

Desensitisation To Frightening Stimuli

R.M. Miller

It may seem to be incongruous that the flighty, easily frightened horse can be more quickly desensitised to frightening sensory stimuli than other animals, but it is nevertheless true.

What more vivid example can be given than the millions of horses which have been trained for military use. Horses have stood quietly in ranks under artillery barrage, charged into battle, carried knights in armour, pulled caissons, ambulances, and supply wagons, and trained to lie down to provide cover for firing cavalry troopers.

Even today horses tolerate the banners and noise of parades, police horses calmly manipulate rioting mobs, and horses pack dead game for hunters. Buffalo and boar have been pursued on horseback. In some areas highly trained horses deftly avoid the charges of fighting bulls. In the ranching industry all over the world, stock horses mingle with and control herds of half-wild cattle.