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WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES

In perhaps a never before done feat, Canadian horse trainer Randy Bird of Harwood, Ontario can proudly point to having four, possibly five horses representing two countries and two entirely different disciplines competing in the World Equestrian Games being held in Lexington, Kentucky. Four of these are Percheron cross Thoroughbred mares competing for their owners Bob and Susie Cook of Southern Pines, North Carolina in the Combined Driving Event as part of the United States team. They are currently being trained, and will be driven by the Cook's daughter Cindy O'Reilly. Three of these horses were obtained as a group of eleven five month old weanlings from Alberta, and as two and three year olds spent five months at Randy Bird's facility learning their driving skills. Little did anyone realize that these three, along with one new recruit added later to make up the four in hand, would go on to challenge twenty eight other four in hands for the world championship.

Another factor making this remarkable is the fact that these four will be only the second four in hand of mares ever to compete at the World Equestrian Games. Prince Philip being the other competitor to share in this honor.

As if this weren't exciting enough, another horse who had been started by Randy as a three year old is currently a member of the Canadian Eventing team, and will act as an alternate or spare should something happen to one of the six other team members or horses. This horse is "Manny", a Thoroughbred cross gelding owned by John Lennox of Port Dover Ontario, and trained and ridden by Diana Burnett of Blackstock, Ontario. Diana and Manny have spent the last few years competing at a world class level and have their sights set on the 2012 Olympic Games in Burleigh, England. The World Equestrian Games will run from September 25 to October 10. It is the first time they have been held in North America and will boast 900 athletes and 1300 horses who will be competing in eight different events. The Games are expected to attract as many as 500,000 spectators.

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If you'd like more information about this topic or to schedule an interview with Randy Bird, please call (905) 342 – 3053 or email randy@randybird.ca