

## 2010 Lusitano Collection

### Quadrille Performance Reunites Lusitanos

February 4, 2010

Imagine eight grey Lusitanos making graceful maneuvers across a wide arena as they glide in motion to lively Brazilian music. That thought was behind the invitation made by Interagro Farms to buyers of their horses purchased from 2005 to 2009 and living across the USA from Massachusetts to Georgia.



During the third annual Showcase Reception, eight Lusitanos - six stallions, one gelding and one mare - are preparing to delight an international audience with a feature quadrille performance on Friday evening, February 26, at The 2010 Lusitano Collection™ International Horse Auction which is held at The Jim Brandon Equestrian Center in West Palm Beach, Florida. Due to various plans, some riders and horses arrived in South Florida months prior to the event while others arrived only weeks before to practice.

“I’m not worried,” says Heather Bender, director of the quadrille who is also the Director of USA Training – Interagro Farm Export Program and the professional who helps select horses for The 2010 Lusitano Collection™ International Horse Auction. She adds, “I know all the riders and their skill levels. They are up to this challenge and will do a great job.” Heather will start with a basic riding plan, but will finalize the movements as they practice. She explained, “Because of their ages, the horses are at various levels of development, but they are so well matched in body type and color. The audience will see them moving in sequence and in unison. Some can do piaffe, or half passes and flying changes, but the real beauty in a quadrille occurs when the horses are in sync, a necessity when ‘threading the needle’ in perfect harmony across the arena, an audience favorite.”

Growing up on Interagro Farms, the horses started their lives in the beautiful rolling hills running and playing together. When they began their training, they were groomed in open cross ties and were ridden side by side in large groups which helped them become better socialized. Heather comments, “Because they are used to working closely together, this has made putting a quadrille together an easier project.”

Three of the owners, all dressage competitors, are riding their own horses while Heather and four additional trainers are riding the other horses. Heather, Barbara Masterson and trainer Leah Winston ride at the same barn while most of the others haven’t ridden together. Six have some experience riding in quadrilles, but first-timer grand prix rider/trainer Tim Mellott offered, “It will be a good experience. Everyone

I see who does it seems to have a great time.” Interagro Farms Head Trainer Pia Aragão, a Swedish-born international rider and eight-time Brazilian dressage champion, is riding one of the two stallions from The 2010 Lusitano Collection™. “It is unusual for such young horses to be competent enough to participate in a quadrille performance like this,” Pia remarked, and added, “The lucky people who get to take these two home from the Auction will get a splendid preview of their abilities.”

Having served as a member of the USDF quadrille committee and as a qualified quadrille judge, Heather has performed and written about quadrille performances for a number of years. This past March, she was a member of the winning international quadrille team in the Challenge of the Americas Competition in Wellington, Florida. She clarified the process, “When you are working with music and eight different riders and horses, sometimes the movements may go faster or take longer. We have to be able to deal with the changes. Most importantly we try to select choreography that enhances the horses’ abilities.”

Until all of the riders and horses are in South Florida, those who are there will rehearse aspects of the quadrille. In reality, according to Heather, the performance won’t be finalized until the final two weeks. She added, “We may have to add a few bars to the music. It all depends on the timing. That’s where the creativity comes in.”

The music will have special meaning for Interagro Farms Managing Director Cecilia Gonzaga and rider Pia Aragão. The music for the Quadrille will be the same that was created by producer and song writer Eric Bikales specifically for Nirvana Interagro and Pia when they represented Brazil in the Pan American games. Pia and Nirvana never got to perform their ride as Nirvana Interagro contracted an illness right before the big event. Today he is a successful sire in Brazil producing huge babies with super gaits. Cecilia stated, “I’ve known every horse participating in the quadrille for his entire life. I’m so excited with the prospect of getting these alumni horses together again.”

When those magnificently-braided elegant grey Lusitanos enter the lit-up arena in formation like a rotating kaleidoscope amid the pulsating Brazilian music, it will surely be a spectacle worth watching.

The participants are: Heather Bender riding stallion Zero(Zairo) Interagro owned by Priscilla Baldwin and Heather Bender; Leah Winston riding stallion Amintas Interagro owned by Sheri and Al Zobec; Pia Aragão and Timothy Mellott riding stallions from The 2010 Lusitano Collection™; Stephany Fish riding mare Zalene Interagro owned by Kathryn Elliott; Kate Tremain riding her stallion Zenith Interagro; Louise Weststrom riding stallion Ximenes Interagro owned by Marylin Fallon; and Barbara Masterson riding her gelding Velasco Interagro.

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