

NOTES ON THAI PONY

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For many centuries the horse has been the sturdy and esteemed servant of man. Its varied and valuable service in times of peace and war has been one of the chief factors in the rise and supremacy of the great nations of ancient, medieval and early modern times. With the exception of the present machine age when the usefulness of the horse is

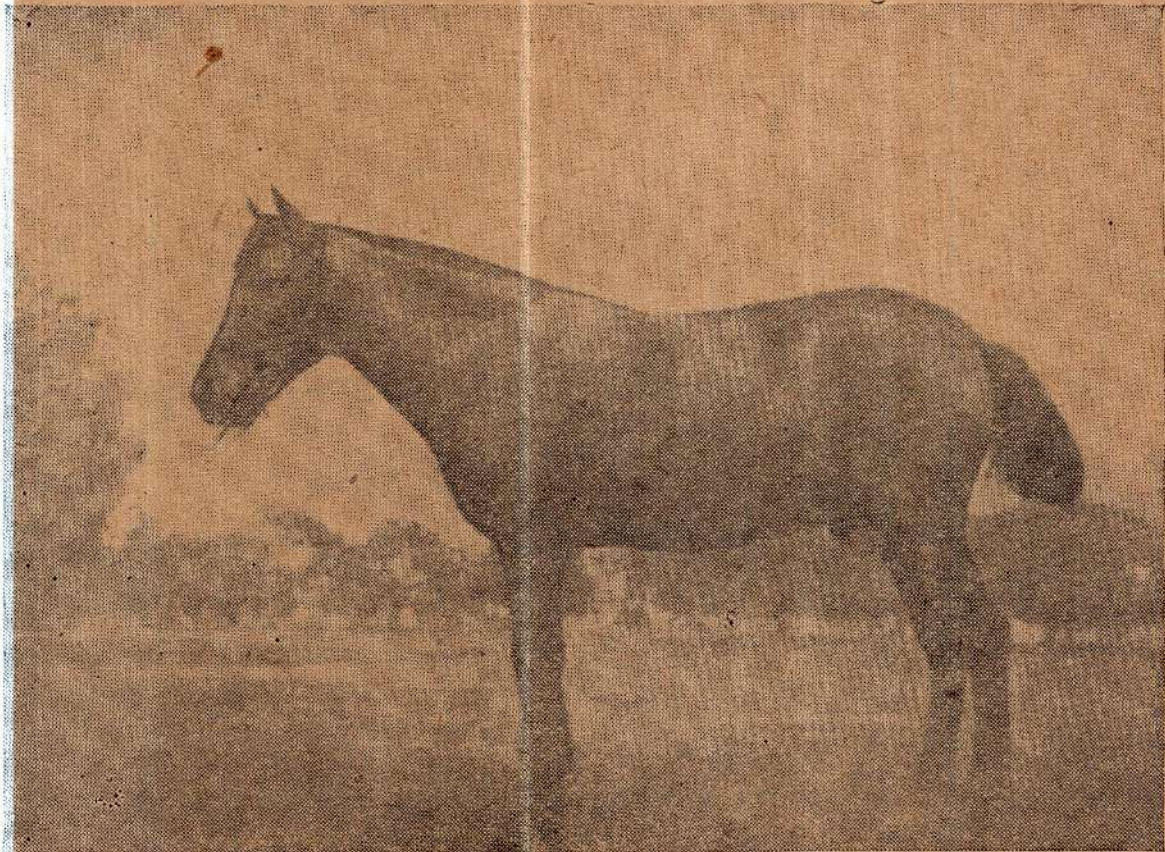
reduced considerably in many parts of the world, in all ages it had occupied an important position.

