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Bright View Farm and Gregory Kilka named 2025 New Jersey Breeder of the Year by TOBA

Bright View Farm and Gregory Kilka have been named the 2025 New Jersey Breeder of the Year by the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association (TOBA), recognizing their exceptional achievements in Thoroughbred breeding, highlighted by their role as co-breeders of Eclipse Champion Male Sprinter Book'em Danno.

The recipients will be formally recognized at TOBA's National Awards Dinner, scheduled for September in Lexington, Kentucky.

Book'em Danno emerged as one of the most accomplished sprinters in the country, delivering a standout campaign that earned him Eclipse Award honors. Owned by Atlantic Six Racing LLC and trained by Derek Ryan,



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the New Jersey-bred gelding delivered a remarkable 2025 season, winning four of five starts.

Bookem Danno launched his championship season with a decisive 2½-length victory in the \$100,000 Boston Handicap at Colonial Downs, carrying 125 pounds. The state's all-time leading New Jersey-bred money earner, now boasting \$1,915,425 in career earnings, later finished fourth, beaten just a neck, in the Grade 1 \$1,000,000 Churchill

Downs Stakes beneath the Twin Spires — a race that proved to be his only defeat of the year.

He rebounded in dominant fashion, sweeping Saratoga Race Course's prestigious older sprint series, the Grade 3 True North Stakes, Grade 2 Vanderbilt Stakes, and Grade 1 Forego Stakes. Those victories propelled the New Jersey-bred to national prominence, as racing fans across the country were captivated by his Saratoga performances.

The Breeder of the Year award highlights not only the success of Bookem Danno but also the continued commitment of Bright View Farm and Gregory Kilka to excellence in Thoroughbred breeding. Their achievement reflects a broader resurgence of the New Jersey breeding program and its capacity to produce horses capable of competing at the highest levels of the sport.

Cruise the Nile wins Laurel Park's Henry S. Clark Stakes

It took New Jersey-bred Cruise the Nile a while to get to the races, and it didn't exactly go well when he did. He debuted Nov. 22 last year at Laurel, late into his 3-year-old campaign, and finished a non-threatening fourth in a 6-furlong dirt maiden.

"I really liked him the first time I ran him, so I was a little disappointed with the way he ran," his trainer, Graham Motion, said. "He'd shown too much ability for me to be that far wrong about him."

Since then, the gelding by Cairo Prince has been perfect. Winning his fourth straight, Cruise the Nile captured the April 18 Henry S. Clark Stakes at Laurel, winning the 1-mile turf race by a well-measured neck under jockey Jorge Ruiz. The Clark was a prep for the May 16 Dinner Party Stakes, a \$500,000 event run at 1½ miles on the grass on the Preakness undercard.

Cruise the Nile is owned and bred by Hope Jones, the daughter of Monmouth Park founder Amory L. Haskell. Jones has been a longtime, enthusiastic supporter of the New Jersey breeding program.

"We had a couple of little issues with him," Motion said. "He had an infected

vein when he was a 2-year-old from an antibiotic shot. We just had some tricky things that we had to deal with. I just can't tell you how happy I am for Hope that it's worked out because she's been so patient and so good about it. It just took us a long time to get into the races. We always thought he was a runner, which made it even more frustrating that we had issues with him early on."

Cruise the Nile prospered once Motion decided he was a grass horse. In his second career start, which was his grass debut, he broke his maiden at Gulfstream in December at 1 mile. He came right back to win a first-level allowance at Gulfstream in January on the synthetic surface.

"The mare [Party Boat] was more grassy, but she handled the dirt as well," Motion said. "I felt he'd shown enough on the dirt to run on the dirt, but, clearly, the grass has been a different deal."

It was after the gelding's fourth start that Motion began to believe he might have a quality stakes horse on his hands. He stepped up into a second-level allowance race at Gulfstream in February and won by 2¼ lengths over a quality field. The runner-up was Burnham Square, last year's Blue Grass

winner who came back to win the Grade 2 Elkhorn Stakes April 18 at Keeneland.

"His last two races have been against pretty solid company," Motion said. "The 'two other than' at Gulfstream could have been a stakes race anywhere else in the country. It was kind of a wide-open allowance race and the horse he beat (Burnham Square), came back and galloped over the weekend at Keeneland."

In the Clark, Cruise the Nile showed a new dimension. In his three prior starts, he was either on the lead or stalking the pace. At Laurel, he closed from sixth and didn't get rolling until near the top of the stretch.

"We just felt there was a ton of speed in this race," Motion said. "We never felt he was one-dimensional. He had always been a very sensible horse at Gulfstream. We kind of took advantage of the fact that he had so much early speed. In the race at Laurel, it just kind of fell into place. But [taking off the pace] was discussed."

Based on his numbers and how he keeps handling more difficult assignments, it looks like Cruise the Nile can only get better.



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“He continues to step up and handle things, and yes, I have been impressed by that,” Motion said.

The trainer said that he hadn't given much thought to the Dinner Party Stakes before the Henry Clark. He wanted to see if he could get by that test first. But now that Cruise the Nile is a stakes winner, Motion said he will take a look at what would no doubt be the toughest assignment of Cruise the Nile's career.

“The Clark just seemed like the most logical spot for me to bring him into stakes company.

