

# Spotlight On: Dr. Kathleen Crandell, KER's Newest Nutritionist

ROBIN STANBACK

An internationally respected equine nutritionist, a mother, wife, and athlete, Dr. Kathleen Crandell is the epitome of the 90's woman. She is just the kind of person whose abilities would make others envious except that she adds yet another attribute to the mix, charm. All of this, combined with her ability to converse in six languages, makes her a shining asset to Kentucky Equine Research's roster of equine specialists.

Dr. Crandell came to her profession in a circuitous route as would befit the daughter of a Navy captain. She had the opportunity to see many parts of the country as her mother, two sisters, and two brothers traveled to be with her father. At one point her mother opted for a six month sojourn to Europe in an effort to be near her husband whose tour of duty saw him stationed in ports throughout the Mediterranean. Dr. Crandell found a job there that captivated her interest and she stayed.

*Kathleen Greiwe Crandell, Ph.D.*



She explained, "Our last stop in Spain was in Barcelona. The fellow who rented us an apartment offered me a job working for him finding accommodations for tourists to the area. It was a wonderful opportunity for me. I would go to check on the tourists and it was then I learned I had an affinity for languages. We also would travel in the winter to different countries visiting some of the agents who sent tourists to us which gave me an even greater chance to try out the new languages I had been learning."

Six years later Dr. Crandell decided it was time to move on. "I had done two years of college before I left for Spain and I felt it was time to go back and finish my education. There is no Latin blood in my family, so, while I loved Spain, I always felt like a 'extranjero,' a foreigner," she said.

With help from a connection she had made in Holland, Dr. Crandell spent a year at the University of Wageningen studying Animal Science. She then came back to the United States to finish her education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University achieving M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. Her research centered on equine nutrition, exercise physiology, and reproduction. Her dissertation involved the study of vitamin A and beta carotene supplementation in Thoroughbreds. She stated, "One of the things we discovered was that supplementing feeds with synthetic beta carotene as a source of vitamin A, did not work but that horses who had access to plenty of fresh green grass got all they needed. Horses on hay alone could not get enough vitamin A."

Dr. Crandell met her future husband Jeffrey while she was working on her Master's degree. They dated for two years before marrying and settling in Middleburg, Virginia where he manages an estate. They have two children, a son Nathan and a daughter Allison. Together they operate a small breeding operation where they stand the Thoroughbred stallion All Done John, and the Moyle stallion Moyle Apple Cider. While working on her Ph.D., Dr. Crandell attended a short course presented by KER. She said, "I came away from that program very impressed with the company and the information I gathered from them. I talked with Dr. Pagan and asked about possible



*Dr. Crandell competing with Bold Soldier, her mother-in-law's eighteen-year-old Arabian stallion.*

positions with his company then. He remembered me and talked to me about joining the KER team the following year.”

KER president Dr. Joe Pagan said, “I was very impressed with Dr. Crandell’s ability and enthusiasm. Being fluent in Spanish as well as a few other languages was also a great asset and one we needed. KER supplies feed and supplements to horsemen all over the world. For instance, we are one of the largest feed suppliers for Paso Fino horses in Central and South America. Having Dr. Crandell on board gave us the opportunity to communicate with these horseman and better serve their needs.”

Dr. Crandell recently visited Paso Fino breeding establishments in Puerto Rico and South America. She came away with an added appreciation for the breed. She commented, “These horses are really quite versatile athletes. I had the distinct pleasure of being offered the opportunity to ride some show horses and found them to be incredibly comfortable and enjoyable. Paso Finos, whether show, breeding or working horses, do present some interesting challenges to the equine nutritionist. Many of these horses seem to be easy

keepers, in that they do not require a large volume of feed for maintenance but, at the same time, they still require a careful blend of nutrients to meet their needs.”

Her ability to appreciate the unique demands of equine athletes stems not only from being an equine nutritionist by education but also from being a lifelong horsewoman. Dr. Crandell’s family introduced her to the joys of horseback riding at an early age. She is known on the East Coast as a tough competitor in endurance competitions aboard her mother-in-law’s 18-year-old Arabian stallion, Bold Soldier. The two recently finished in the IAHA top ten in the Race of Champions, a 100-mile endurance race held this year in the countryside outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With over 900 miles of endurance competition under her belt, Dr. Crandell is justifiably proud of the fact she has finished every race she has entered, a tribute to good riding, conditioning, and nutrition.

Dr. Crandell’s unique combination of experience and knowledge has helped her to assist David and Karen O’Connor, two of the United States’ most accomplished Olympic riders, in catering to their horses’ nutritional needs for the international circuits in which they compete. She has also been a featured speaker at some of this country’s most prestigious equine seminars. She presented a portion of the 1997 KER Short Course and was a popular speaker at Equitana held in Louisville,

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Kentucky this past summer. Dr. Crandell said, “It is an honor to be associated with some of the finest athletes in equine sports. I very much appreciate having the opportunities KER has made available to me and I look forward to a long and prosperous association with them.” ☺☺