The Thai pony, like the horses or ponies in other countries, has been very useful to the people in Thailand for many years both in war and in peace time. Thus, it is of interest to record some notes on this pony.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE THAI (SIAMESE) PONY

As can be gleaned from the poem of the famous Thai Khun Chang Khun Phan with reference to the Thai history

about 460 years ago, there was a grey horse belonging to Khun Phan. This horse was very stout and powerful, highly

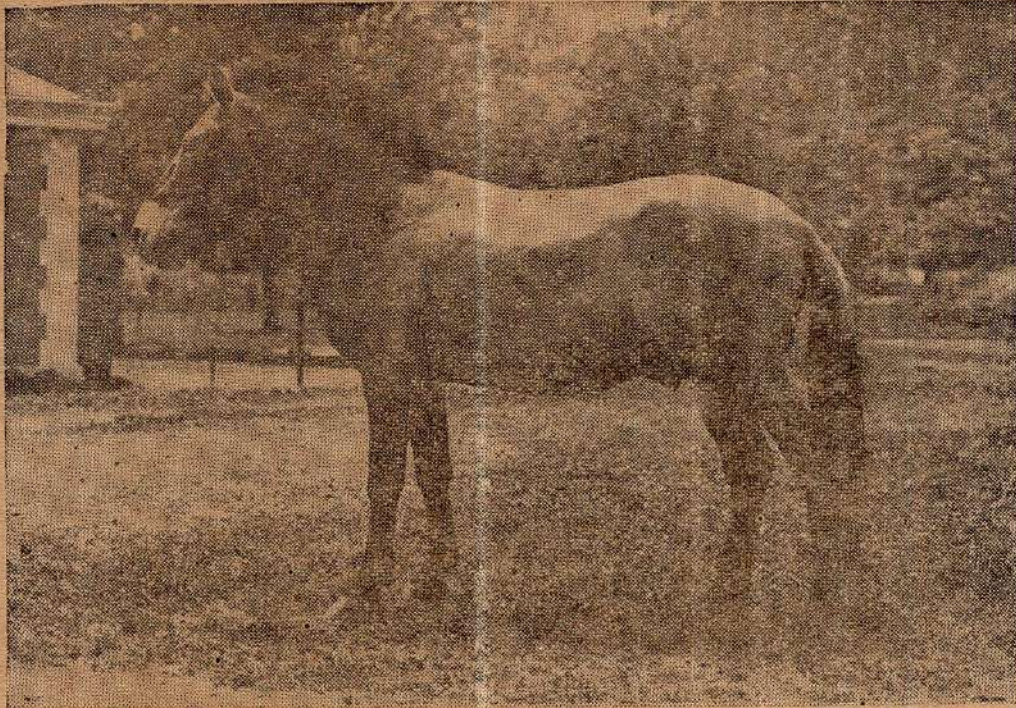


Burma pony gelding. (Courtesy of Jack R. Cormack, The Hutchinson Group, London)

intelligent and was considered by many Thais to be even magical in its performances because it had helped its master

(Khun Phan) escape from dangers several times.

This grey horse of Khun Phan was



Prejvalsey horse (Courtesy of John Tee-Van, D.Sc. General Director, New York Zoological Society.)



Prejvalsey horses (Courtesy of John Tee-Van, D.Sc. General Director, New York Zoological Society.)

the offspring of "E. Luang" (The Yellow mare), both of which were brought from Mahrid, the famous territorial province of Burma. It is thus possible, if not evident, that the Thai pony had been bred with the Burmese horses since few centuries ago.

The Thai pony may have had some relationship with the Prejvalsky horse and the Celtic pony, for there were many famous hippologists, namely ; Ridgeway (1905), Gay (1913), and Matthew (1926), who stated that the horse in the steppe of Central Asia was know as Prejvalsky's horse, so called from the name of its discoverer. They explained that there were horses and ponies as follows:

1. Prejvalsky horse of Central Asia.
2. Celtic Pony of Northern Europe.
3. The Libyan horse of Northern Africa.

It has been believed by the above mentioned hippologists that all of the present draft breeds have derived their origins from more or less mixing of the Libyan and Prejvalsky, the light horses from the Oriental group and the Libyan, and that the Celtic pony was the ancestor of all present pony breeds. In this connection, however, it is possible that the Mongolian pony may have descended from the original Celtic pony and the Prejvalsky horse of Central Asia, because it is difficult to contradict that these are not the ancestors of the Thai pony since the latter is in Central Asia and must have been taken to Mongolia by people in Central Asia who migrated to, or traded with, other parts of Asia, such as Mongolia which is close to Central Asia.

