

Foundation 101

by Sharon January

There seems to be much confusion over what a foundation horse is. Many throw the word out there without any real knowledge of what they're saying. We've heard people ask if they know of any foundation stallions out there that they could breed their mare to. Sometimes the mare they want to breed is a Quarter Horse.

Are these people really asking for a foundation bred stallion? Or are they just asking for a stallion with a heavy concentration of Appaloosa breeding with minimal outcrossing to other breeds in its pedigree?

What is a foundation bred horse? A foundation horse is a horse that is being used or was used to create a new registry. They are (or were) the horses that the registry will (or did) build up from, usually with the intention of improving on those original founding horses over time with each generation. Think of it like building a home. You start with the foundation and improve your structure from there.

The ApHC started its registry with many horses that had unknown pedigrees or were by and/or out of other breeds. As long as they had the Appaloosa coat pattern, and didn't show pony or draft, they were pretty much all admitted into the registry. At that time, there was little to choose from that had a pedigree, so they chose the horses that fit their idea of an Appaloosa, pedigree or not, and used these horses as their foundation stock to start the ApHC. When people use the term "foundation horse" or "foundation bred horse" in the Appaloosa world, they are generally referring to a horse that has a high percentage of the old ApHC F (foundation) horses in the pedigree.

ICAA has its own F (foundation) horses, which are in no way associated with the old ApHC F (foundation) horses. These are the horses being used as the founding stock of the future Purebred registry. While it could be said, in a sense, that ICAA is a foundation registry, as our horses are ICAA's foundation horses, ICAA is not typically known as a foundation registry (as stated before, that terminology generally leads people to believe the horses have a high percentage of old ApHC F horses). ICAA is known as a generational breed registry that is striving for Appaloosas with multiple generations of strictly registered Appaloosa horses in their pedigrees, with the goal of 8+ generation horses that can be deemed purebred. While many of our ICAA horses do have a lot of the old ApHC F horses in their extended pedigrees, this is not a requirement for ICAA registration.

ICAA has an advantage that the ApHC did not have when they were choosing their foundation stock. We now have documented pedigrees on Appaloosa horses that go back many years in which to work from. We can see what is behind our ICAA Appaloosa horses, how many generations of Appaloosas there are behind them, and use this as a tool towards creating a purebred.

When looking for an Appaloosa to buy or breed to, you may want to ask for a foundation bred horse, which people will associate with having a high percentage of old ApHC F horses, or you may simply want to ask for a horse that has a heavy concentration of Appaloosa breeding in its pedigree, with minimal outcrossing to other breeds. The latter may or may not have a pedigree with a high percentage of old ApHC F horses, but will have multiple generations of nothing but registered Appaloosas in its pedigree. Hopefully this has cleared up a few misconceptions and misunderstandings.

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