Donald G Stearns was born February 20, 1925 to Elvis and Florence Stearns. He was raised on a ranch near Karinen, South Dakota in northwest Harding County. His grandfather and father homesteaded the land and brought many draft horses with them. He attended grade school at Karinen and graduated from Spearfish High School in 1943. He joined the Army Air Corps and served in Texas and Arizona until the end of WW II. When he returned to the ranch, Don married Donna Olson and they had seven children.

Don started raising quarter horses in 1957 and purchased his first stallion, Sputnik I, in 1959. This stallion became the foundation for what was to become one of the largest broodmare bands in the country. At one time in the early to mid-1980s, he bred over 300 broodmares and registered more weanlings with AQHA than any other producer. Their first ranch production sale was in 1963 and was one of the first sales of its kind in the country. The one-day and sometimes two-day sales continued until 1992.

In the early 1970s Don and Donna’s four youngest children successfully participated in high school rodeo. During these years Don worked tirelessly to promote high school rodeo in North Dakota. If contestants would need horses to rope steers or calves on, or goats to practice tying, he would provide them with what they needed. When going to high school rodeos, two trailers always went down the road, one with horses and the other with roping and dogging stock and goats for the goat tying event.

Don was on the NDQHA Board of Directors in the 1970s and 1980s. He served as an AQHA Director from 1972-1990. He was a founding member and president on the North Dakota Quarter Horse Breeders Association in the early 1980s. He was one of the first members of the North Dakota High School Rodeo Association and served on the Board of Directors and as its President in the 1970s. Don was a charter member of the Western South Dakota Buckaroos and rode on the trail rides from 1966-1992.

Don liked to team rope and was active in the Bowman and Rhame, North Dakota roping clubs. He built a multi-purpose indoor arena in 1973, the first in the area. The barn was used for foaling mares in the spring as well as a venue for the annual production horse sale. Team roping leagues and jackpots were held at the arena in the winter with ropers driving up to 150 miles to participate. In the spring the high school rodeo team used the arena for practice until the weather warmed enough to move outside.

In addition to steer roping, Don liked going to rodeos and trail rides. He especially liked going to horse sales and would always take a trailer with so he could buy a horse or two to “make expenses”. He was proud of his family and enjoyed watching their activities.

Don looked forward to foaling each spring to see the fruits of his labor and was proud to present his colts to the public at the annual sales.

Don died on September 22, 1992 north of Buffalo, South Dakota.