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BLOODSTOCK NOTES

Chelokee given to U of A

By Glenye Cain Oakford

LEXINGTON, Ky. – Centennial Farms has donated its Grade 3 winner Chelokee to the University of Arizona's Equine Center in Tucson, where the 6-year-old stallion will cover about 15 mares this year.

Chelokee, a son of Cherokee Run, sustained a career-ending injury to his right front foot in the 2008 Alysheba Stakes. After surgery and extensive rehabilitation, he entered stud in 2009 at Vinery in Lexington, where he covered 24 mares. He stood for \$7,500 then, but mare owners will be able to breed to him this year for \$2,000. That fee drops to \$1,500 for black-type runners or producers, according to the Equine Center's manager, Laura Walker. Chelokee's 2010 book will include seven mares the center owns as part of its equine studies program.

"Those mares will primarily be Thoroughbreds," Walker said. "We have classes where we teach students how to properly care for and manage horses. We have to generate our own funding, so the mares we breed and the babies we raise out of our mares, those come up and help us teach classes, and then once they're yearlings, our students take them to the Arizona Thoroughbred Breeders sales in Scottsdale, and we sell them there as racing babies. We get a percentage of their earnings if they win, through the Arizona Thoroughbred Breeders Association."

Chelokee's former owners haven't forgotten him. Centennial president Don Little Jr. said some of the partners intend to breed show horses from him using artificial insemination.

"Despite his pedigree and existing race record, you know the way the breeding market is," said Little. "Even though it was caused by an injury, that leg didn't look too pretty. People don't think about that, they just get turned off. We had a good amount of insurance on him that we were able to negotiate, which was fine by all the partners, and we knew he needed a home where there was extensive care instead of just being turned out. Everybody was excited about this plan, because we knew it's a great home and that the students would fall in love with him. He's got a great personality and is a beautiful individual."

Chelokee arrived in Arizona on Nov. 12. He requires a special glue-on shoe for his right front hoof that the Equine Center's farrier makes by hand. Dr. Vernon Dryden, an equine podiatry specialist at Lexington's Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital, also conducted a clinic at the university



BARBARA D. LIVINGSTON

Grade 3 winner Chelokee is expected to cover about 15 mares this year at Arizona's Equine Center in Tucson.

to show area farriers the latest hoof-care technology and glue-on shoe applications.

"So it's benefitting the community as well as our students," Walker said of Chelokee's presence as an educational tool. "He's doing great."

Walker said Chelokee has a stall with an outdoor paddock, and Equine Center staff also handwalk him as needed. That exercise is important, she said, both for the horse's happiness and to prevent stiffness and arthritis.

"Quite a few people have been calling and e-mailing, wanting to know how Chelokee's doing," she said. "He's getting FedEx packages of peppermints and treats and blankets. He's a sweetie, and we really appreciate Centennial letting us have such a nice horse."

Ghostzapper fee dropped to \$30K

Adena Springs in Paris, Ky., has revised 2004 Horse of the Year Ghostzapper's stud fee, cutting it to \$30,000 for the upcoming breeding season. The farm originally announced that the Awesome Again horse would stand for \$50,000.

Stud fees have faced downward

pressure in the last 12 months as the bloodstock market and breeding activity have declined. Ghostzapper is entering his fourth year at stud.

Darley opens new training facility

Darley USA president Jimmy Bell says that the operation's newest property, about 360 acres in Aiken, S.C., eventually will provide more options for training Sheikh Mohammed al-Maktoum's young racehorses.

The new training area will include a one-mile dirt training track and will complement the current Darley facility at Aiken's former Stonerside center. Bell said construction is unlikely to begin in 2010.

"It's got cotton on it, and woodlands, and pasture," Bell said of the Aiken land. "It's really just been farmland. This gives us the opportunity to do more than just train horses. We're obviously going to have ample space to turn out horses, we'll have some trails on the property, and we'll be able to do different things at different times and create the ultimate environment to pre-train and develop our young horses from October to May."

Bell said the Aiken properties allow young stock to ship from Jonabell Farm in Lexington in October, undergo early training in Aiken's warmer climate, then ship up to Darley's Greentree facility in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., in the late spring.

Darley has 65 horses in Aiken, and Bell said that initial planning for the new property calls for about 130 stalls.

"There's no time limit, and we're under no pressure at all," Bell said. "There's nothing pushing us to say we need a time line to get it done. We'll give ourselves the luxury of that time."

► The Jockey Club has renewed its voluntary check-off program, which allows owners and breeders to contribute money to racehorse retirement, retraining, and adoption programs as part of the foal registration process. The program allows check-off donations to the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation and Thoroughbred Charities of America. The Jockey Club also pledged to provide \$100,000 to the two organizations in 2010, as it did in 2009.