

Must Be Something In The Water!

By Deb Kidwell, Lake Nowhere Mule and Donkey Farm

Last year we decided to breed our team of Belgians, Pam and Sue. Both were eight years old, stand 18.2 hands and weigh over 2,100 pounds apiece and had never been bred. They were brought to Kentucky when they were weanlings from Canada and came from pulling stock. They are sweet, placid girls and we thought they would make great mule mamas. Although we stand 15.2 hand AMJR "PCF Genesis" here at the farm, and he has a superb pedigree (own son of Preacher, grandsire Bully Boy, great-grandsire Jen Jack), he is black with white points and we wanted to breed to sorrel. I contacted Nicky Howell in Trenton, Tennessee to see if we could use his 15.3 hand, AMJR jack "Howell Farms Bill". Nicky said to bring the girls down. Both girls were bred, Pam settled, Sue did not.

Pam's pregnancy was uneventful and we expected a baby between February 15th and the 20th. February came and went. March brought us weather that included record rain and a winter storm all within the same week. Every dawn before Susan, our farm manager and the hands arrived and every night before bed I would brave the elements and check on Pam who was in the barn lot with Sue. Pam would look at me while she munched her hay with a look that said, "What???" March 19th, Mike Turbeville of 6 T's Belgians in Dresden, Tennessee stopped by. It was pouring again and the temperature was dropping and in the 30's. Mike asked me if Pam would let him feel her "bag" and I told him she would and feel free to check her. Mike checked her, ran back to the barn and said, "It'll be next week".

March 20th at dawn I debated on whether to have another cup of coffee or check Pam. After all, a man with a lot more experience than I had told me she was a week off from foaling. I headed to the barn. Lo and behold, I had a baby on the ground! He was still wet and was laying in the hay. Imprinting began. Then he stood up! He looked part giraffe! He nursed and Pam was a good mama. Susan showed up and once we had him dried off,



"Winchester" with his mama, Pam at three days old

treated his umbilical cord and located and checked the placenta we really started to evaluate the little guy. Dr. Burnley DVM stopped by on her way to work and told us that she had never seen a mule foal that big and she rides Clydesdales! We decided to measure him even though his legs weren't even straight yet. He measured 48". Wait a minute, 12 hands at birth?

This got us thinking about what the cur-



From left, Susan Powell, farm manager and Deb Kidwell, standing with "Winchester" and mama at six days old.. Both ladies are 5'8" tall so that gives you a comparison as to how tall he is.

rent Guinness record might be for the world's tallest mule. I went to the library and looked at the Guinness book, nothing for mules. I went online to the Guinness website, nothing on mules. So, I called Ben and Neta to see if they might know what the record might be. "Nope". I told Neta, "OK, I'll try the American Donkey and Mule Society and call you back". ADMS told me that the record they have shows 19.1 hands. It seems to me that I have read somewhere it was over 20 hands.

This got Ben, Neta and all of us here at the farm (and everyone from the area who has come to visit the baby) talking about record-breaking mules and "Lake Nowhere Winchester" as we named him. And we would like to know from readers if anyone knows definitively what the current record is and if anyone has had a foal over 12 hands at birth.

Regardless, we can tell you that we have stepped up our baby training with Winchester. We haltered him the first day and a foal halter was not going to do it. He wears a Weaver weanling halter. If this boy ever figures out how big he is he is going to be a handful. Needless to say, we will be breeding Sue to Nicky's jack, Bill, to see if we can get a teammate or "Win". Happy Spring Y'all!

P.S. Wait until we breed our 16.3 hand jennet!!!!

If you have any information on record heights at birth you may contact Deb at:
www.elitemulesandjackstock.com



Another photo of mama and baby