

think it should be made the state horse. The horses are a part of our history.”

The brothers also hope to get the Nokota breed officially registered with the American Minor Breeds Conservatory.

The fight to preserve these horses has been long and the cost steep. Since 1978, Frank and Leo have bought close to 150 horses from Park Service auctions at a cost of \$25 to \$700 a head.

“In order to save a breed, you can’t pass up any of them,” explains Leo.

It costs over \$30,000 a year to feed their estimated 250 horses. Frank is losing his farm, but shrugs, “You can always buy more land, but you won’t be able to get these horses back if you lose them.” Frank and Leo earn a living working odd jobs, including giving wagon rides in Medora each summer. But their horses are eating up more than they can afford. Against their hearts desire a few Nokota horses were sold at auction last October.

“We’ve got to eat too. It’s time to start cutting back or find rich widows with lots of pasture,” jokes Leo. “Hell, they don’t even have to be rich, just have the pasture.”

The two brothers hope the tide is finally turning for their horses. In the meantime, they will continue to maintain as many animals as they are able.

“We can’t just walk away from them,” says Frank. “We’re in it for the long haul.” ■

Seven years after the Battle of the Little Bighorn the Marquis de Mores brought Sitting Bull’s horse herd into the Badlands.



In their desire to keep as many Nokota horses as possible, the Kuntz brothers have run out of pasture for their herd. (Below) The descendents of Sitting Bull’s herd are ideal for the rigors of the Great American Horse Race circuit.

