

## THE DOGS THAT WORK WITH BUFFALOES IN THE VALLEY OF RIBEIRA

This story was published in the CAFIB bulletin "O fila", ano II, nº 18, in May 1980 and tells about the farm "Rio Bonito" of Karol Klevze in the Ribeira valley where Filas work with buffaloes, which is something very rare. The farm is situated near the small town of Registro, half way the road from Sao Paulo to Curitiba (State of Paraná). The visitors were Airton Campbell, judge and president of CAFIB and his wife Rosaly, Luiz Antonio Maciel, CAFIB judge, author of this article and editor of "O fila" and Roberto Maruyama, CAFIB judge and photographer of the Filas in action with the buffaloes. The same day, in the town of Registro, took place a CAFIB analysis of Filas from the area of the Ribeira Valley. Only three of the ten dogs passed the analyse. Xula, the Fila bitch from the farm was not present but to the opinion of the CAFIB team she was the best Fila they had seen that day.



Os cães vêm tranquilos na carroceria da camionete, para o trabalho com o gado.

### Os cães que trabalham com búfalos no Vale do Ribeira

De repente, ao longe, dentro do vespertino, o latido grosso e profundo dos cães. Em poucos segundos a terra desnuda do chapão começou a tremer, e virou-se por trás das matas o tropel pesado dos búfalos.

Apresamto o passo, na medida do possível, saquele sóu difícil, cheio de obstáculos formados por troncos caídos de árvores, alguns já bastante apodrecidos, contribuindo para dar aquela coloração negra a terra, rica em húmus. O tril estava quase a zero, quando, abrandado, formadno um esmoço que tornava mais difícil a manobra, já ofogante pelo ar pesado "lento de Cooper" de andar por uma trilha de terra, batendo casais de drenagem, afundado os sapatos na terra negra, subindo e descendo de troncos caídos, saltando poças de lama.

Mas alguns metros de caminhada e chegamos a uma clareira. No centro, 16 búfalos, inquietos, formavam uma massa compacta de tonetadas de carne, amarela.



O desobediante dos cães, sob as ordens de Karol.

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## THE DOGS THAT WORK WITH BUFFALOES IN THE VALLEY OF RIBEIRA

Suddenly, from the distant forest, we heard the strong deep barking of the dogs. In a few seconds the drained marshes started trembling, and we saw through the scrub the heavy stampede of buffaloes.

Hurrying through, as prudently as possible on this difficult terrain, full of obstacles such as fallen trunks, some already rotten, contributing to the colour of the soil, black and rich in humus. It was almost midday, the sun burning hot, the atmosphere stifling, making breathing difficult. Already gasping from this unexpected “Cooper test” of walking through this earthen track, skirting draining channels, our shoes sinking into the black spoil, over and under fallen trees and jumping pools of mud.

But after several meters of this we arrived at a clearing. In the centre, 16 restless buffaloes, tons of flesh forming a compact mass, threatening... A sudden gesture, an unexpected noise, and this mass of flesh could start to run out of control. At a distance of some meters sat the dogs, observing calmly awaiting the order from their master to start the demonstration.



At an order from Karol, the dogs, without fear, courageously approached the buffaloes. The buffaloes were alarmed, not knowing which direction to take, but the dogs quickly closed and obliged them to run in a pre-determined direction away from us, who filmed and photographed the exhibition.

Leading the small herd, an enormous buffalo, shining with the reflection of the sun on his hide, covered with a coat of still damp mud, which gave off silver reflections. Away from the buffaloes, the order completed, the dogs returned to the side of their master.



*Princesa and Sheik*

Karol Klevze, a middle aged Yugoslav, strong, healthy, face burned by the sun, hands big and strong, accustomed to hard work in the open country, arrived in Brazil in 1949, became nationalized, and is today totally considered Brazilian at heart.

“I have bred buffaloes for 17 years, and have had other dogs, German Shepherds, but only with the Filas, that entered my life 7 years ago, do I feel secure. The buffaloes are very temperamental, they are easily alarmed and attack when surprised, like wild animals. whether in the marshes or a clearing. Always when I enter the moors to inspect the buffaloes I take the dogs with me, for they protect and defend me, and the buffaloes respect and fear them.”

All the work of driving and herding the buffaloes at the fazenda is done by the dogs (one pure very typical fila, named XULA, a male with mastiff blood named SHEIK, a bitch also with mixed blood PRINCESA, and a mixbred German Shepherd) which however are not trained for the more elaborate work with the livestock, such as driving, by order the stock to a determinate place, separating one particular beast from the herd, or bringing down a bull). Accompanied by Karol however, they help him to locate the buffaloes, which are kept loose in the marshes, they defy them and herd them in a direction contrary to where Karol stands and in this way they drive the buffaloes in the desired direction.



*Sheik, Xula and the mixbred German Shepherd*

#### THE CARE OF THE LITTER

Karol Kleve's fazenda Rio Bonito, situated at the banks of the Ribeiro do Iguape river belongs to the municipality of Registro and measures 57 alqueires of land, there are rice and banana plantations and there is buffalo raising. To drain the marshland where the buffaloes live, 20 kilometres of ditches were constructed by hand. The dogs are raised in freedom in the fazenda, accustomed from birth to the movements of the workers in the fields.

At the entrance of the fazenda, beside the house, Xula was guarding a litter and when the CAFIB team (Airton Campbell, Rosaly Campbell, Roberto Maruyama and Luiz Antonio Maciel) neared the zone, she received them with a growl of warning, that this territory was under her protection and the group better not come nearer.

Informed that Karol could be found in a field, supervising the workers harvesting rice, we went, guided by José Coimbra de Macedo, who had arranged our visit for that day, May 10<sup>th</sup> in Registro. Karol was accompanied by two dogs, Sheik and Princesa. He explained that the

litter being taken care of by Xula, was Princesa's, and recounted this surprising story.

“After the birth of her puppies Princesa still followed her habit of accompanying me to the forest to inspect the buffaloes. One day, still in the suckling period, we were attacked by a swarm of bees. I almost died, Princesa as well. The bitch was in a very poor state, completely swollen, without the strength to move and in no condition to feed the puppies, and then suddenly the milk production stopped. Xula, who was not the mother of the puppies, and who never had a litter, started feeding the litter normally, as though they were her own. After Princesa recovered she did not return to feed her puppies who continued in the care of Xula.”



*Karol entering the bush with two Filas*

We returned to the entrance of the fazenda to collect Xula. At an order from Karol, Xula, Princesa, Sheik and the mixbreed herding dog jumped into the back of a “pick up” happy as though they already knew that they were going to work. We travelled around two Km, between banana plantations, until arriving at a point in the marsh where the buffaloes may be found. The dogs jumped from the “pick up” excitedly, and immediately entered the marsh, smelling the ground. Later returning staying at Karol’s side, who advanced into the marsh, following a narrow path. Passing a drainage channel Xula submerged herself in the water to refresh herself from the intense heat. For some time the dogs penetrated the shrub land, in search of the buffaloes but later returned to their master. After half an hours walking, the fila bitch (Xula) and the others became more exited, because of the proximity of the buffaloes and led into the undergrowth, followed by Karol Klevze, with a sickle in his hand, to open a pathway in the undergrowth.

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