



Kerckhaert Dura Plain Becomes the Shoe of Choice

We learned recently, from a dealer in the Rocky Mountain region, that one of their major outfitters for pack and trail horses has switched to the Kerckhaert Dura Plain shoes for the 2014 season. They like the wear and overall strength of the shoe, and find less lameness issues with the flat shoe than toe and heel shoes. The reduced lameness benefit is a good selling point in helping to convert your customers from toe and heel shoes to the Kerckhaert Dura Plain.

Support Your Dealer

You have a primary dealer that you like to purchase your farrier supplies from, but you see a great deal offered on horseshoe nails from another store and it's hard to resist. We have all been guilty of getting drawn in to special deals; maybe the quality of the product isn't as good, maybe it's a store you don't buy from regularly, but that low price was just too good to pass up. Be careful. This buying strategy could be bad for your business.

Here are a few things to consider before you decide to bypass your primary dealer and go for that special deal.

Your Dealer:

- Understands your buying preferences
- Is willing to special order products when needed
- Carries quality products you can depend on
- Stands by the products they carry
- Is interested in the success of your business, and in you personally

All of these attributes add value to the purchases you make from your dealer. When you are tempted to purchase elsewhere for a few cents difference, you risk hurting your dealer's business; making it difficult for them to sustain their level of service to you. No one wins in this scenario, so think about extending the same level of loyalty to your dealer that they are giving to you.

2014 AFA CONVENTION BIG SUCCESS

The 2014 AFA Convention, held recently in Reno, NV was a resounding success. This is the first convention in quite a few years to have good overall attendance and activity in the marketplace. The FIA worked closely with the AFA to set up a schedule that maximized the traffic in the marketplace and the format worked well. They are now planning the 2015 Convention, to be held in Overland Park, KS (Kansas City metro area). With the momentum they gained this year, the AFA appears to be headed in a positive direction. The Kerckhaert-Liberty Intermediate Division was a new division this year in the competition and we are pleased with the positive reviews we heard from all who participated.



Photo Credit: Dick Booth, Boca Publishing

Dan Burke from FPD presents the bronze trophy to Victor Frisco, CJF, the winner of the high point award for the Kerckhaert-Liberty Intermediate Division. See all the Kerckhaert-Liberty Intermediate Division winners on FPD's Hoofwall™ Blog at farrierproducts.com/blog.



Wire to Wire - The Pressure Never Ends

By Steve Norman

My work at the Thoroughbred farms in Kentucky always starts with the evaluation process. This is especially critical working with the foals, weanlings and yearlings. This is a process that includes the farm manager or staff member in charge of the particular horses I'm working on. In the very early stages, when confronted with serious conformation and hoof imbalance issues that may be better treated surgically, I will ask that a veterinarian be consulted. The pressure on all parties in dealing with high dollar bloodstock makes this type of cooperation critical.

I begin by having the horse walked away from me, always on a hard flat surface. This hind view allows me to look at medial and lateral deformities of the hoof capsule and the conformation of the hind limbs but it also gives me a good view of the heel length of the front feet. When they walk back to me I am looking at the front-end conformation. Is the chest narrow or wide? Are the knees, ankles and hooves in alignment in relationship to the rest of the body? This initial evaluation will usually give me some strong clues as to what I will find when I pick up the foot. **(Photo 1)** shows evaluation of alignment problems - toed out at ankle, likely to have sheared heel or other medial heel problems.



My biggest concern in working with the foals less than 3 months old is the ankles. The growth plates are changing rapidly and close early in the ankle area so I have to address these deformities very quickly. I will usually be making my first evaluation at the age of 2 weeks to 30 days old. I trim the feet to balance medial or lateral angular limb deformities, in an effort to even and stabilize the growth plates. If it is not too serious a deformity we will often treat the hoof capsule by using extensions, as there is very little foot to work with in the first three months. If it is a serious toed-in (varus) deformity or

extremely toed-out (valgus) the vet may do a periosteal elevation surgery. This is where the early cooperation between the farm, the farrier and the vet is critical. I never hesitate to ask the farm to call in a vet when I think the problem is too severe for the correction I might be able to offer. **(Photo 2)** showing ankle deformity from front, **(Photo 3)**, showing high lateral heel, low medial heel.



One of the problems in dealing with deformities of the ankle is the resulting hoof capsule distortion. Whether I put the correction on or the foal tries to correct on its own there will be distortion to the hoof capsule. You can see from the photographs of some of the cases I worked on recently that you will often get a hoof that has a lateral flare (to the outside) and straighter medial (inside) wall. The hoof capsule of the foal in the Kentucky climate is very soft, wet and easily manipulated by compression, either weight bearing or weight shifting as in



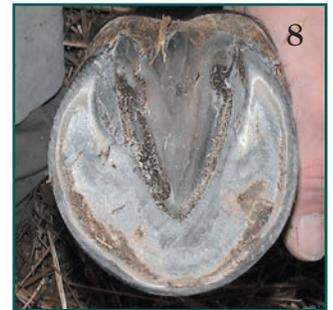


a lateral or medial extension. Unfortunately, most of the correction we are applying is creating an uneven weight bearing laterally. **(Photo 4 & 5)** showing resulting hoof distortion, lateral flare of left front.

If I see a knee deformity early I will begin to consider how to approach the correction but only after I have dealt with the ankles. I think knee deformities can be dealt with as long as 9-12 months after birth. But if I think the ankles are ok but suspect the knees have a tendency to bow out I will consider a lateral extension as an option to provide support. Here again, the reality of this support option is a resulting hoof capsule distortion. We are trying to fix something above - offset knees- at the expense of the hoof.

(Photo 6) shows a knee deformity. Some common problems to be addressed are deep flexor contractions that result in high heels, a mule shape to the hoof and pressures on the toe area. The excess of heel moves the heel forward, putting more pressure on the toe, sometimes even causing a separation or toe crack. I simply drop the heels moderately and reshape the toe area, often putting a bevel on the toe to aid breakover. **(Photo 7 & 8)** - Hoof with contracted tendons with tight, high heels, untrimmed and trimmed. **(Photo 9 & 10)** show distortion of toe and crack as a result of the high heels.

No matter what decisions you make when working on these young horses you have to realize there may be repercussions. Most of the time you are making decisions that have trade-offs, but that is part of the pressure of the industry. ■



STEVE NORMAN is a farrier living in Lexington, Kentucky. He has been shoeing thoroughbred horses his entire career and divides his time between the breeding farms and the race tracks.

JUST A REMINDER New Educational Videos

New videos have been uploaded to the farrierproducts YouTube channel. The new videos include "Evaluating the Gypsy Vanner," "Evaluating the Shire Horse," "Evaluating the Thoroughbred," "Evaluating the Arabian," and "Evaluating the Standardbred." These are good videos to link on your website. Go to www.youtube.com/farrierproducts or farrierproducts.com/farriery/videos.html to view the entire list of videos



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