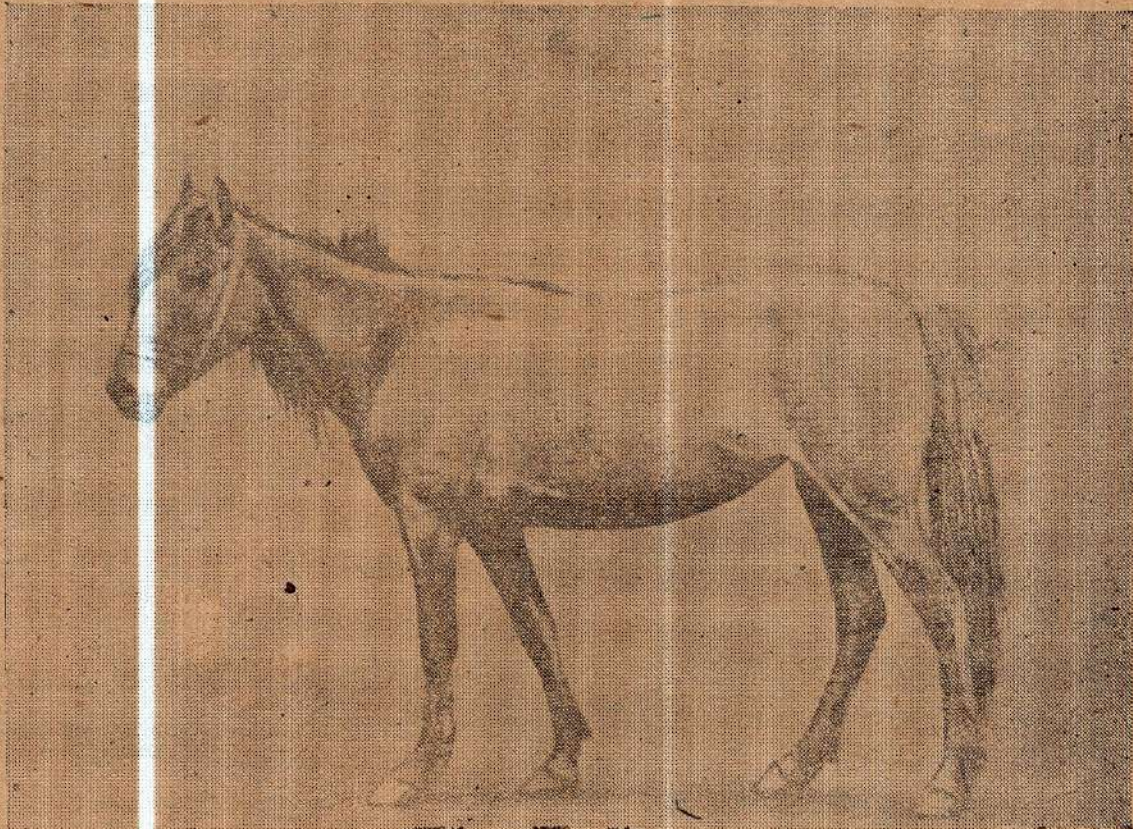
Likewise, it is possible that at least some of the Thai ponies must have originated from, or have some blood of, the Mongolian pony which is famous for its hardiness, capacity to carry load despite its small size, and endurance even on rough roads and trails. This type or breed of pony has a stocky body, short legs and bushy forelock and mane and tail especially. It might have been introduced to southern China through importation from Mongolia, or it might have been brought in large numbers by



