

# Appreciation, Tillage & Percherons



Cliff Eakins, Bloomfield, IA, with four up on a Pioneer KV bottom plow. When asked if it takes four to pull the plow, Cliff replied, "No, three can handle it but I brought four horses today and if I leave one alone she gets nervous."

By Jay Franzen

The morning of September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010, brought heavy rains to the horse farming community of Bloomfield, IA. This rain caused a delayed start to the "Yoder Equipment Customer Appreciation and Field Day." As the morning hours went by and the rains stopped, it did not take long before people started showing up, horses were harnessed and the scheduled activities began.

It took Ivan Yoder, owner of Yoder Equipment, a few months of planning to organize this event where the primary goal was to show his appreciation to all of the dedicated customers that have purchased horse drawn equipment and supplies from his business. Ivan stated, "I wanted to thank people for their business by offering breakfast and lunch and I also invited representatives from Pioneer Equipment to be here

and be available to answer questions about new [horse drawn] equipment." Following the "Horse Progress Days" concept, Ivan felt he would enhance the day by having several types of farm implements demonstrated in the field throughout the day.

One of the highlights of the event was seeing several Percherons in harness, with expert teamsters at the lines, in a farming environment. There were several teams, plus hitches of 4, 6 and 8 horses used during the day and as expected, they all worked right in stride. The teamsters made driving these horses look easy, but do not underestimate the experience and skill required to drive up to eight horses through a crowd of people and then have them stand to be hitched to an implement.



Yoder Equipment keeps a lot of horse drawn farm equipment and farm supplies on hand at all times.



Three Percherons on a Pioneer KV bottom plow.

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It was clear that having an opportunity to see the new tillage and hay equipment being used in the field helped farmers decide what type of implement may help them be more productive and efficient on their farm. If a decision was or was not made, there was plenty of discussion in the crowd about the performance of the implement being demonstrated. Even though there were several types of farming equipment demonstrated during the day, there was obviously a primary focus on tillage. This especially held true during the plowing demonstrations where there were a lot of eyes on the new style Pioneer Kverneland bottom plow and comparing that to the traditional Oliver bottom plow.

It was proven that there are strong opinions on which plow performs better and who would or would not own a specific type of plow and why. In the end, there was no clear winner on which plow was best - nor was that the intent of the plowing demonstrations, as it was not a competition.



As with all type of farming, adjustments need to be made. Here, a Pioneer representative makes an adjustment on the fly.



Six Percherons on a Pioneer gang plow

The goal of the day was to have both new and seasoned horse farmers observe the farm equipment in use, have all of their questions answered by the teamsters, Ivan, company representatives, and others during the event, then form their own opinions on what equipment would work best for them on their own farm.

Even though this was a local event, mainly attended by horse farmers, there were several people that came a long ways just to see the horses work in harness. One attendee in the crowd was overheard stating, "You don't get to see this type of an event just anywhere. I don't even have horses but I wanted to take advantage of the day and see these

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Top view of six on the gang plow. Notice how straight the furrow is down the field. One spectator was overheard stating, "Look at how straight the furrow is; I know people that use tractors that don't have furrows that straight!"

horses working. They're just beautiful."

The day was not limited to demonstrating tillage equipment, as there was also hay equipment on display. Unfortunately, due to the weather situation, the field conditions were not good to mow, rake or bale hay due to the wet alfalfa. However, the weather had cleared somewhat, some changes were made to the agenda, and by mid-afternoon there were rakes and tedders being demonstrated in the field.

Adapting to the current weather situation is a daily struggle for farmers. This day was no exception for Ivan who stated, "I was hoping to have a better turn-out but I understand that the rain kept a lot of people away. In order to plan and advertise an event like this you just have to pick a day and hope for decent weather. I had hoped for better weather but it's OK and I'm still glad we had it."

It appeared that the day was quite successful for all as there was plenty of good food (including the homemade ice cream), lots of conversation between friends new and old about the weather, Percherons, farming equipment, and current status of the horse farming industry.

Below, eight Percherons on a White Horse hydraulic forecart, pull a White Horse chisel plow.

