

# History of the Blue Earth Show 1985-2005

## Memories of the Blue Earth Show, by Nancy Hotovy

Our first year at Blue Earth was in 1989. At that time we took our first three fjords, Frida, Anvil's Torbjorn (Toby) and Jon. There were only around 20 - 25 horses at that time (quite a few from the Roger Whitney farm). We held the show one afternoon in front of the grandstand. I remember Larry Bo, Gayle Ware and Dusty just starting out in the western riding class, and Orville and Anita Unrau among others, so you see people used to come from great distances even then. The horses were stabled in the barn at the bottom of the hill (where the camel was last year).

The show was much more relaxed than it is now. We showed in the halter classes then I drove Frida in our Meadowbrook cart in my first cart class and we won. I was so surprised because we had just started driving. Took me a couple years to come to the conclusion, we have a GREAT horse and she always did her best to make us (the amateurs) look good.

We had never seen a log skid before, so Orville Unrau told us the rules and to watch him then to give it a try. Obviously I didn't watch as close as Rich, because he won it with Toby and I hit every cone on the way down and every cone on the way back! There was no award for that!

We had such a great time that year and met so many really nice people who all gave us a hand, helped us out and made sure we had all the equipment we might need. I'm sure it's the reason I am so committed to making sure all new fjord people are welcomed to the Blue Earth show and that they receive help and instruction if they need it and also that they go home with a whole new group of friends.

The show grew and we actually got to move up the hill and be stabled in the big barn. Didn't need any stalls in the middle at that time. Actually we used the indoor arena to show in a couple times when there was rain. The outdoor arena was in back of the barn and the "blue earth" was extremely slippery when wet and did not dry easily. This arena is now our parking lot.

The most popular class by far was the horse pull held in the evening each year. It was held in the barn because it usually didn't start until well after dark. There were bleachers up above the aisle ways and the barn was always totally packed with spectators. It was definitely the "big event". It wasn't unusual to have enough teams to keep the show going till midnight. Our best team was purchased from Orville and Anita Unrau, Windy Poplar Woody and Anvil's Birger. Ron and Kit Davis would use their stallion, Valea's Lee and Flick and I'm not sure about Roger's team. Larry Boe also entered a team along with others.

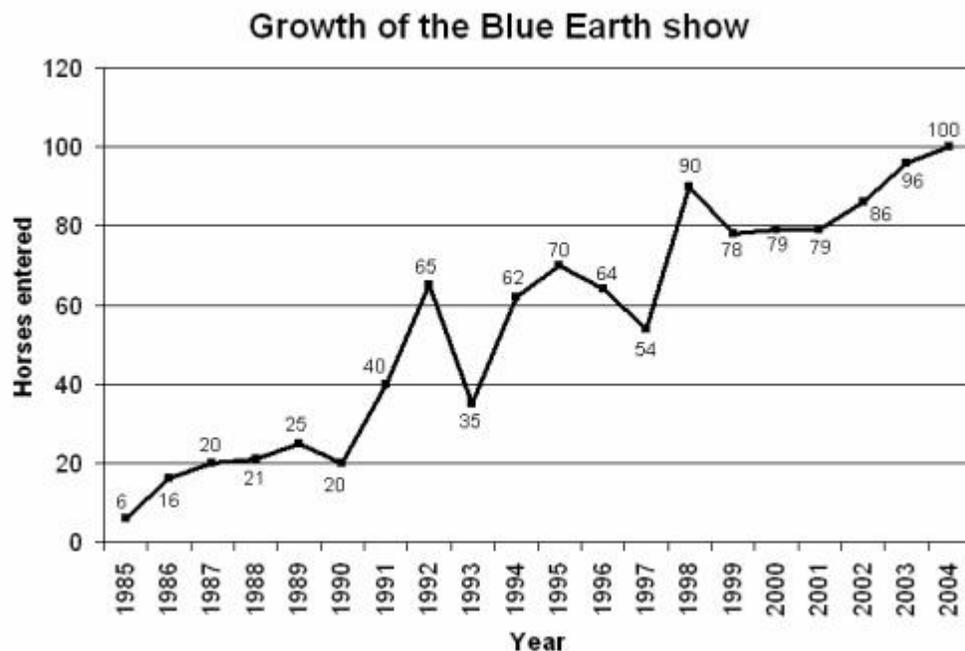
One of the early years, our mare "Bakken's Aurora" colicked in the early evening. She was really bad and we called the vet who forgot to bring his oil and had to go back to the clinic and get some. Ended up, he only had 1 gallon and a little later Neil Sorem had a horse colic but there was no oil left. Sorem's walked their horse quite a long time and I spent the night with Aurora, truly thinking she was not going to make it until morning. Both horse's were much better by morning and went on to a full recover. Lesson - always have a vet kit and a gallon of oil wouldn't hurt either.

