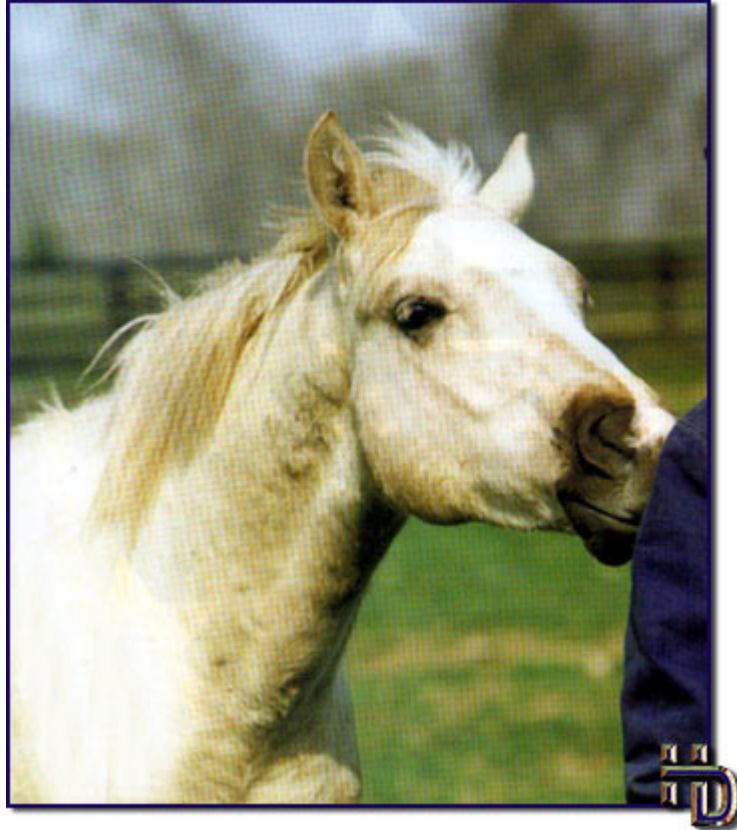


# Lifestyles



**C**harlie Hutton and his family aren't exactly up-to-date on the latest trends coming out of suburban America. They don't spend time playing Super Nintendo® or rollerblading, and they have a hard time remembering when they last saw a movie in their closest neighboring city. The family of five doesn't even own a goldfish -- no time for it, they say.

**B**ut talk Quarter Horse bloodlines, working cow horses or reining, and you've got them on a subject they know forward and backward and can talk about in their sleep. As it turns out, Charlie Hutton and his family are completely wrapped up in the horse business.

**F**or example, daughter Sarah Locker, 11, plans to get a scholarship after high school and become a veterinarian, Jessicah Keller, her 15-year-old sister, intends to be a horse trainer. And David Hutton, their older step-brother, already is.



*Hilldale Farm - a family affair.*

"This is what we do," Charlie explained, referring to the family's equine-focused lifestyle. "I think anyone who is capable of operating a horse business could make more money doing something else if they applied this much effort and determination. But

being trainers and breeders is not an occupation. It's what we love. It is who we are.

### **FROM THE BEGINNING**

Charlie Hutton always knew his life would revolve around horses in one fashion or another. As a boy, he helped out on his family's farm by working draft horses and mules. Later, he and his younger brother broke colts for their neighbors.

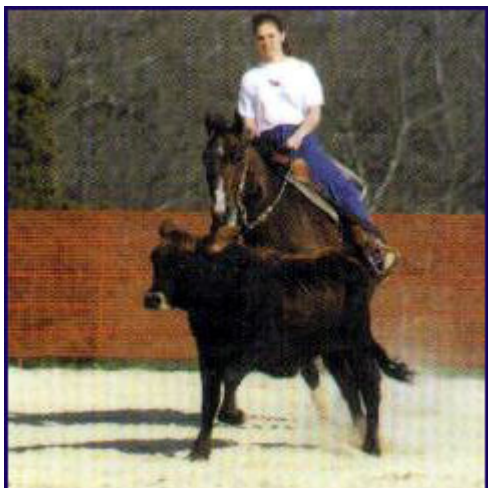
"I loved working with young horses, even back then," Charlie said.

After teaching in horse programs at Ohio State University and the University of Georgia for 14 years (Charlie has a Ph.D. in reproductive physiology), Charlie decided at age 40 that he'd rather be training horses full-time.

