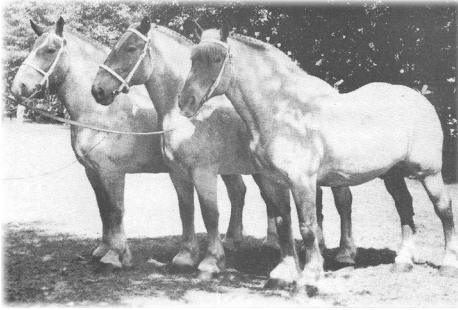
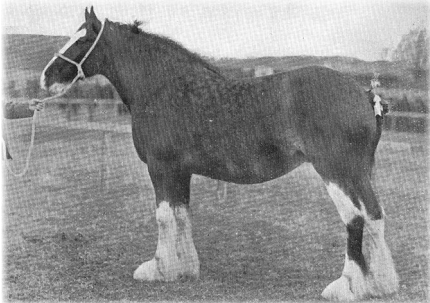


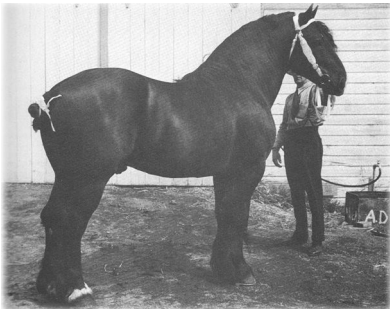
A Brief Overview Of Draft Horse Numbers - by Merlin Ford



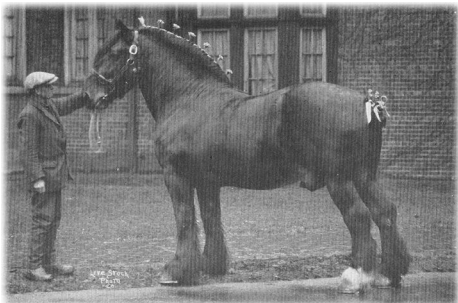
Three roan Belgian geldings owned by Harvey Osborn, Weyburn, SK in the 1960's.



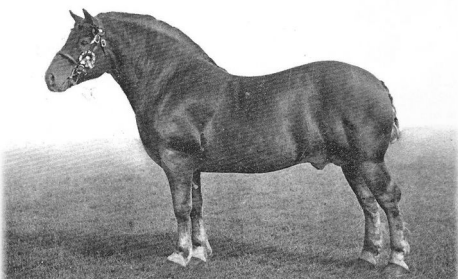
Rosalind – one of the great Clydesdales of her time. She was purchased by the University Of SK in 1923.



Riverbend Monkoncarlaet – Percheron. Purchased by George Fraser of Tate, later by Jonathan Fox.



Marden Jupiter – Gr. Ch. Shire Stallion at Chicago in 1924 for the Experimental Farm at Lacombe, AB.



A Suffolk from the early 1900's.

I've spent a bit of time over the past couple of years thinking about the number of draft horses that are being bred at the current time. I decided that it might help to put together a summary of draft horse numbers for the past number of years, as well as a few from the current time – just to see where we really do stand.

I want to start off by giving the first word to my old friend Eddie Arnold. It is now four years ago since Eddie passed away – just a few months shy of his 107th birthday. A very interesting man, his experience and memory regarding Clydesdale horses was second to none.

I came across a letter of his the other day in which he said, "I went to the Brandon Winter Fair for the first time in 1923. There were 28 Clydesdale stallions in the aged class. The grand champion was Arnprior Emigrant, a good draft colt rising two years".

I don't suppose that there has been (or ever will be) a draft horse show in our time (World Shows included) where we will ever see 28 aged stallions in one class.

Just below is a chart which shows when the different association's were formed.

Association	Year Formed
Clydesdale Horse Association of Canada	1886
Canadian Shire Horse Association	1888
Canadian Percheron Association	1907
Canadian Belgian Draft Horse Breeders Association	1907
Canadian Suffolk Horse Society	1910

A note about the Suffolk stud book. It is a softcover and "contains pedigrees of registrations from the date of incorporation – April 27, 1910 – up to and including June 1, 1939". That one stud book covers almost thirty years, and despite that, there are only a total of 307 stallions and 352 mares that were registered. The Suffolk is one of the most interesting livestock breeds in existence – but unfortunately they have had more than their share of lean years.

Rather than include numbers from every decade, I'm going to include only some of the highlights. I think it will be easier to follow, and it will still allow for some helpful comparisons.

In 1920, Saskatchewan had over one million horses, more than any province in Canada. The Stallion Licensing Board listed the purebred stallions as follows:

Clydesdales	Percherons	Belgians	Shires
1,378	872	176	38

In 1930, Saskatchewan still had over one million horses, but numbers started to drop the next year, and by 1951 the province's horse population had fallen to about 304,000.

In the 1930 US Census, Percherons made up over 50% of the entire population of registered horses in the US (including light horses). The draft horse was in for some tough years however, and the chart below will show how Percheron registrations changed in the US from the 1930's through to the mid 50's.

Year/ # Reg'd	Year/ # Reg'd	Year/ # Reg'd	Year/ # Reg'd
1930 – 2,312	1933 – 2,651	1936 – 5,000+	1954 – 85

That isn't a typo. In 1954 there were only 85 Percherons registered in the U.S. An amazing drop when you consider that only 18 years before that they had registered over 5,000.

In 1946, the last Shire horse in Canada was registered. It would be another 37 years (in 1983) before a Shire horse was registered in this country again. The current Canadian Shire Horse Association was incorporated one year later (1984).

In 1947, the Clydesdale stallion Windlaw Proprietor was bought from Ray McLaughlin by the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture for \$2500. In 1953 the stallion was moved to the Prince Albert Jail Farm and the U of S Clydesdales were reduced to about 7 head.

The American Suffolk Horse Association ceased to exist. They reorganized, and held their first meeting in 15 years in May of 1961.

Any of us who enjoy draft horses owe a great big debt to those breeders who kept on through the lean years of the 50's and 60's. I wonder if any of them realized how critical they were to the future of the draft horse.

The chart below will show just where things were at in the 1960's. These numbers are from the United States, but things were very similar in Canada.

Year	Percherons	Belgians	Clydesdales	Shires	Suffolks
1962	129	446	34	0	0
1963	116	530	15	6	4

In the spring of 1964, the first issue of the Draft Horse Journal was published. Maurice and Jeannine Telleen of Waverly, Iowa sent this magazine to 2800 potential subscribers. The response was excellent and today the magazine goes to over 20,000 subscribers around the world.