At some point in the early 90's we got all the way to Blue Earth only to find the horse's had everything they needed, however, we forgot to put our suitcases in the truck! That's when we got very familiar with Walmart.

Written by Nancy Hotovy

## 20 years of the Fjord Show, by Diane Whitney

A total of 1106 horses have been entered in the show over the past 20 years. Here are the approximate numbers of horses entered each year:



Here goes with the history of the Blue Earth show:

In the beginning in 1985, Mitchel Perrizo and Roger discussed exhibiting their Norwegian Fjord Horses at the Faribault County Fair in Blue Earth the end of July. They contacted the Fair Board and they said they could use the white racing barn on the fairgrounds. Many people came through the barn to see this new breed of horse. We noticed some of the same youngsters were coming back many times to pet our young stallion, Anvil's Torbjorn. He of course enjoyed this very much!

As Roger was a director on the NFHR board it was decided that the 1986 annual meeting of the Norwegian Fjord Horse Registry and show would be held at the Faribault County Fair in Blue Earth on July 24 and 25. On Thursday afternoon there was judging of the individual classes. Sixteen horses took part in 9 classes. Horses were brought by Don Rasmusson, Jim Lundholm and Lisa Ringer from Minneapolis, Dana Tautz from Ohio, Mitchel Perrizo Jr., and Roger Whitney.

The meeting was held in the evening after a very good dinner at Dave and Junes downtown. Those attending from far away were, Orville and Anita Unrau from Canada, Pam McWethy, executive secretary from New Hampshire, Janice Ashpole, President from Alaska, Phil and Connie Prichard, director from New York, Steven Spengler director from Oregon. On Friday afternoon a display of 2 teams pulling wagons was done by Roger Whitney and Don Johnson. Don Rasmusson showed how he enjoyed using his 2 geldings. Lisa Ringer exhibited her pretty gelding on a beautiful cart.

The first Fjord Herald was published by Ramona Johnson of McCoy, Colorado. Keep in mind that there were only about 350 Norwegian Fjord Horses on the North American continent at that time.

By 1987 there were more Fjord horses in the Midwest, Ron and Kit Davis from Culver, Minnesota, and Rich and Nancy Hotovy came and took part in the classes.

In 1988 a special feature of the show was a national competition of wood carvers, who spent 3 days in the Fjord Horse barn demonstrating their artistic talents carving a horse. There was a \$400 cash award for the best carving of a Fjord Horse, done on butternut wood. There were 21 horses and foals entered in 13 classes.

In 1989, Orville Unrau, a longtime Norwegian Fjord Horse breeder from Armstrong, British Columbia gave an educational clinic at 10:00 A.M in front of the grandstand. He was assisted by David Klove of Voss, Norway a leading horse judge, Director of Agriculture for the Voss District of Norway.

The afternoon competition was judged that year by Arnold Jenkins of Delavan, a nationally recognized Arabian Horse breeder and showman. He will also be assisted by Mr. Klove. Also at the show was Mr. Jon Hegdal, director of Norges Fjordhestlag in Norway. As director he has had final responsibility for the management of the breed over which the Norwegian government assumed control in the 1920's to ensure the highest quality in breeding stock. There were 25 horses entered in 19 classes. Some horses had to be stabled in the big horse barn that year.