**"To me," Charlie said, "The working cow horse class best defines the true talent of the Quarter Horse -- better than any other event that is offered."**

"I knew if I didn't just go ahead and put all my efforts into training horses, then I'd never really know if I could be successful at it," he said.

The results: throughout the past 18 years, Charlie has trained and campaigned multiple AQHA high-point horses and World Show finalists. His step-daughter, Jessica, has claimed seven high-point awards, and his other step-daughter, Sarah, showed the high-point youth halter mare in 1997. Prior to that, his son David won the youth reining high-point in 1986, when he was 14.



*Charlie and Tammye Hutton endorse longevity training and maintaining healthy, sound horses. Nowhere can the results of their efforts be seen better than by taking a look at their horses' AQHA show records, which reveal numerous high-point wins with young and old horses, alike.*

**Jessica Keller**

- *1994 high-point working cow horse, 9th place*
- *1994 high-point halter mare, 1st place*

- *1995 high-point working cow horse, 1st and 4th place*
- *1996 high-point working cow horse, 1st, 5th and 9th place*
- *1997 high-point working cow horse, 1st, 2nd and 6th*
- *1997 high-point reining, 2nd place*
- *1998 high-point working cowhorse, 1st and 2nd place*
- *1998 high-point reining, 4th place*
- *1999 high-point working cow horse, 1st, 2nd and tied herself for 4th place*
- *1999 reining, 1st and 2nd place*

#### **Sarah Locker**

- *1997 high-point halter mare, 1st place*

#### **David Hutton**

- *1986 high-point reining, 1st place*

#### **Tammye Hutton**

- *1992 high-point junior halter mare, 10th place*
- *1993 high-point junior working cow horse, 7th place*
- *1995 high-point senior working cow horse, 3rd place*
- *1995 high-point working cow horse, 4th place*

## **HILDALE FARM**

Hilldale Farm is located on 120 acres of rocky Tennessee soil in the tiny town of Fayetteville. Purchased by Tammye Hutton's father, Don Davis, in 1970, the farm has played host to halter horses, pleasure horses, reining horses, working cow horses, mules and cattle through the years. Today, it is a training and breeding facility with some 20 broodmares and approximately 40-50 training horses and outside mares, depending on the time of year. Hilldale Farm's 1990 palomino stallion, Nu Chex To Cash, 1996 PHBA world champion senior reining and senior working cow horse, stands for about 40 outside mares. Nu Chex To Cash, by Nu Cash and out of Amarilla Chex, also was the 1999 AQHA high-point horse in reining and working cow horse.

Hilldale Farm focuses mostly on reining and working cow horse classes.

"To me," Charlie said, "The working cow horse class best defines the true talent of the Quarter Horse -- better than any other event that is offered. It shows all the characteristics that a true cattleman would want in his best mount.

## **IN THE BREEDING SHED**

Fences and cross fences stretch up and down Hilldale Farm's landscape, and fat broodmares with frisky foals at their sides graze in green pastures. A proud papa, Charlie stands out in the pasture with his favorite mares and babies. He can recite pedigrees faster than most people can name off their children, thanks to years of bloodline research and a sideline occupation as a pedigree commentator at horse sales.

"The mares that we've bought for Jessicah and Sarah were all selected with the idea that

they would show them, but also with the idea that they had the quality to be future broodmares," Charlie said. "Tammye and I both are fascinated with the breeding part of the horse business -- the genetics, trying to raise a better horse. We share the same weakness -- we'd buy every broodmare in the country if we were wealthy; we'd have all the good ol' mares."

**D**uring breeding season, Charlie, Tammye, David, Jessicah and Sarah all contribute time and energy to completing the myriad of details that go along with the business. They are assisted by two additional employees, an assistant manager and a grad student working on her internship from Texas A & M University. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are typical breeding days. Margie Carter, D.V.M., of Fayetteville, oversees almost all the farm's breeding and makes calls to Hilldale four days a week.

"**O**ur mares are kept in such good shape," Tammye said. "We grain them twice a day, and it's getting pretty common for our mares to foal as early as 10 to 10 1/2 months," Tammye said. We've had a really high success rate of mares that settled on the first breeding."

**A**t the entryway to the main barn at Hilldale Farm, a metal sign is tacked to the wall, which reads: "Buy the best you can afford. The best do the best, beget the best, and make the most." Charlie says this logic tends to pay off in their breeding business.