A Libyan woman on horseback. (After Ridgeway in Origin and Influence of the Thoroughbred Horse.)

the Mongolian traders, or as a beast of burden in their southward migration and trades. Similarly, some people in southern China might have brought the Mongolian ponies in their migration or invasion of certain Asian regions south of China in the mainland of Asia, like

the territory which is now the separate Kingdom of Thailand. Therefore, it is possible that the remote ancestors of the Thai pony are the Celtic pony of Northern Europe and Prejvalsky horse of Central Asia



Professor Ewart's Mongolian pony (13.2) (Courtesy of Jack R. Cormack, The Hutchinson Group, London.)

PRESENT THAI PONY

At present, it is evident that some of the Thai ponies still largely possess the general body conformation and other characteristics as well as performance and endurance similar to those of the Mongolian pony. The other types of Thai pony are of course the results of cross-breeding either with other types

of imported ponies or with certain breeds of Oriental and Occidental horses.

While comparing the size, the average size of some Thai ponies is a little smaller than that of the Burmese ponies. Usually the high specimen of Burmese pony is about 13.2 hands at the withers whereas the so-called Thai pony, except

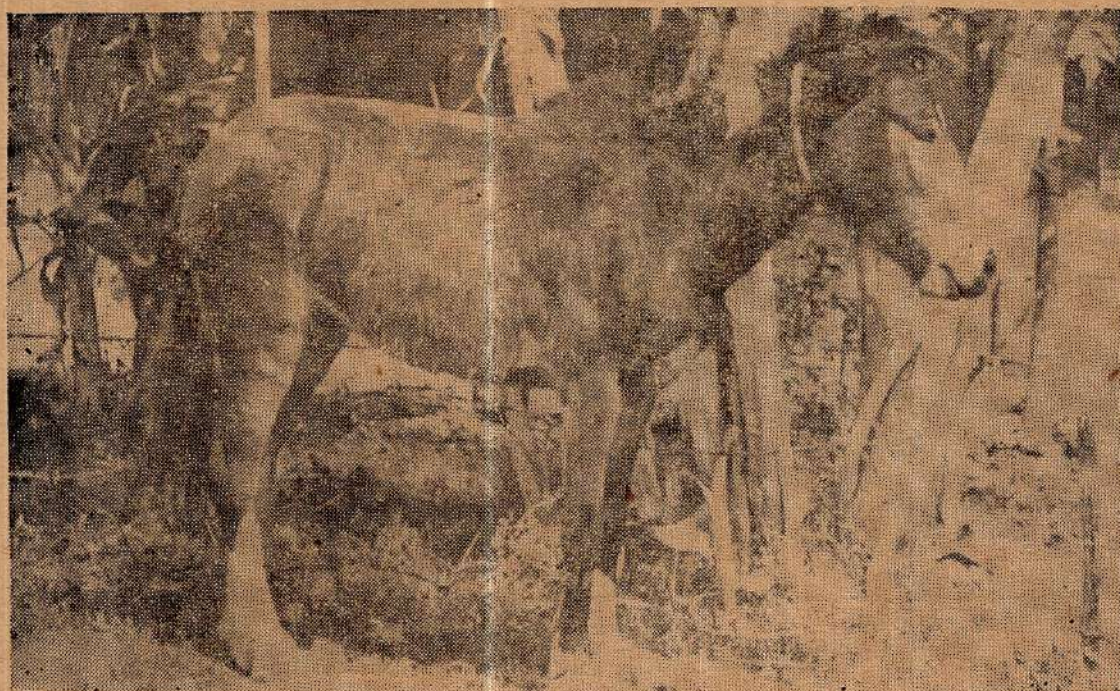
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in some particular cases does not exceed 12 hand high, and probably at its best when about 12 hands high.

