

Horse And Buggy Day

Some 3,000 persons Saturday attended what was billed as the largest driving horse auction in California in the last 40 years at Horsehaven Stables in Felton.

Some 100 horses — from huge draft horses weighing in at a ton to Shetland ponies — were auctioned off. Additionally, over 50 horse-drawn vehicles, such as, wagons, buggies and carriages went to the highest bidders. Horse equipment sold ranged from saddled to blankets.

Organizer Bob "Pappy" Backus of Felton called the auction a "rebirth for driving horses." Driving horses, he explained, involve horses that pull anything from a buggy and wagon to a plow.

"It was almost a lost art, but with the gasoline shortage and back-to-nature bit, its coming back," said Backus. "These auctions are the coming thing when you consider the general public just doesn't know where to buy driving horses."

Where else, for example, could you buy an

entire team of Arabian horses? Or, how about a team of Belgian stallions or Appaloosa mules? They were all there Saturday.

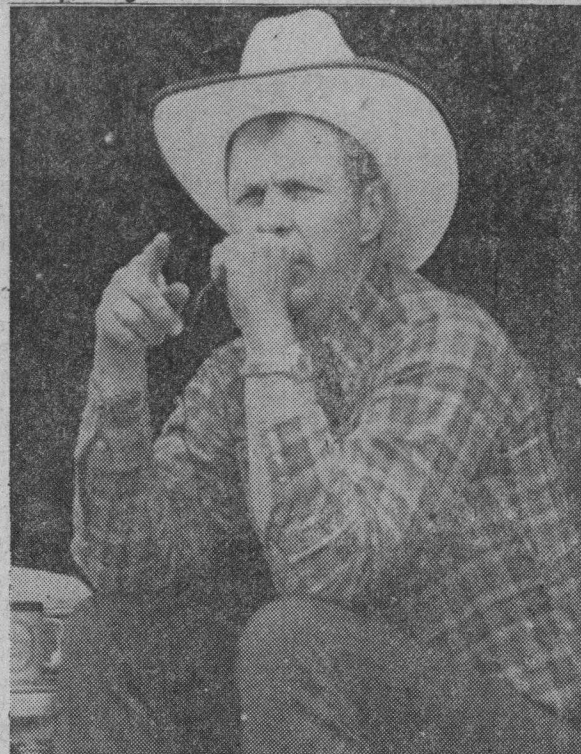
Horse enthusiasts came from throughout the state, as well as many of the western states.

Steve Haupt from Southern California has the unusual occupation of driving the Anehiser-Busch Belgian horse team that pulls away the starting gate at Santa Anita Horse Track. He was in Felton "because you never know what kind of deal is going to come up. I always carry a check."

He termed the rebirth of the driving horse as coming just within the past five years. Auctions such as this one, he added, are commonplace in the Mid-West, but should gain popularity in California soon.

George Kendall, from Los Angeles, was also looking for a deal. He raises Belgian horses at his ranch.

Backus hopes the Felton auction could become an annual event.



(Sentinel Photos by Dan Coyro)

