

Horse Illustrated 2025 “Best of Breeds: American Cream Draft”



BEST OF Breeds

American CREAM DRAFT

Dedicated Cream Draft fans are working to keep America's only native draft breed around.

BY KRISTINA LOTZ

In the early 1900s, a uniquely colored cream mare named Old Granny consistently threw cream-colored foals that caught the eyes of farmers in Story County, Iowa. In 1932, her impressive great-great-grandson, Silver Luck, helped to further people's interest in these unique light draft horses that are known for their cream coats, pink skin, amber eyes and white manes and tails.

The American Cream Draft Horse Association (ACDHA) was formed soon after in 1944 by Clarence T. Blanton under the name American Cream Horse of America Association with 75 horses. By 1957, the association had doubled its membership and had almost 200 horses registered. It seemed like the breed was well on its way.

Unfortunately, the advent of heavy machinery made the market for draft horses sharply decline, and the new breed just couldn't get its footing. Since then, the breed has struggled to survive, with the ACDHA going inactive for more than 14 years.

A BREED WORTH SAVING

Still, a few people kept the Creams alive by holding on to their stock. In 1982, the ACDHA was reorganized with the help of the University of Kentucky Equine Blood Typing Lab, which affirmed the breed's genes.

Since then, the breed continues to have low numbers. The Livestock Conservancy has them listed on their priority list as critical, meaning they have fewer than 200 annual registrations in the U.S. and an estimated global population of less than 5,000. Currently, there are fewer than 500 registered American Cream Drafts in the ACDHA. But staunch breeders and fans of the breed are not ready to give up on their Creams.

"As a breeder standing a stallion, a few other stud owners and I have been offering free or reduced stud service to cover Cream mares to get foal numbers up," says Kerrie Beckett, who is also secretary and treasurer of the ACDHA. "There is definitely a core group continuing to do a great deal to help this breed."

If you're looking for a horse with plenty of athleticism that can carry a heavier rider or that can both pull and ride, this may be the breed for you. It may be easier to find a young, unbroke individual than a fully trained adult Cream Draft, so if you have the experience, a young horse is a great way to go. Plus, they are fun to work with!

FAST FACTS

HEIGHT: 15 to 16.5 hands

COLOR: Light, medium or dark cream color on pink skin, with white mane and tail and amber or hazel eyes.

OVERALL APPEARANCE: Refined head, wide-set large, intelligent eyes, small expression ears. Short-coupled body with well-muscled hindquarters. Wide chest, short, strong back, strong legs.

ASSOCIATION: American Cream Draft Horse Association
www.acdha.org

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“Having a State Horse is a stupid idea; it’s not needed.”

This opinion, behind the scenes, has kept “The American Cream Draft Horse for The State Horse of Iowa” bill bottlenecked in Committee.

Iowa has rich soil and is world renowned for that today.

Iowa has rich traditions of agriculture and ranks number one nationally in corn, pigs, eggs, ethanol, and biodiesel.

Iowa’s rich farming heritage includes founding and developing *the only draft horse originating in the United States* — a breed whose beauty, intelligence, gentle disposition, and trainability for all-around rural and urban work reflect the best of our State.

Why would anyone not want to acknowledge the founding and development of the American Cream Draft Horse in Iowa — a unique part of the agricultural history of our State — when it is truly an Iowa story.

We would not be alone. All of these States made the decision to honor a part of their heritage with a State Horse:

Vermont for the Morgan in 1961
Massachusetts for the Morgan in 1970
Idaho for the Appaloosa in 1975
Alabama for the Racking Horse in 1975
New Jersey for the Horse in 1977
North Dakota for the Nokota in 1993
Kentucky for the Thoroughbred in 1996
Tennessee for the Tennessee Walking Horse in 2000
Missouri for the Missouri Fox Trotter in 2002
Maryland for the Thoroughbred in 2003
Florida for the Florida Cracker Horse in 2008
Texas for the American Quarter Horse in 2009
South Carolina for the Carolina Marsh Tacky in 2010
North Carolina for the Banker horses in the Outer Banks in 2010
Oklahoma for the American Quarter Horse in 2022
Virginia for the Chincoteague in 2023
Mississippi for the American Quarter Horse in 2024

Iowa has an opportunity to honor a part of its heritage by recognizing a breed of horse *that only Iowa can claim*.

Vote Yes for The American Cream Draft Horse as the State Horse of Iowa