It is sometimes called "Mah Klab" (The Native Miniature Pony). Bay, grey and black at present are the common colors; brown is rare. Its body has a great depth compared to its length. For a saddle pony, it has a fair looking head, neck and shoulders, and it jumps smo-

othly well; but its croup is slightly drooping and it is slow in running. It is much better "topped" than it is below its elbows and stifles; its fore-arms and gaskins are not very attractive and the hocks are scanty. For a draft pony, the animal is very hardy strong for its height, and is a good weight-carrier as might be expected.



Thai pony (10.2)

PONY POPULATION AND ITS USES IN THAILAND

For about forty years past, the horse population in Thailand has decreased rather than increased due mainly to the unpopularity and abolition of horse-carriage service in the towns and cities. So that nowadays horses are not seen as many as in former time.

Another reason that caused the Thai ponies' decreased was that in World War II, all civilian horses were mobilized by the Royal Thai Army to be used for military purposes. Most of them were killed

by the enemies or diseases, especially Surra.

As of 1956, the horse population of Thailand was 196,910 according to Dr. Valente Villegas in his report on "Observations on Livestock in Southeast Asia" in 1958.

Table I.— Showing the horse population of 1959 based on data collected by the Interior Sections of various Provinces of Thailand;

Region 1	Total	Region 2	Total	Region 3	Total
11 Changwads	9,575	7 Changwads.	5,335	6 Changwads	43,266
1. Bangkok	3,022	1. Chacherungsao	981	1. Nakhonratsima	6,125
2. Thonburi	12	2. Nakhonnayok	495	2. Chaiphoom	4,876
3. Ayuthya	805	3. Prajinburi	1,973	3. Buriram	7,262
4. Lopburi	1,876	4. Cholburi	1,218	4. Surin	9,316
5. Chainat	268	5. Rayong	220	5. Sisaket	4,210
6. Singburi	527	6. Trad	137	6. Ubolratthani	11,477
7. Angthong	2,061	7. Chanburi	311		
8. Saraburi	879				
9. Pathumthani	99				
10. Nonthaburi	9				
11. Samutprakan	19				
Region 4	Total	Region 5	Total	Region 6	Total
9 Changwads	87,418	7 Changwads	18,687	9 Changwads	11,508
1. Udonthani	5,811	1. Lampang	931	1. Pitsanulok	798
2. Nongkai	1,093	2. Maehongson	942	2. Sukothai	110
3. Loei	735	3. Chiengrai	3,587	3. Tahk	3,404
4. Skon-nakon	17,324	4. Chiengmai	9,975	4. Kampanget	259
5. Nakhonphanom	2,369	5. Nahn	1,932	5. Pijit	2,038
6. Konken	13,212	6. Lampon	150	6. Pejaboon	2,593
7. Mahasarkam	16,322	7. Prae	1,170	7. Nakonsawan	1,939
8. Roi-et	13,410			8. Uthaithani	153
9. Kalasin	17,142			9. Uttaradit	214
Region 7	Total	Region 8	Total	Region 9	Total
8 Changwads	4,681	7 Changwads	3,699	7 Changwads	433
1. Ratburi	1,112	1. Nakonsitamarat	1,562	1. Sonkla	222
2. Nakhonpathom	416	2. Chumpon	203	2. Trang	28
3. Suphanburi	1,540	3. Suratthani	1,876	3. Pataloong	54
4. Kanchanaburi	805	4. Ranong	7	4. Satool	—
5. Petburi	319	5. Krabi	38	5. Patani	50
6. Prachuabkirikan	481	6. Pangna	8	6. Yala	36
7. Samutsongkram	—	7. Puket	5	7. Narativat	45
8. Samutsakon	8				
Region 1 of 11 provinces (Changwad)					9,575
Region 2 of 7 provinces					5,335
Region 3 of 6 provinces					43,266
Region 4 of 9 provinces					87,418
Region 5 of 7 provinces					18,687
Region 6 of 9 provinces					11,508
Region 7 of 8 provinces					4,681
Region 8 of 7 provinces					3,699
Region 9 of 7 provinces					435
Grand Total number of horses.....					184,604

