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Horse Community Gives UNH A Unique Gift

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DURHAM, N.H. -- While it's not the largest gift in the history of the University of New Hampshire, it may certainly be the most unique.



States Premium Mara

A foal will be born in August on the Durham campus – the offspring of two parents with golden pedigrees. Conceived on Sept. 11, 2003, the horse will be sold to benefit the university's equestrian program, and is expected to command a price of between \$8,000 and \$10,000.

“It's a story that demonstrates how special the relationship is between our equine program and the horse community,” says Sue Bruns, manager of the UNH horse barns. “It's how two industry people felt they could help.”

Those people are Anne Whitten, owner of Horses Unlimited in Albuquerque, N.M., and Verne Batchelder, owner of River House Hanoverian in Piermont, N.H. Both farms train and breed hunter/jumper and dressage champions.

Whitten developed a relationship with UNH when she brought her dressage champion Pik L to the university to have his semen frozen for artificial insemination. At that time, Pik L was living in Gloucester, Mass.

“You can't collect semen during the riding season because it affects the horse's performance. We needed to collect off-season, and have it available when the mare was ready.”

There are very few semen freezing facilities offering such services to stallion owners in the United States and Whitten says it is invaluable to the horse community. As a way of saying “thanks,” she donated a sample of Pik L's frozen



Pik L ridden by Dr. Cesar Parra.

semen to the university so that a mare could bear his foal.

An 11-year-old Hanoverian and one of the few remaining approved stallions who is a direct descendant of the famous Pik Bube II, Pik L is one of the top U.S.-owned dressage horses and last year was named the American Hanoverian Society FEI and PSG Horse of the Year. In addition to his athleticism, Whitten says what makes Pik L exceptional is his “intelligence and good temperament.”

The search began for a mare. Enter Batchelder.

“We’ve had a relationship with UNH for a long time,” Batchelder says. “My wife’s parents and my wife are grads. We’re familiar with the riding program, do some teaching, and have competed at many shows. We were aware that UNH had Pik L’s frozen semen and that they were limited in quality mares.”

Batchelder says he wanted to help the university. He had a mare that matches well with Pik L and has proven offspring of her own. The mother-to-be is States Premium Mara, a 13-year-old German Hanoverian who descends from the legendary Matcho X.

“Matcho X mares are the jewels of the best breed bands in the world and especially States Premium ones,” Batchelder says. “Mara earned 8’s on all three gaits under saddle, and produced an exceptional Donnerhall filly in 2000. She represents the best of the bloodline.”

SPS Mara was inseminated last fall and has been on loan to the university since she conceived. Pregnant for 11 months, her due date is August 11, 2004. While she anxiously awaits the birth of her new charge, Bruns watches over Mara and will be on call 24/7 to welcome the new foal into the world. Both mom and baby will remain “guests” of UNH until the foal is weaned.

Note: Interested buyers should contact Bruns at 603-862-0027.

Photos:

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/ag/bruns.jpg>

Sue Bruns, manager of the UNH Horse Barns, and States Premium Mara.

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/ag/pikl.jpg>

Pik L ridden by Dr. Cesar Parra.

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/ag/mara.jpg>

States Premium Mara