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# GET 'EM BROKE!

Volume 1, Issue 3

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## Training On Cattle

*Let your horse make mistakes on cattle*

**Shaun McBride**

I thought I should share my personal philosophy on cow horses. I'll start with what I think is the ideal working cow horse. The ideal cow horse works cattle willingly and effortlessly with as little help from his rider as possible. Keep in mind that this is a reined event, but when I'm showing, I want to keep my cues as subtle as possible. A good cow horse "locks" on to the cow and moves with it, putting himself into a position to remain in control. Controlling the cow is what it's all about. This ideal cow horse doesn't become this way overnight. Years of work and training go into making this happen. During those years of training, that horse probably made more than a few mistakes. I don't mind if my horses make mistakes because I want them to learn from those mistakes.

Riding a lot of young horses and prospects, I spend a lot of time putting the horses into the proper position on cattle. At some point I want to know just how much that horse has learned. I want to know what's going to happen if I become a passenger and not the pilot. I'll put a cow in my round pen (which is eighty feet). I walk to the cow, drop my hand and wait to see what happens. I'm just going to let my horse react to the cow. If all goes well, he'll get to the cow's head and turn her, get to the head and turn her again and so on. If my horse makes a mistake, I'm not going to make a big deal out of it, just use my leg and push right back to the cow's head to turn her. This exercise of letting your horse react to cattle doesn't put a lot of pressure on him. If he makes a mistake, you don't have to make a huge deal out of it. Make the correction and ride right back to the cow and drop

your hand and let him work that cow again. If you constantly school on your horse and pull him around on cattle, you will lose a lot of his natural ability. He'll begin to rely on you too much and won't be watching that cow; he'll be waiting for your command. If you're not careful, you will start to take the "cow sense" out of your horse. Drop your hand every once in a while and see what happens. We all buy horses because they are "cowy", so let your horse use that instinct. It will build confidence in your horse and you'll learn to trust him.

Until next time – Ride Well!

Be sure to let me know if there is a topic you would like me to cover in future Tips or if you have a training question. – Shaun McBride  
Email: [info@cowhorseohio.com](mailto:info@cowhorseohio.com)  
Cell: 614-519-5969

### **Regional NRCHA Show Calendar**

Oct 13-14 Madison, IN AQHA Cutting & Working Cow Horse and NRCHA Classes

Oct 27-28 Cazanova, NY AQHA Working Cow Horse and NRCHA Classes

Nov 17-18 Madison, IN AQHA Cutting & Working Cow Horse and NRCHA Classes

Dec 1-2 Madison, IN AQHA Cutting & Working Cow Horse and NRCHA Classes

## Coming Soon!

COW HORSE TRADING CO., A TACK STORE FEATURING QUALITY TACK AND EQUIPMENT. A LINK WILL BE ADDED TO OUR WEBSITE SOON!

[www.cowhorseohio.com](http://www.cowhorseohio.com)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### WORKING COW HORSE CLINIC

DATE SATURDAY NOVEMBER 10, 2007

PLACE MCBRIDE FARM; MT STERLING, OH

TIME 9 AM – 5 PM

9-12 Reining

12-1 Lunch (provided)

1-5 Cow Work

Details are on our website: [www.cowhorseohio.com](http://www.cowhorseohio.com)

Participation is limited to 8 riders.

Auditors are welcome to attend for free.

McBride Performance Horses  
10698 Baldwin Road  
Mount Sterling, OH 43143

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