For the benefit of foreign readers who are not familiar with this part of the globe, a brief geography of Thailand is given hereunder:

Thailand is divided into the Northern Zone, North-Eastern Zone, Central Zone and Southern Zone. In the Northern Zone is Region 5 and the 7 Changwads of Chiengrai, Lampang, Chiengmai, Lamphoon, Nahn. Prae and Maehongsorn. In the North-Eastern Zone are Regions 3 and 4 and 15 Changwads of Kalasin, Konken, Chaiyapoom, Nakonpanom, Nakornrajsima, Burirum, Maharakam, Roi-et, Loei, Sakonakorn, Sisaket, Surin, Nongkai, Udorn Thani, and Ubolrajathani. In the Central Zone are the Regions 1, 2, 6, and 7 and 35 Changwads of Bangkok, Thonhuri, Kanchanaburi, Kampang-pet, Chantburi, Chachengsao, Chqlburi, Chainat, Trat, Tahk, Nakorn-nayok, Nakorn-patom, Nakornsawan, Nontburi, Patumthani, Prachuabkirikan, Prachinburi, Ayuthya, Pichit, Pitsanuloke, Petburi, Petchaboon, Rayong, Ratburi, Lopburi, Samut-prakarn, Samut-songkram, Samut-sakorn, Saraburi, Singburi, Sukhothai, Supanburi, Angthong, Uttaradit and Uthaitbani, In the Southern Zone are Regions 8 and 9 and 14 Changwads of Krabi, Chumporn, Trang, Nakornsithamraj, Naratiwart, Pattani, Pang-nga, Patalung, Puket, Yala, Ranong, Songkla, Satool, and Surattani.

The Thai pony population at present is small even though it is used widely in some provinces of Thailand, mostly as beast of burden, especially in the northern part of Thailand, for pulling two-wheeled or four-wheeled vehicles on rough-roads, and for riding and freight from village to village. But it is not used for ploughing unlike the draft horses in other countries. Some small villages, which are connected by trails or paths, can be reached only by walking. On these paths, the horse is only a means to use for transportation. Some of the ponies at present are used for horse racing and for riding like the equitation class in the Polo Club.

As Thailand has to import the gasoline and fuel-oil from abroad, the use of motor-cars and motor-cycles will not be available in war-time, when the importation of gasoline is impossible, so that the use and improvement of the Thai ponies should be more encouraged.

About five decades ago, in Bangkok and in certain provinces of Thailand, the carriages and carts drawn by two or more horses were commonly used to carry passengers and cargoes. Expensive horse-drawn carriages were then used by the well-to-do families.

It has been said that in December 1897 when H.M. King Chulalongkorn (5th. King of Chackri Dynasty) returned from Europe, His Majesty rode from the

pier on a royal coach pulled by three pairs of fine horses in addition to other long ceremonials in his honour. The royal coach these days has not been used for nearly thirty years past: but according to the request of Thai people this traditional ceremonial for their Majesties would be restored by the present government led by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat.

In Lampang, a northern province of Thailand, horses are still used for pulling carriages and carts. The Thai Army outside the capital also still uses a considerable number of horses; Likewise, the Cavalry Inspector General Department, the Army Animal Affairs Department, the Royal Household Department, and recently the Police Department are still using some horses for various purposes.

pony improvement projects of the present Thai government

The methods of improving and encouraging the use of the Thai pony as being done by the ministry of Defence are as follows:

1. Horse Racing.
2. Horse Shows.
3. Increased Budget for Horse Improvement.
4. Breeding Services, using certain Breeds of Stallions.
5. Breeding Techniques, with Special Reference to Artificial Insemination.

1. **Horse Racing.**— Bangkok has two very up-to-date race courses, namely; The Royal Bangkok Sports Club, and The Royal Turf Club of Thailand. Some provinces namely Chiangmai, Nakonratsima, and Konken also hold horse racing events on small scales. Race horses are classified hereunder:

- (a) Thoroughbred horses.
- (b) Thai horses 12-2 hands in height.

