

Six Lambs — A Record!

A Suffolk ewe owned by brothers Wade Wilson and Kendall Fortner, Pickrell Corner, Kan., ties the Guinness Book of World Records for having 6 live lambs.

According to the book, 8 lambs have been born at once but none of them lived. There have only been 4 cases of sextuplets reported since 1977. The Kansas Suffolk may be the fifth ewe, and the first ever of her breed, to have 6 lambs.

Dr. Robert Jordan, extension sheep specialist at the University of Minnesota reports, "It is very uncommon for Suffolks to have this many lambs. For Finnish breeds, 6 lambs would be more common and, once in a while, you even hear about 8 to 10 being born."

Officials at Kansas State wouldn't even venture to guess what the odds were for a Suffolk ewe having 6 lambs.



Photo by Charlotte Anne Smith

The lambs were born in sets of three with one ewe and two bucks born the first day, and one buck and two ewes born the next day. All six lambs were born normal size and in good health.



Judges award points on how load of dozen eggs, canned goods and set of deer antlers is packed and how well it survives the trip.

OBJECT IS TO PACK WELL AND MOVE SMOOTHLY OVER A 15 TO 30 MILE COURSE

Pack Horse Contests Catching On Fast

"It's really not a race," says Dr. James Shubert, a Minnesota dentist who's working in his state to organize the hottest new sport in the horse world. "A pack horse contest is most like a trail ride, but involves more people. It's not an endurance test, but rather it involves skill and efficiency."

A pack horse team consists of two riders, two saddle horses and one pack horse. At the starting point, the team "packs" the pack horse and then rides out to a designated campsite, which is the finish line, to set up a tent and lay out all their packed equipment in a prescribed manner.

Time is a factor, but it's most important to carry the load right and set up camp properly. Teams are penalized for moving their horses faster than a trot. To judge how well the load was packed and carried, each team includes in its load a dozen eggs, some canned goods and a set of deer antlers.

Each broken egg, dented can, or damaged antler costs the team points in their final score.

There are two classes of competition — amateur course is 15 miles, the professional 30 miles.

The team competition is only the showy part of horse packing. Many months of learning and preparation precede the event itself. Many contestants build their own pack saddle and then must learn how to mount it and load it. Animals must be trained for carrying this kind of load.

"It's an ideal project for youth groups," says Dr. Shubert, "but it also

has special appeal to the hunter and the horseman of any age. Pack horse contests started in Wyoming about 6 years ago and last year we tried it near Park Rapids, Minn. This year we will offer the first Minnesota state pack horse championships."

The pack horse competition is usually combined with other horse events, and last year was held in connection with the muzzle loader rifle competition.

"Horse packing is part of the American heritage," says Dr. Shubert. "Pack animals were important to settlers moving West, to hunters who had to bring home a large carcass, and to the horse-mounted cavalry."

Shubert and a local Jaycees club have conducted many pack horse clinics where horsemen are taught how to make a pack saddle, how to load it and how to manage and train the animal. "The response to our clinics has gone far beyond what we ever expected," says Dr. Shubert. He adds that mules, donkeys and even goats can be good pack animals and are eligible for competition.

The Minnesota group is anxious to promote horse packing over a wider area. They have information available on setting up a contest, where to buy books on packing, how to build a pack saddle, and how to load a pack animal.

For information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dr. James Shubert, 604 Forest St., Park Rapids, Minn. 56470 (ph 218 732-3879).



Toadie doesn't have any trouble balancing on Genevieve's back.

TEAMS UP WITH "GENEVIEVE" THE DONKEY Mule-Riding Dog

A canine in Kentucky isn't living the traditional dog's life. She's riding around on the back of her master's donkey, and getting ginger snaps for doing it.

The dog, named Toadie and of the Catahoula breed, was trained by her owner Wilbur Duncan, a tobacco and hog farmer, of Maceo, Ky. The training took place over three weeks time and was done in two steps — first to ride on Genevieve as she pulled a surry down the road, and second to jump up on the donkey's back. Duncan used the reward system — ginger snaps, about 10 pounds of them, and Toadie still gets one when she jumps up for a ride.

A small rug on Genevieve's back provides the dog traction, "but she doesn't have any trouble staying up there," says Duncan. "Genevieve is no speed demon!"

Wilbur won first prize in the Cloverport, Ky., parade last summer with his dog and donkey pair, and that made him feel pretty good. "The award wasn't really much, but it means a lot to me. I don't think money would have bought that dog that day!"

Genevieve, a jenny donkey (female), is about 15 years old and doesn't mind at all Toadie riding on her back. "But many donkeys wouldn't stand for it," comments Duncan. Genevieve is about 15 years old. Jennies sometimes live to be 30-35."

The Kentuckian is now wondering if he could train a goat to ride up on Genevieve's back, along with Toadie the dog.