

Letters To NFAQHA - Three Bars

Dear NFAQHA,

I would like to make a plea for recognition of THREE BARS as a foundation stallion. This is not in our own interests - as our horses have either no Three Bars breeding or very little of this bloodline.

However, Three Bars has made a considerable impact on the Quarter Horse! When Joan, a foundation - bred quarter mare was bred to Three Bars, the offspring (Steel Bars) looked more quarter-type than his dam! This is only one instance out of hundreds!

In looking over the records of all-time leading sires - Three Bars is included in every single one. He is the only Thoroughbred on the all-time leading sires list for AQHA Champions and broodmare sires of AQHA Champions. Sixteen of twenty two of the leading performance ROM sires are closely related to Three Bars with 2 own sons. Eighteen of twenty four of the halter ROM sires are related to Three Bars. He is well represented by grandsons and great-grandsons on the all time leading sires of racing's money earners. On the racing broodmare list, he is still No. 20 out of 27 (Leo is No. 25). All of this does not take into consideration of his impact on the NCHA, NRHA and the PRCA.

The point is: THREE BARS is not just any Thoroughbred stallion. He has become one of the building blocks of the quarter horse world. This is not just an opinion. It is solid facts and figures. Few stallions can boast of a record comparable to Three Bars.

As a foundation horse breeder, it is not my intention to discourage breeding good horses for the sake of certain criteria.

Please look at all the facts and re-think the Three Bars issue. I'm sure I'm not alone in my assertions of this great horse.

Thank you
Sue



Three Bars

Dear Sue,

Thank you for your letter. The Three Bars issue is one that has caused a lot of confusion. In fact, some people new to the industry do not realize that the famous Three Bars was a registered Thoroughbred.

Three Bars' record certainly speaks for itself, and there is no doubt that he left a giant mark on today's Quarter Horse. However, NFAQHA's purpose is not to promote the current Quarter Horse (that's AQHA's job which they do very well) but to preserve and insure the perpetuation of the Original Versatile Bulldog Type Quarter Horse which is a very different horse than the modern Quarter Horse.

Most fans of the modern AQHA Quarter Horse would agree with you that Three Bars has had a positive influence on the Quarter Horse. On the other hand, many Foundation Quarter Horse enthusiasts feel that his influence has been a negative one, in that his blood served to breed out the original Quarter Horse attributes (low center of gravity, sturdy bone and foot, quiet disposition, etc), thus losing the Bulldog Breed Type that Robert Denhardt formed AQHA to preserve.

In fact, Three Bars probably did more than any one single horse to almost eradicate the Bulldog as a Breed Type. During the 1960's when a taller, more refined horse became the fad (as opposed to the stock horse type) Three Bars' sons and grandsons were the stallions of choice, and many great old bloodlines became hopelessly diluted by the infusion of his Thoroughbred blood.

Nowhere can this be seen more dramatically than in the Three Bars' creation - Impressive. Impressive, a linebred Three Bars stallion (with only 24% Quarter Horse blood), has had a greater impact on the Quarter Horse industry than probably any horse in history, and most National Foundation Quarter Horse people think it was a negative influence.

We realize that the big hearted little bulldog is not for everyone, but NFAQHA is not trying to be something for everyone and every type of horse. We are completely focused on the original (before Three Bars) Bulldog Type Foundation Quarter Horse. For those who prefer the Thoroughbred cross there are a myriad of Associations that serve the modern Quarter Horse, from AQHA to groups that treats Three Bars as a Quarter Horse and, for a fee, will give a "foundation" number to most horses with a Quarter Horse or Paint Horse pedigree.

No one would disagree that Three Bars was a truly great Thoroughbred individual that crossed superbly on Quarter Horses. The cross of his blood (in moderation) on Foundation Quarter Horses is still sought after by many; but he could never, in my opinion, be considered a Bulldog Type Foundation Quarter Horse, nor did his blood perpetuate the Bulldog Quarter Horse Breed traits.

Gail Zscheile