- (c) For horses 13-3 hands in height.
- (d) Country-bred horses over 13-2.5 hands in height.
- (e) Country-bred army horses.
- (f) Imported stallions and mares of high quality.

2. **Horse Shows.**— The horse shows are occasionally held, but the public reaction seems to be not very enthusiastic.

3. **Increased Budget for Horse Improvement.**— An additional budget is given to the various governmental departments for activities concerned with horses and their improvement.

4. **Breeding Services, using certain Breeds of Stallions.**— The breeding service is done for several purposes. So the purpose of horse breeding is modified from time to time to suit the purpose. Presently, the Thai pony is not yet improved for agriculture or utility, but mainly for military and racing purposes. However, the wartime worth of horses is

recognized by the Thai Army, and a far-sighted policy has been laid down by the present government for improving horse breeding in general.

At the Animal Breeding Division, Army Animal Affairs Department, Phayathai Road, Bangkok, there are expensive thoroughbred stallions ready for breeding services to the civilian's mares to be brought in for breeding purposes. Each service is often free of charge, or at a very small charge of a about 100 baht or 80 baht. This service is given through out the year. The Army Animal Affairs Department of the Thai Army in Bangkok tries to encourage owners to improve their horses. but certain owners of ponies do not show much interest to bring in their mares to be bred.

For the production of race horses as well as as horses and ponies to be used to by the Thai Army, local mares are bred to Arab stallions. While the Department concerned charges a very small fee for each service to a civilian's mare, the private owners of stallions often charge fees as follows :

700 baht for the first service ; 400 baht for the second service ; afterwards, free of any charge. With mares over 13 hands in height, the breeding fees charged by the private owners are 900 baht for the first service and 500 baht for the second service.

During every breeding season of the year starting from 1952 between March and October, several good stallions are

sent to the provinces for breeding service to the privately owned mares free of charge. The reason why they send the stallions at this time of the year is because from March to October the farmers have less work to do on their farms so they can pay better attention to their mares. Nevertheless, there is a regulation about breeding service to the effect that a stallion can be borrowed for one breeding season, provided the owner or owners have at least ten mares in one community,

5. Breeding Techniques, with Special Reference to Artificial Insemination.— the breeding of horses is conducted by both natural and artificial means ; the former is by the natural mating of the animals and the latter by artificial insemination. In artificial insemination, the semen from the stallion is collected. Usually the stallion is allowed to serve a mare in heat, but before the stallion inserts its penis into the mare's vagina, the operator seizes the penis and put it into the artificial vagina, having practically the same temperature, lubrication, tension and so forth to make the stallion ejaculate its semen into the artificial vagina. There-after, this semen is diluted with a prepared medium to make it sufficient to inseminate 10 to 20 mares for a period of from one to several days. All the mares in heat are then inseminated artificially with the use of an inseminating instrument. By this method there is a possibility of breeding hundreds of

mares with several stallions in one breeding season, otherwise one stallion would

be able to serve only a few mares.

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๘. ร.อ. กาญจน รัตนวราหะ "ม้ายี่หมอก" หนังสือพิมพ์ทหารม้า ปีที่ ๓ พ.ศ. ๒๔๙๒ เดิม ๙ หน้า ๓๕-๔๑ โรงพิมพ์กรุงเทพ ฯ วารศัพท์

๙. ประวัติ การ แข่งม้า ใน ประเทศไทย (คู่มือ ใน งาน ของ ราชคฤณ มัย สยามคม แห่งประเทศไทย ใน พระบรมราชูปถัมภ์)

๑๐. สถิติปศุสัตว์และสัตว์พาหนะ พ.ศ. ๒๕๐๒ (๑๙๕๙) แผนกประมวลสถิติ และชีวประวัติ สำนักงานเดชาอนุการกรม กรมปศุสัตว์