

Leslie Bebensee and Susan Osborne, Swedish Gotland Ponies



Leslie Bebensee was responsible for bringing the last herd of Gotland ponies on the continent back together for breeding in Kentucky 20 years ago. The herd has grown from the original seven to nearly 200 in North America today. Leslie has shown the Gotlands at major US Expos including Equine Affaires in Ohio and Massachusetts for the past 13 years, Hoosier Horse Fair (IN) since 2002, Equitana for the few years it was produced, and the Virginia Horse Expo in 2006. Leslie is from Corinth, KY.

The Gotlands were shown for years in Pony Club (combined training) by Bebensee's daughters, and Leslie has shown Gotland singles and pairs for the past five years, first in training and now preliminary level combined driving events (CDEs). For two years her team of Kokovoko Erika and Kokovoko Erlking (trained by Sue Osborne) were undefeated in CDE competition. Present pair Kokvoko Felicity and Kokovoko Halley have competed in national CDEs and were champions at the Lexington Bluegrass International CDE 2007 at the prelim level. Between the two pairs, they have competed across the midwest and south in CDEs in IL, IN, MI, OH, KY, TN, and NC, never placing lower than second!

For more information on Leslie, and her Gotlands, visit her website: www.gotlands.net.

Assisting Leslie with the Gotlands at this year's MHC Horse Expo will be Susan Osborne. Susan's driving career spans 30 years and many disciplines. She started out driving draft horses and has shown in pleasure and combined driving events across seven states and Canada. Susan drives everything from drafts to minis, singles to four-in-hands.

She has garnered awards in areas too numerous to mention, but including a grand championship and several reserves at the prestigious Walnut Hill pleasure driving competition, the largest of its type in the world. Susan is presently training a pair of buckskin Gotland ponies for CDEs, hoping to take them to the pair pony world championships. She has driven through advanced level in CDEs. She is a sensible and capable blacksmith, trainer, driver and horsewoman, and has an amazing grasp of all aspects of driving and showing.

Susan has been extremely active in the Michigan horse world. She annually participates in the Metamora CDE, the Metamora Pleasure Drive, the Mackinac Island *Somewhere in Time* Parade, and numerous other public events. Her national/international honors include a silver medal in the pony pairs division of the North American Pleasure Driving Championship and two bronze medals in the same event. She regularly competes in many national combined driving events and most always wins! Susan is from Silverwood, MI.

Watch this rare breed perform in the Main Arena throughout the weekend, and be sure to visit them "up close and personal" at their stalls in the Draft Area.