

**William Meaux interview, 2012-10-24 : interview conducted by Ellen E.
McHale**

INTERVIEW LOG

William Meaux is training fifteen horses. He is running his horses in Denton, LA. He has been training since 1991; for 21 years. His father was training before him. He took over the business. Horses change-over every 3-5 years.

1:31 The racing career of a horse is 3-5 years. They start as 2 year olds. They are productive 5-6 years and then they trail off. Most of his horses, right now, are young and "unstarted."

2:22 He is working for several different owners, most from Lafayette.

2:55 He talks about the area being horse country. There is a lot of history. His dad got started in quarter horses and moved into thoroughbreds.

3:35 Talks about the change from quarter horse to thoroughbreds in the mid-1970s. It was hard to make a living with quarter horses. Thoroughbreds run year-round. Quarter horses only ran in the summer and for fewer races.

4:58 He defines a "mixed meet" and talks about them.

5:12 The training is different. Quarter horses run $\frac{1}{4}$ of mile or less. Thoroughbreds run $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The Belmont Stakes is a mile-and-a-half.

5:58 His father taught him about the horses, but not about the Business, which has changed a lot since then.

6:36 He talks about how the business has changed. He talks about loyalty being important in the past. Owners would stay with a trainer, even if they weren't doing well in the races. Now, if you don't produce, the owners will find a different trainer, even if you've trained for several years.

8:22 He thinks there are limited things you can do to make a horse run. There are things that you can do veterinary-wise. Otherwise, there isn't much that one trainer does that one doesn't. There is a certain format. Maybe you can change things feed-wise.

9:45 There is a progression in training. The first thing to do is to have them go around a track and then you work on speed and distance. You have to make them comfortable with the starting gate. It is a gradual progression. The last thing you want to do is send a baby back there who isn't ready because it's a bad experience and it makes it worse. You make it as easy on the horses as possible. He talks about training for the gate and making them comfortable.

11:50 He was in college while his father was racing at Louisiana Downs and his father asked him to help during his summer break. That was his first experience. He was on his first horse when he was 3-4 years old. He

started really working with horses in 1990 as an assistant at Louisiana Downs. He got hooked. He fell in love. He went back to school and finished before working full-time with horses, which his father stressed. The day he graduated from college, he went to graduation rather than go to see his horse run. But on Sunday morning, the day after graduation, he was mucking out stalls for fifteen horses.

16:02 He has one running tomorrow (Oct. 25, 2012), the 4th race at Delta. A "maiden race."

16:34 William has three brothers and a sister. An older brother trained for a while. He also worked with their dad. He broke babies and did a lot with the mares. Others have no desire to be in the horse business. Williams sister is an attorney and his younger brothers didn't go into it. His daughter is in to volleyball, but not horses.

18:43 He has two grooms, and one of the grooms son's cleans the stalls and there's an exercise boy. He and the fellow trainer in the barn work with the same exercise boy. He gets on 10-12 horses a day.

20:14 The horses go to the track 4-5 days a week. They get 2-3 days off, depending upon the horse. A horse that is going to race stays on the same training schedule. If the race is shorter, you might try to make them a little fresher and back off a little with training. You usually follow the same training schedule as usual.

21:34 End of interview.