"**I**t's proven true for us," Charlie said. "We've tried to eliminate the 'welfare system' with our mares, where non-productive mares are supported by the producers. Sometimes it gets emotionally difficult when you get attached to a horse that gets to the point it can no longer carry its own weight. You have to see to it that each horse has a reason for being on the farm. Some may be able to partly pay their way with prize money, but it really hurts your business if you have a mare that's not paying for herself."

## **SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES**

**T**ammye's role in the farms' management, in addition to working with the horses, includes handling the books and background communication. Each day she returns phone calls and replies to e-mails, updates the farm's Web site and sends out stallion reports and foal videos.

"**I**'m really serious about keeping in touch with people, and I check my e-mail twice a day," Tammye said. "I can't stand for the phone to ring and not have someone answer it. I feel that customers will lose interest if they call here and no one calls them back. If you don't call them back, someone else will."



*Tammye Hutton (left) secures this foal in the stocks next to its dam before administering medication.*

**C**harlie agreed. "If people request a video, and we're home -- it will be out the next day. There are a lot of shortcuts that you can take with these horses, but none of them will lead to where you want to go. We like to keep the communication open around here."

**D**avid's responsibilities, on the other hand, center more around the farm's maintenance, including anything from truck driving and colt-

breaking, to fence-building and other property maintenance. Charlie plays a hand in just about every aspect of the operation, in addition to training horses. Jessicah and Sarah help out wherever they're needed.

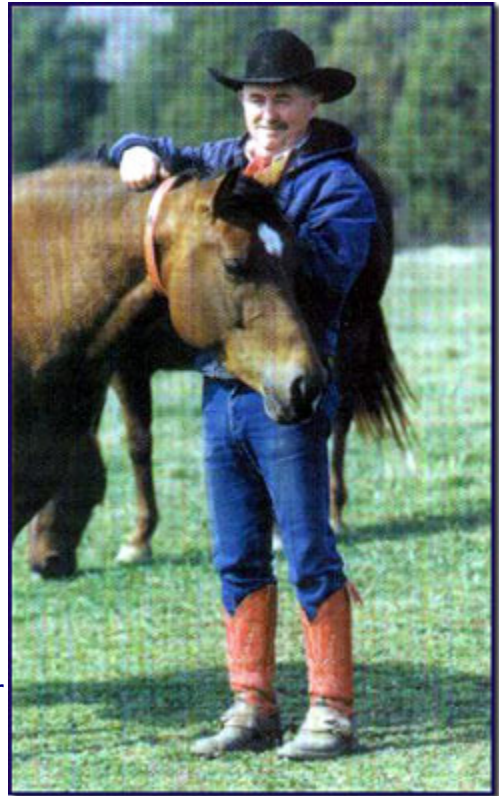
*The quality of broodmares at Hilldale Farm (right) is vital to the farm's success.*

"It takes me about a whole day just to do the clipping before a show," Jessicah said. "It's so nice whenever we have extra help around here. There's just so much work that has to be done all the time."

Because Jessicah and Sarah are still school-age, there are times when traveling to horse shows can be a little difficult to manage. Beginning with the 1999-2000 school year, Jessicah enrolled in a home-schooling program that she completes via computer. Sarah still attends public school, however, and she frequently works with her teachers to get her absences excused. It's typically not a problem; she's been on the honor roll for as long as any of them can remember.

### FROM HERE ON OUT

Charlie Hutton says his ultimate goal as a horse trainer is to be able to ride more of the horses that he and his family have bred and raised.



"My idea of retirement will be to ride the horses that I want to," Charlie said. "I'd like to see the trend in our business continue, which means that we earn our customer's trust and ride the horses that we've bred."

In the years to come, Jessicah intends to finish high school, then work for another trainer and eventually return to Hilldale Farm to work with her family's horses. David plans to continue breaking colts, pick up tips from horsemen he admires and compete successfully at the industry's largest horse shows. Sarah says she wants to get a scholarship and attend veterinary school after high school. The family's desire for continuing education is evident.

"Horse people that I know come in two kinds," Charlie said. "Those that are getting better, and the kind that think they are, but are really getting worse. My definition of a horseman is a student who learns from horses and other horse people."

- Article by Summer Ann Best
- Quarter Horse Journal
  - May, 2000