“I'm not sold on the Dinner Party just because it's another eighth of a mile, which he's not done before,” Motion said. “But I think there's a good possibility we could end up doing that. He handled the mile-and-a-sixteenth, so I guess I shouldn't worry about going another sixteenth. He's got a tremendous turn of foot. If there's not a more obvious option, we'll probably go to the Dinner Party, but I want to kind of see how it goes.”



JIM MCCUE

Though keeping his options open, Motion isn't afraid to test his horse against tougher competition in the Dinner Party.

“The race that he won down there at Laurel was very good and his numbers have been consistently good,” Motion said. “I think he's up to it.”

Rutgers Equine Science Center's Equine Pasture Management: “A Year-Round Approach”

Robert Mickel, Regional Livestock Agent

Reviewed by Carey Williams, Ph.D., Extension Specialist in Equine Management

Introduction

Pasture management is an evolving dynamic system requiring care and supervision year-round. Equine practitioners often expect their pastures to provide areas for exercise, training, and forage production, without providing adequate levels of plant management to obtain these goals and expectations. Pasture management is not a one-shot deal, but should be regarded as a system in constant fluctuation. Equine practitioners need to assess pasture management much as they do horse

management, relationship to nutrition, grooming, eventing, breed selection, health care, rest/recuperation, and overall general equine common sense.

Nutrition

Pastures, much like horses, need a balanced diet if they are to attain optimal growth and performance. Unfortunately though, pastures quite often are left to fend for themselves until such time as they either become an eyesore or have little or no stand utility. When meeting their horses' nutritional demands, producers go all out in balancing horses' diets by using prescribed rations and feeds. Reaching the same level of management for the pasture should be a

goal of equine practitioners. To achieve the same level for their pastures, growers need to begin by taking a soil test at least every other year, if not every year, to monitor nutritional needs. Nutrition requirements for pH and plant growth are essential if optimal growth and performance are desired. Much like the ration for a horse, a balanced diet for pastures goes very far in assisting in overall performance and forage production. Pastures with an average pH of 6.5 (or a range of 6.0-7.0) will allow for maximum nutrient utilization for optimal pasture growth and production. Fertilize pastures according to the seasons and expected performance



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demands. Apply fertilizer based upon soil test results to maximize pasture potentials. Applications split throughout the pasture season encourage initial spring growth, regenerative summer growth, and, most important, fall root strengthening and subsequent winter protection.

Grooming

Grooming pastures is another essential criterion of successful pasture management and subsequent plant and forage growth. Once pastures are grazed to adequate levels (3-4 inches), remove horses and then clip or mow, simultaneously drag, and fertilize. The mowing will cut off uneaten vegetation (forages and weeds) and will be extremely beneficial for regenerating new plant growth. This new growth will be more palatable and nutritious for successive pasturing in an applied rotation practice. Dragging pastures with commercial tine or chain drags or even with home-made drag designs, will help break up manure deposits and aerate the sod or thatch cover. Depending on each grower's situation, the rotation of use should be done on a four- to five-week schedule. The size of the pasture and the related stocking needs will determine the rotational schedule in conjunction with weather conditions, nutrient practices, and the pasture quality. Stocking rates will have a tremendous impact on pastures, as will the eventing use of that pasture. One horse per acre should be a common goal for pasturing success in much of New Jersey. When combined with larger equine numbers, intensive grazing of one or more horses per acre can be achieved in an integrated pasture-rotation system. If the pasture is used for other reasons, i.e., turnout, exercise, and for various eventing/training, the relative success of the pasture will be impeded accordingly.

Seed Variety

Pasture forage species and blend selections should be analyzed, much like matching equine breeds to the task or specific job you want the horse to do. You

wouldn't generally pick a standardbred for dressage, so in parallel you would not plant alfalfa in high-traffic exercise paddocks. For general purposes it is best to select a mix of grasses and legumes that provide pasturing needs throughout the growing season.

Cool-season species, such as timothy, perennial ryegrass, brome grass, bluegrass, reed canary grass, and orchard grass provide early grazing in spring and early summer. They will also provide grazing when cooler temperatures arrive in fall. These grasses perform adequately when managed properly and provide partial pasture during the summer months. Cool-season grasses in our area generally flower or bloom by mid-May and continue into early June. At this time they tend to mature and go to seed, producing coarse stalky forage that horses generally will not eat. Mowing at this time is critical, but generally should be done before the plants reach this stage of maturity.

Warm-season species will continue to grow and bloom during the hotter, drier summer months if properly grazed, fertilized, and clipped. Within this grouping are legumes (clovers, trefoils, and vetches) that mature with the cool-season varieties, but offer continued regrowth during summer and into early fall under proper management.

Rest-Rotation-Recuperation

Pastures, not unlike horses, need rest and recuperation if they are to maximize production goals. Rest for a pasture will reduce the stress from equine traffic and allow the forages to recuperate and establish new growth. Rotational goals should allow plants to reestablish new leaf growth for photosynthesis. Without rest the pasture's regenerative process will not respond well to fertilization and water efficiently. Proper pasture health care, not unlike equine health care, is essential for maximum production. Pastures may also need insect, disease, and/or weed controls based on diagnosis by a specialist. If left untreated, infested pastures will be less productive and

possibly may even die out. The higher the stress factor placed upon the pasture, the greater the chance for poor performance and production.

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