

# Media Release

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## China Eyes Australian Stock Horse potential for Beijing

**The Australian equestrian industry looks set to benefit from heightened Chinese awareness of the potential for the Australian Stock Horse to fuel its Olympic hopes for 2008.**

An equestrian trade mission to China this week has been boosted by news that the current front runner<sup>1</sup> in the Eventing World Cup is a registered Australian Stock Horse.

Australian Stock Horse Society chief, Mr Steve Guihot said, "While we promote this as the "breed for every need" in Australia, initial indications are that the Chinese market would be interested in the breed for recreation and sport, rather than for work."

The trade mission, led by the Hunter Export Centre, features the Australian Stock Horse Society. The Society began researching its export potential following the 2000 Olympics, with the support of the Department of State and Regional Development which enabled the Society to employ a business development co-ordinator.

**The ten-day mission will visit Beijing, Nanjing, Wuhan and Shanghai departing Sydney on 24 September 2004.**

The mission was due to depart for Shanghai on 26<sup>th</sup> September but recent strong interest from the country's leading horse magazine has brought this forward by two days. The publication, *Chinese Horse Industry*, has leapt at the opportunity to bring the delegation to Beijing to meet with forty riding clubs. The party will meet with three of these on the first day of their visit.

After Beijing the party travels to Nanjing which is home to a state of the art 2000 acre equestrian centre currently under construction. While there they will meet with the Nanjing Racing Horse Company and Nanjing Sports Bureau.

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<sup>1</sup> After 16 of the 17 qualifying rounds, current competition front runner is West Australian Sonja Johnson riding *Ringwould Jaguar*. The 13 year old gelding is affectionately known as "Jag". Sonja, aged 36, has earned 200 points in the qualifying rounds, ahead of a second-placed Swede Linda Algotsson and third-placed Brit William Fox-Pitt.

## **China eyes Australian Stock Horse Potential /2...**

On September 30<sup>th</sup> the party flies to Wuhan to attend the second national horse festival. The delegation will host the **only Australian trade exhibit at the show**. The festival includes a number of events with competing teams from a dozen leading provinces which essentially “supply” the Chinese Olympic equestrian team.

Mr Guihot added, “The feedback we’ve been getting is that while they are interested in the horses themselves, because the market is relatively under-developed, they are particularly interested in accessing our skills in training and horsemanship.

“Our business development co-ordinator Ray Hynes has been working closely with the Hunter Export Centre to prepare a number of materials and resources for the Chinese market. It is important that we get our message across very clearly and in addition to general information brochures, DVDs and posters, we will be using this premier equestrian event in China to develop our contact database,” Mr Guihot added.

The Society had seen a consistent growth in traffic from South East Asia to its official website more than double in the past six months. In a further recent study of Society members, almost 60% stated that they were either quite or very interested in developing their export potential.

“Export for us was never a case of IF but WHEN and the interest from China is certainly there. Given the number of additions to our itinerary the interest is growing daily, which I think augurs well for the success of this mission,” Mr Guihot added.

The 14 person mission party is headed by Hunter Export Centre’s Don Champagne and Helen Xie, Australian Stock Horse Society’s Steve Guihot and Ray Hynes plus the Society’s Honorary Veterinarian Bill Howey, farriers, breeders, equine product and service suppliers and a representative from Scone TAFE. The group was formed with the assistance of Coal & Allied Community Trust.

**Ends 22 September 2004. Contact Steve Guihot or Ray Hynes (02) 6545 1122.**

### **EDITOR’S NOTES: ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK HORSE SOCIETY:**

1. The Australian Stock Horse Society has 9000 Members and has registered over 150,000 horses since establishing itself in 1971.
2. The Society is the largest organisation of recreation/work horses in the country.
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 general public. It aims to (i) preserve the heritage and identity of the Australian Stock Horse; (ii) promote the development and popularity of Australian Stock Horses throughout Australia and the world and (iii) maximise the benefits of owning a Registered Australian Stock Horse and being a Member of The Australian Stock Horse Society.
4. The ASHS is headquartered in Scone, NSW and currently employs ten staff.
5. **For more see [www.ashs.com.au](http://www.ashs.com.au)**

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