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ITHA Scholarship

Prompt 4

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Nature vs Nurture

Over the years many things have led many people to read all about bloodlines and which horse to breed and what horses not to breed to which ones.

Many stud farms are what they focus on when buying horses at auctions; they focus heavily on the breeding side rather than on the looks of the horses.

To some degree I do believe that horse genetics are involved in a horse's career just due to the fact that I believe that some bloodlines are bred for a certain distance or certain surfaces. But in all cases a lot of horsemen do believe that genetics help come a long way and also the stats will show the success of a certain sire. But i believe this is more to a state of "following the pack" what i mean by this is that once they see a certain sire having a decent amount of success here come all the horsemen trying to get a piece of their offspring so they leave the other sire's behind and that's why i think some sire stats are better than others because of the support their receiving. Having good genetics doesn't necessarily mean a horse will be good, so much hype is built around very good race horses that are becoming sires and when they don't produce it's like they were a fluke or something. But I just think they expect that just because the offspring has the horse's genetics it automatically means they're going to be good race horses and produce the amount of success their sire produced . I also think it has a lot to do with the dam's genetics because I believe some horsemen focus just on the sire and don't do enough study of the dam's side of the family.

In all, I think it also diminishes the offspring and implies that the sire's genetics aren't good which will mean that the offspring's genetics won't make it a good race horse.

From my standpoint, although it's a hard decision, I believe having a competent trainer is a very much more important thing than having good genetics. I say this because a trainer that knows a horse's way can bring out more from a simple genetics horse than one with "million dollar" genetics. Take for example California Chrome, a winner of almost 15 million dollars had a sire named Lucky pulpit which really didn't have a ton of good offspring until a horse named California Chrome was with a caring and nurturing trainer named Art Sherman. That is a prime example that horsemen don't need to pay those millions of dollars for good genetics as long as you have a caring and nurturing trainer who's willing to take time with the horse for it to mature and grow into themselves. Take for example if you take one of all the decent horses Todd Pletcher has and you bring that horse to one of Arlingtons trainer's their going to think that's a very good horse because although Todd Pletcher has a lot of decent horses he also has a lot of very good horses so that certain horse might not stand out and won't get nurtured the same as the very good horses. That certain horse will get treated differently here than maybe at Todd Pletcher's barn because we see them differently. And I think that's the case with a lot of horses. Although those horses might have potential to have been very good, they just got put in a barn where there are so many good horses that a certain horse doesn't stand out like maybe it would in another barn.

The only thing I think genetics have a lot to do with is the distance a horse can go or the surface where the horse is best. Although having a nurturing trainer might help a little with the

distance, I think there's still a limit in the distance where the horse is best suited for and the surface where the horse will be competitive.

To put this in perspective I really do think nurturing has a lot to do with the horse's success because although genetics might help the horse in some way I think having a caring and nurturing trainer can take a horse past its limits.