Some new special performances were given in log skidding, pleasure riding, western and English and obstacle course. Gayle Ware, trainer for Chip Lambs stallion, Woodlands Dustin, gave a very nice demonstration on reining and other things she had been teaching him. Also Ramona Johnson, editor of the Fjord Herald was present to personally write an article on the show.

There were many members from far away in attendance: Gayle Ware from Montana, Chip and Susan Lamb, Rick and Sloan McGrew from Idaho, Orville and Anita Unrau from Canada, Neil and Ruth Sorum from Iowa, Rich and Nancy Hotovy, Bernadine and Gordon Karns from Michigan, Bill Poe from Ohio, Phil and Connie Prichard from New York, Romana Johnson from Colorado, Pam McWethy from New Hampshire, Larry and Sarah Coyle, Ron and Kit Davis, Lisa Ringer, all from Minnesota. Roger and Darlene Ejstrand from Wisconsin. The annual meeting was held at the White House in Blue Earth.

After the 1989 or 1990 show, many members from the Midwest and their horses traveled to Decorah, Iowa, for their Nordicfest parade on Saturday. People came from Norway and rode our horses in the parade with owners leading the horses. They brought beautiful side saddles from museums for the horses that were hand carved, also decorative bridles for the Bride and Grooms horses. It was very beautiful with the Voss, Norway women and men dressed in traditional – green, black, and white wedding costumes. A very wonderful adventure for every one!

1990 and 1991-- About this time the Fair Board noticed that the Fjord Horse Show was attracting a large crowd! They decided to help us a little more with ribbons and Premiums. We also were able to share the big horse barn with the 4-H horses. Also Marlin Krupp narrated the show. He always had funny little stories to tell between classes.

1992 -- This year there were 65 horses in 19 classes, and for the first time we had a national evaluation and the Annual NFHR meeting too.

The Davis' and Whitney's planned the evaluation process, we were honored to have Arne Presthus, the new director of the Norgesfjord Hestlag in Norway and his wife, Aud, attend to help with the judging for the evaluation. Wayne Hipsley from Massachusetts and Jim Havelhurst from Oregon also were part of the judging panel. Pam McWethy came to do all the paper work.

There were 30 horses evaluated in conformation. Those taking part were: Carron Birkholz, Ron and Kit Davis, Dennis and Romona Redfield, Klaas VanZee, and Roger Whitney, from Minnesota, Merlin Davey from Michigan, the Ehlers from Nebraska, Tim Hamlett from Iowa, the Sorums from Ohio and Kate Stout from Wisconsin.

At the show that year a pulling contest was organized and 5 teams took part. Tied for 1st place was the team of Ron and Kit Davis and Roger and Diane Whitney. This was first for the Blue Earth show and will most likely be seen again, as there was much fun for all.

The evaluation was very special for us, as our mare Hilma was evaluated as 1st Quality, 2nd premium, one of the top horses evaluated and our Granddaughters handed out ribbons and trophies.

After the show the group discussed forming a club and everyone was in favor. They had a meeting in Kenyon on Feb. 27, 1993 after the Carriage and Cutter parade. Several names were submitted and will be voted on at the summer meeting after the show.

1993 was our first year as an official Midwest Fjord Horse group. We had the barn all to ourselves. People and horses started arriving on Sunday afternoon, with lots of visiting to catch up for the past year. Monday evening about 25 people gathered for food and fellowship. We voted to name the club "Midwest Fjord Horse Club".

Officers were Roger Whitney, President, Rich Hotovy, Vice President, and Sharon Falck, Secretary, Treasurer, It rained Tuesday morning so we had the show at the indoor arena. About 35 horses took part in 21 classes.

The Ladies' and Men's single cart classes were divided, with 7 in each class. Some of the Ladies looked so nice as they wore authentic Norwegian dresses. The team pulling class was added this year. Rich Hotovy's team pulled 4400 lbs., topping last year's pull of 3500 lbs.

The Winter meeting was in Madison, Wisconsin, Jan 8 and 9, 1993. It was at a Historical Society Sleigh Rally. Sleigh rides were offered to the public by Tom Hans and Janet Voeltz, also other breeds were giving rides also.

