

*The end of the story isn't the end of
the line for ranch-bred 4-year-olds.*

By Larri Jo Starkey

AND NOW THEY'RE 4.

Ranching-bred 3-year-olds had a birthday January 1 and became eligible for Zoetis AQHA Ranching Heritage Challenges.

Two of the horses the *Journal* has been following for the last year were at the first Challenge of the year in January in Fort Worth, Texas.

In the 4-year-old open working ranch horse class, Matt Koch of the Wagonhound Land & Livestock Co. rode Dual With A Shiner, while Dusty Burson of the Four Sixes in Guthrie, Texas, showed Paddys Wimpy.

"Diesel" was third, and "Mojo" was 16th, but that's not the end of the story for these 4-year-olds: It's just the beginning.

Here's the final report from these horses' trainers on what's next for these horses in their long ranching careers.

MAKING COW HORSES



LARRI JO STARKEY

Matt Koch

Dual With A Shiner, aka "Diesel"

2011 sorrel gelding (Reys Dual Badger-Miss Shining Dear by Shining Spark), bred and owned by Wagonbound Land & Livestock

DIESEL GOT SOME TIME OFF DURING CHRISTMAS, AND THEN WE went back to exercising him. I roped the mechanized dummy a bunch, just to give him something fun to do for exercise. One or two days, I actually roped out of the box on him and stopped some steers. I just backed him in the head box a couple of times and ran a few and scored a few.

I was pretty happy with him at the Ranching Heritage Challenge. He wasn't as good as he could have been, but he didn't embarrass us. And I caught, so I held up my end.

I used to have heck with the thought of missing, but now I take the same exact shot every single time. I take my cattle to the left, like a team roping run, and I'll keep them about a stride further behind than if I was going down the fence. The horse just rates in that spot, just a touch to the side. I look to see when the yearling steer is going to be running the truest and straightest, and as soon as it looks like it has hit a consistent, cadenced stride, that's when I try to fire.

Matt Koch circles on Dual With A Shiner during the Zoetis AQHA Ranching Heritage Challenge in Fort Worth Texas.

At home, schooling a horse around, I want my horse to run on a loose rein. I don't want to have to be pulling or holding him. It's the same thing as in the fence work: When I turn the corner, I might have a little contact, but I'm not having to keep him from running. In roping, I drop my hand and the cow carries the horse forward. My horses all know that. As soon as I throw and get the yearling gathered up, when I sit down, the horse should go to the ground.

I'm pretty pleased with Diesel. I'll probably show him again in Houston (in March at the next Zoetis AQHA Ranching Heritage Challenge). We'll keep hauling him as long as he keeps winning and paying his way. When he's tired of showing, he'll make a nice using horse on the ranch.

Dusty Burson

Paddys Wimpy, aka "Mojo"

2011 buckskin gelding (Paddys Irish Whiskey-Wimpys Six by Wimpys Little Step), bred and owned by Burnett Ranches of Fort Worth, Texas

SINCE MOJO CAME INTO MY STRING, I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO RIDE him much, but I like him a lot. We're getting along good, and I've been using him to help the cowboys here gather pastures.

I was proud of him in Fort Worth. That was the first time he'd ever been shown in reining and cow horse-style compe-

2015 ZOETIS AQHA RANCHING HERITAGE CHALLENGES

MARCH 22

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Houston

AUGUST

Colorado State Fair, Pueblo, Colorado

SEPTEMBER

Tri-State Fair, Amarillo

NRCHA Snaffle Bit Futurity

Reno, Nevada

OCTOBER

Northern International Livestock Exposition
Billings, Montana

Exact dates were not available at press time. Get more details at www.aqha.com/ranching as they become available.

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Dusty Burson shakes out a loop on Paddys Wimpy during the Zoetis AQHA Ranching Heritage Challenge in Fort Worth.

tion like that. He didn't end up placing very high, but I think by the next one (in March in Houston), we'll be a better team. There's still some getting used to each other going on.

I saw some areas in Fort Worth that we need to improve on in the reining. Most of the time, you know what you need to improve on before you look at the judge's scorecard. On Mojo, I thought the judge was right on the money. That helps when I get home, because it confirms that what I felt and what I thought was the same thing other people were seeing. When I get home, I can look at those scores and think, "Well, I didn't think my spins were very good and the judge didn't either, so maybe that's something I need to work on."

We ended up castrating Mojo when we got back from Fort Worth. He started showing that he might be talented enough to be a stud, but he didn't have the right mentality. We're still excited about what he can do. Now he'll be a gelding and that should help with his attitude some.

He's going to be in my string and I plan to use him on the ranch. We'll probably keep showing him in these Ranching Heritage Challenges and maybe some Ranch Horse Association of America shows as well. I think he'll be a pretty nice using horse. He's good looking and he's fun to ride.

That's my plan for him: Ride him and use him on the ranch. 🐾

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