

## Breeder of the Month - Spring Farm

Like so many people in the Thoroughbred industry, John Brown, DVM, who owns and operates Spring Farm, near London, Ontario, was introduced to horseracing through life on the farm.

"I was raised on a farm and my dad always liked horses, my granddad did too," says Dr. Brown. "They owned one that they raced at local fairs."

While Dr. Brown grew up around farm animals, he gained a strong interest in pedigrees. At first it was cattle, but when he bought a young three-year-old Thoroughbred filly at the age of sixteen, his interest switched to Thoroughbreds.

After graduating from veterinary college in 1966, Dr. Brown began to dabble in breeding Thoroughbreds racehorses, which included selling stock at Yearling Sales. His first yearling sale product was from an earlier purchase of a Court Martial mare in foal to Belmont winner Hill Prince. After making a few trips back and forth to Kentucky, each time bringing back more mares, what started as a hobby began to grow from there.

"Things got a little crowded at the little four-and-a-half acre farm my wife and I owned, so in 1975 we bought the farm we're on now," says Dr. Brown of Spring Farm. "It was basically a dairy cattle farm, and we had to redo it to suit Thoroughbreds."

Located in Granton, about 20 miles north of London, and situated on 140 acres, the couple named it Spring Farm. A few years later they purchased 43 acres across from the farm, and then another 125 acres a little further down the road.



Spring Farm is currently home to approximately 75 horses, consisting of 20 broodmares, weanlings, yearlings, few boarders and their Thoroughbred stallion Saffir, who is by the Kentucky Derby winning sire Unbridled. (His first foals are two-year-olds of 2010). Previously they owned Elajjud, a son of multiple Graded Stakes winner Dayjur, who they lost in 2007 due to a paddock accident. However, his memory lives on, through his progeny.

"Elajjud had an absolutely first rate female family," he adds. "I feel his daughters will be excellent broodmares."

Priding himself as being a hands-on horseman, Dr. Brown prefers to breed for consistency and good quality rather than aiming for a Queen's Plate or Oaks winner every time.

"I just go about my business and try to raise them properly and hope that I can beat the averages and produce a lot of good racehorses," he says. "Having stakes winners and classic winners sure would be a big plus, but I've seen many people aim for something like the Oaks and never get it done."

While not often in the limelight, Spring Farm has been consistently in the top ten breeders' standings in Canada, and in 2009 earned over \$42,000 in CTHS Ontario Breeders Awards.

Over the years, Spring Farm has produced several stakes winners, including 2007 Sovereign Award finalist Stonetown, multiple stakes winner Bent Attorney, U.S. graded stakes winner Perfect Spy, etc.

A consistent participant at the CTHS Yearling Sales, Spring Farm-bred Yearling Sale grads earned over \$840,000 throughout the 2009 racing season, and have collected over \$4.8 million in racing earnings since 2000.

With a focus toward yearling production and producing consistent runners, this is when Dr. Brown's personalized expertise comes in.

"When it's time to start booking my mares, I like to study the pedigrees and analyze who I think would go best to which sires," he says. "And being a vet in this business, I can be more hands-on and do certain things that others in the breeding business can't." Dr. Brown points out that most breeders have to rely on a commercial trucker and send their mares ahead of time for breeding, then wait for the mare to come in season. For some mares, this can cause a lot of stress. However, he is able to recognize the immediate signs, saving on time, added expenses and stress.

"I know the signs, so I am able to send them down to be bred, and then they just turn around and come right back, that way I can help eliminate any stress," says Dr. Brown. "Placing mares for breeding into new surroundings with people and horses they're not familiar with can be a huge stress factor on them. This can affect their cycling and their ability to conceive."

Dr. Brown adds, "This saves on outside vet and boarding bills, and I feel makes breeding more efficient. And in this economy, we have to try to do anything to get ahead."



First foal of 2010 for Spring Farm

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