

# Working To Save Endangered Galiceno Breed

At 12 to 13.2 hands tall, the Galiceno horse is known for its small size. Considered to be the earliest Spanish Colonial horse in the Americas, it is also critically endangered. With less than 200 of them still in existence, a few breeders have dedicated themselves to preserve the breed.

Rick Blaney, one of the owners of the largest remaining herd, hadn't heard of the breed until he retired as a biology professor in 2006.

When a friend, Heidi Reinhardt, said her mother, Marie LeBret, had two Galiceno horses she could no longer care for, Blaney and his wife, Pat, got interested after learning about the breed's history. They traveled to Idaho to pick them up, and in their travels ended up with 4 more Galicenos from a breeder in Ft. Worth, Texas. Now Reinhardt and the Blaneys are partner owners of Galicenos of Suwannee Horse Ranch in Live Oak, Fla., with 45 Galiceno horses.

Besides their small size and Spanish breed features, nuclear DNA studies confirm that their heritage is closely related to Garrano horses that still live wild in the Portugal mountain region. Columbus, and later Cortez, brought the horses with them to Cuba and later Mexico. Galicenos remained isolated so the line stayed pure. But as they were brought into the U.S., many were bred to improve other breeds.

Fortunately some Texas ranchers and others imported Galiceno horses in the 1950's to keep the breed pure. In the 70's, Reinhardt's grandfather, John LeBret, and his

partner, Walt Johnson, in Spokane purchased 18 horses to use for 4-H because of the breed's small size and good nature.

"As livestock, Galicenos are easy keepers," he adds, noting they don't shoe the horses. "They're browsers as much as grazers so they eat grass, acorns, and oak leaves. They have no special dietary requirements and are very healthy. Hardy is an understatement. Out of 28 births from our stock we've had 100 percent survival." Only pregnant and nursing mares are given supplemental grain.

Though short and only weighing 600 to 750 lbs., Galiceno horses can accommodate adult riders, and they are good competitors. Reinhardt has earned many blue ribbons in various competitions in Florida and one of their geldings has taken top honors in Texas dressage, for example.

Galicenos come in a variety of colors, including some gem-like tones.

"Bay roans turn a shade of silver in the summer that looks metallic in the sunlight," Blaney says. "Also, the red horses show copper with flecking in the flank and tail."

In addition to careful breeding with males with unique genetic backgrounds, the Suwannee partners are committed to educating people about the breed. In one year, they traveled 36,000 miles to fairs and horse events in the U.S.

The partners also take care of the registry and are involved with the Livestock Conservancy. As an established 501c3 they focus on education and allow people to visit their farm. They work with committed



The Galiceno is the earliest Spanish Colonial horse in the Americas. They weigh only 600 to 750 lbs. but can accommodate adult riders.

partners interested in raising Galicenos in other U.S. locations and would love to hear from anyone interested in helping.

"We have 7 stallions on our ranch and two more that we have placed with some mares at other locations around the country. We want to help others who want to likewise be dedicated to saving this rare breed," Blaney says.

The Galiceno is referred to as the little

horse with the big heart. "I find it very interesting that even after 520 years of isolation - Cuba in 1500 and on into southern Mexico in 1519 - the Galicenos are still that close (in DNA to Garranos)," he says.

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## Heavy-Duty Combine Cable Kit

"Equipping your combine with our new heavy-duty MudOx cable kit makes it easy to pull it out of the mud if you ever get stuck," says Anthony Minnehan, Minnehan Metal Works, Churdan, Iowa.

The MudOx combine cable kit consists of custom-mounted brackets and cables designed to pull on the front axle. Two different systems are available - one for Case IH and New Holland, and the other for Deere.

The cables attach to big brackets that bolt onto each side of the combine's front axle. From there a pair of cables run back to a centrally-located cable guide that is hung on the rear axle. When the combine gets stuck, the operator attaches a clevis and then hooks the tow rope to it. A pair of cable hangers on the rear axle, one on each side, serve as a place to hang the cables when they're not in use.

"Pulling from the front axle puts less stress on the combine, and is safer than using chains. It also pulls evenly and prevents damage to grain augers under the combine," says Minnehan.

The MudOx kit retails for \$2,750 plus shipping. Monofilament tow ropes are available by request.



Cable kit uses custom-mounted brackets and cables that pull out the back from the combine's front axle.

Minnehan also offers custom-made tractor tow cable kits. "They work great to pull out tractors that get stuck while pulling tile plows or liquid manure spreaders," he notes.

You can see a detailed video showing installation at farmshow.com.

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Paul Stermer replaced the rickety ladder on his combine with heavy-duty stairs.

## Combine Stairs Better Than A Ladder For Ease Of Use

Paul Stermer put stairs on the outside of his grain bin years ago, and now he has them on his combine, too. The heavy-duty stairs unfold for easy access from the cab or ground.

"My wife and I put stairs on our grain bin 10 years ago, and we appreciate them more every year," says Stermer. "As we get older, the issue often is getting up onto equipment. The ladder on my combine was getting pretty rickety, so I decided to replace it instead of just reinforcing it."

Stermer admits he may have overbuilt the stairs, which he fabricated with 2 by 6-in. channel iron for the frame. He mounted 5 corrugated metal steps to the frame with 1/8-in. diamond plate for the deck. He ran a support from the combine frame to the stairs. It attaches just above the lower 2 steps, which fold over center, allowing gravity to hold them in place when up. A rope runs down the combine side of the stairs, for retracting the steps from above.

"We've had 3 large men on the stairs with no problem," says Stermer. "I'm confident the stairs could hold 900 lbs."

Stermer says the biggest challenge was just deciding to make the stairs. He estimates



A rope runs down the stairs, allowing the bottom steps to be easily raised up from above.

local fabricating shops would have charged him \$2,500 plus. He ordered needed material and had it delivered for a total cost of \$1,100.

"I don't know why the farm equipment companies don't put stairs on new equipment instead of ladders," says Stermer. "Worked into the price of new equipment, the added cost would be pennies."

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## Blind Spot Mirror

"If you're like me, when I turn my head to the left to check if I can change lanes, all I can see is the door post. So I came up with what I call a 'blind spot eliminator,'" says Mike Bauman, Sugar Creek, Mo.

"It's just a spot mirror attached to a metal bracket that I stick to the dash. I adjust the mirrors so when a passing car just about disappears from the outside mirror, it appears on the inside mirror. Works great."



Blind spot mirror is attached to a metal bracket that sticks onto dash.