plays an important role in making a working ranch successful.

A remuda can consist of over a hundred saddle horses. They are gathered every morning in various ways for the cowboys to choose their mounts. One unique way is with the use of a rope corral. The cowhands set up a rope perimeter suspended several feet off the ground with iron stakes. Chosen cowboys keep their mounts from the day before to saddle the



next morning to gather the remuda and run them into the rope corral where they are settled down. The cowboys call out the name of their chosen ride for the day as the mounted cowboys catch those horses

with a lariat rope and hoolihan loop. When the chosen horse is caught, it is lead to the cowboy waiting for him. When all of the chosen horses are caught, the rest of the remuda is released back out for grazing. Some ranches will catch their horses the night before so they do not have this process each morning. Some ranches now use pipe corrals or panels instead of ropes, but catch the horse in the same old fashioned way.



Cowboys look for very specific traits in their working animals to excel in their work, stay safe, and to utilize time wisely. The horses they choose must possess good cow sense, have strong thick legs, be powerful enough to handle cattle when roped, be intelligent, athletic, quick on their feet, and have enough stamina and perseverance to work throughout the day. Ranches develop their remudas by breeding top stallions to quality mares to produce the desired traits of ranch working American Quarter Horses.

Many ranches start riding their colts at age 2 when the horses are developed enough to carry a rider and begin working. However, they are not used much at this young age and get ridden more at age 3. By age 4, they generally have been ridden and exposed to enough cattle that they become dependable working ranch horses. Often select members of the remuda are taken out to shows to perform in various events such as reining, roping, and ranch sorting to gather points used to raise their



