

Media Release

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Aussies ride into Canada

Leading Australian breeders look set to join other equine producers who currently supply North America with in excess of 30,000 horses imported annually¹.

This spring, Australia's largest breed organisation – the Australian Stock Horse Society - makes its debut trade mission to Canada. The tour incorporates the Masters Tournament at Spruce Meadows, Alberta, 7-11 September 2005 where the Society will have a trade stand.

Society head, Mr Steve Guihot said, "The tour is in direct response to significant interest from the North American market for new breeds to service the boom in recreational and sports riding."

The Australian Stock Horse, which featured in the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, has a rich history. The Australian Stock Horse (ASH) developed from bloodstock transported to the colony on the first fleet in 1788.

Subsequent selective breeding created for early settlers a horse they could trust to explore the harsh environment. It also became the mount of choice for cavalrymen in military campaigns in India, the Boer War and other conflicts in the British Empire. Over time, careful breeding created *one* horse, which was suited to work, rest and play.

Mr Guihot added, "As a Society our goal now is to build on the awareness created by the 2000 Olympics and the 2003 Polocrosse World Cup. Our breeders are now very keen on showcasing the versatility and superb temperament of the breed to the Canadian market."

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¹ Source: "Equine Industry Export market Opportunities study 2003 Equine Canada

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There are currently more than 9500 registered members of the Australian Stock Horse Society. A 2004 study conducted by the Hunter Valley Research Foundation found that seventy seven per cent of ASH breeders surveyed indicated an interest in the export market.

Commenting further on this inaugural trade mission, Mr Guihot added the purpose was to:

1. Participate in the largest horse exhibition in Canada in order to gather intelligence on the Canadian /North American horse industry.
2. Participate in the breed in demonstrations and obtain feedback from the market on its potential.
3. Investigate the opportunity of participating in the 'Battle of the Breeds' in 2006.
4. Liaise with other existing associations that could benefit from using Australian Stock Horses.

The Society has extended an invitation to subscribers of ASH International who may wish to join this breeder trade mission. Aside from visiting Spruce Meadows, the tour is likely to include activities in Calgary and Vancouver Island. For more information contact: export@ashs.com.au.

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EDITOR'S NOTES:

1. Established in 1971, the Australian Stock Horse Society is based in Scone, New South Wales.
2. With more than 9500 Members and over registered 150,000 horses, the Society is Australia's largest organisation of recreation/work horses.
3. Its mission is to maintain the heritage and to promote the bloodlines and high performance of the Australian Stock Horse among equestrian activities and the public.
4. **For more see www.ashs.com.au**