1994 -- There were 62 horses in 22 classes that year. As this is such a family show, Rich and Nancy's son, Mike took part in many classes and did very well for a youngster of 13. Mike and Susie Sadlon from Indiana brought their 7 yr old Grandson with them and he joined in all the activities too. We have watched these boys grow up with the horses is fun to see their progress!

Many more people are coming to the show, as they have a new horse and want to watch the show to see what to expect. They usually come back the next year with their horse and enter some classes and learn more about the Fjord Horse and how trainable they are and fun to be around.

This year Sharon Falck brought Fjord t-shirts, polo shirts, sweatshirts, caps and color brochures. About this time Nancy Hotovy took charge of the classes etc. Also Kit and Ron Davis brought trophies, everyone sponsored classes.

On Dec. 2 and 3 of 1994 the winter meeting was held at Stoughton, Wisconsin. during their Victorian Holiday Celebration. Many members and their horses attended and gave carriage rides for the festivities and were in the parade on Sunday. Tom and Ann Hans organized this event.

In 1995 we again sponsored another evaluation program, with Kit Davis doing a very good job of co-coordinating this event. About 20 horses took part in the evaluation, with Wayne Hipsley from Kentucky and Jim Havelhurst from Oregon, doing the judging. The show continues to grow with 70 horses taking part in the classes. There were 14 entries in the geldings 3yrs and over, also 14 in the men's single horse hitch, 13 entries in the mares 3yrs and over and 11 entries in the women's single hitch.

During the business meeting, Rich Hotovy took over as President with Tom Hans Vice Pres, Sharon Falck as Secretary and Jean Elefson as public relations co-coordinator. There also was an annual NFHR meeting with 59 people in attendance. It was reported that there were 1,511 Ford Horses registered at this time. Mike May reported on blood typing and DNA testing. The Midwest group recommended that we should start using the DNA testing as it is less costly.

The winter meeting was again held at Stoughton, Wisconsin, during their Victorian Holiday with 9 Fjord Horse teams giving rides and participating in the parade on Sunday. Again, Ann and Tom Hans did a great job co-coordinating this event.

In 1996 the show went to 2 days, with 64 horses showing in 35 classes. There were 8 new classes for youth, as many more families were attending wanting to do more with their horses. There was a costume class with many children taking part, the Barsness girls, the Hans girls, and some grandchildren that had just worked with the Fjord horses for a short time. We have watched all these children grow up showing their horses. One little girl told her Grandmother "This isn't a horse show, it's a family reunion!", which is very true! The largest class had 13 entries- Geldings 3 yrs and over. The driving classes were divided into novice and open classes. Again the winter meeting took place in Stoughton, taking part in their Victorian Holiday Celebration.

About 1996 the 4-H and Fair Board built a nice new big arena to the east of the horse barn, was so much nicer for the big classes we were starting to have by that time.

In 1997 there were 54 horses and more new classes added, such as jeopardy, trail and reinsmanship. There were Fjords from East, West and many more from the Midwest.

1998 -- There were 90 horses with many large classes. The mares class 4-7 yrs had 14 entries, Open English Pleasure riding 9, Scurry 14 and Gamblers Choice 13. Kit and Ron Davis brought some gray Fjords and Larry Boe also brought some of his and they put together a 6 horse hitch, was pretty impressive.

In 1999 the weather was very HOT. Wayne Hipsley gave two very good showman ship clinics and Vivian Creigh worked with many people to polish their driving skills. Fair Board members have noticed the change in the way the horses are presented and the quality of the horses seems to get better and better each year! Tues. evening the club held their summer meeting at the Ag Center in Blue Earth. We have about 170 members at present. Storrs Bishop, Pres of NFHR and Keith Brighton, Board Secretary joined our meeting and explained how the board of Directors works and gave the agenda for the Annual NFHR meeting. Tom Hans, Pres of our club called the meeting to order. New officers were announced, Mike Sadlon -Pres, Tom Hans- vice President, Patti Walter- Sec. and Sharon Falck Treas. 98 members were present and 9 guests. The winter meeting of the Midwest club was held in Galena, Illinois, and will host a driving clinic similar to last year's Showmanship clinic.

The NFHR evaluation held in Blue Earth on July 23 and 24, 2000, set a new record, with 80 tests conducted over 2 days. 38 horses were evaluated in Conformation /movement, and 42 horses completed the performance tests, making this evaluation the largest ever held in the United States! The outstanding group of mares, ages 3 and over totals 26, when paraded around the arena it proved to be a very impressive sight! Evaluators were Karen Cabic and Wayne Hipsley, with trainer evaluators Sharon Makurak and Curtis Pierce. At the show there were 98 Fjords participating in 51 classes. The weather cooperated with no rain and temperatures under 90. There were improvements at the barn, especially a new and larger wash rack, and new wiring inside the barn. A versatility award was offered this year for the first time. It was won by Solveig 2nd, owned by Martha Lange, shown by Taffy Plaisted.

In 2001 there were 79 horses with 4 days for the show etc., allowing more time to visit with everyone. Of course it rained for 2 days before the show, but the morning halter classes went well, by noon was raining again so things were postponed till 6:00. By Wed. the sun came out and dried the arena fairly well. The arena has tile underneath, so it drains quite quickly, but Bob Gudknecht was out there with his shovel playing in the mud and sand making rivers and lakes, of course he had 4 " supervisors " giving their opinion on where to make the dams!

In 2002 we had a 3 day show, with about 80 horses attending. Some more new classes were added, Hunter Hack and Bare back Jousting, making 53 classes. Another first was Tim Hamlett's eight horse hitch, four abreast with Jeff Mueller and Rich Hotovy driving.

We were informed that a bus load of members from a local Sons of Norway chapter were coming to see the show. Also 2 bus loads of Norwegians were coming, they were from the area of

Nordfjorded in Norway, were touring the Midwest, heard about our show and wanted to come and watch. We put on a special flag presentation with the Norwegian and American flags, playing both National Anthems. There was a speech read while several riders and drivers presented the Fjord Horse in the arena, showing some of the things we do with our Fjord Horses. These Norwegians knew about the Fjords and were thrilled to see them being used in the United States.

We had our meeting at the 4-H hall on the Fair grounds, on Monday morning. Following the meeting the 4-H served us a very good meal. Sharon had much new merchandise for sale, to tempt us all to spend money on special Fjord items!

2003 -- There were about 96 horses in 57 classes. Some of the horses had to be stabled down in the white horse barn. There were large youth classes with 19 in the costume class, 14 in the adult Showmanship class and 17 in open Western Pleasure. Youth High Point award was a tie: Keelie Finnel from Wisconsin, and Sami Poirier from Colorado. Versatility award went to Nancy Hotovy, with a close 2nd to Jessica Katzman. There was a very good story in the Fjord Herald, Fall 2003. It was written as if Bergen, the Fjord horse, had written it telling of his adventure to the Midwest Fjord Horse Show.

The winter meeting was held in the Osthoff Equestrian Center at Elkhart Lake Wisconsin, Feb.28 and 29. Beth Beymer gave clinics.

2004 -- There were more than 100 Fjord Horses at the show last year and the weather was great! Some of the horses were stabled down in the white barn again and some in outdoor pens by the big barn. The horses that were in the white barn had a very interesting stable mate, a camel! They didn't quite know what to make of him, so pretty much ignored this strange character!

Pat Holland was in charge of the show and did a super job, assisted by Linda Kerr Syverson and Howard Fiedler. There were 57 classes again, 15 entries in the geldings 6 and over, 17 in the youth walk trot, 22 in adult showmanship, 14 in mares 4 yrs and over and 22 in the trail in hand. We have come a long way from 13 classes to 57 classes, quite some growth!

There has been a professional photographer on the grounds the last 2 years and many took advantage of some very nice photos of their horses in action.

A sad note was our special tribute to Ron Davis who we lost in May and was a very active member of our group almost from the beginning.

Our meeting was again held in the 4-H building with President Karin Peterson, our first women President presiding over the meeting. It was reported that there are now 4200 members registered with the NFHR. There were 24 members in the NFHR in 1983-84.

Written by Diane Whitney