

NOV/DEC 2023
EDITION

WILDCAT CANTER

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY AG EQUINE PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

Kristen Wilson, senior academic coordinator within UK Ag Equine Programs, has closed one professional chapter and has opened another in a new position.

UK Ag Equine Programs held a graduation reception for our Fall 2023 grads Dec. 14 at Maine Chance Equine Campus. See their profiles and pictures from the event in this issue.

The University of Kentucky Pre-Vet Advising Program, in conjunction with UK Ag Equine Programs and Kentucky Horse Council, will host an inaugural Pre-Veterinary Experience Day Feb. 17 at the Kentucky Horse Park.



HIGHLIGHTS



UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS BIDS FAREWELL TO KRISTEN WILSON

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CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

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WELCOME TO THE

EQUINE SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT

FALL 2023

SENIOR SEND OFF

 Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY TO HOST INAUGURAL PRE-VETERINARY EXPERIENCE DAY FEB. 17

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Jan. 31, Equine and Endophytes Workshop
Feb. 17, Pre-Veterinary Experience Day

Full event listings and details can be found [here](#).

WELCOME

The end of the year always seems to bring about not only a time of reflection, but also closure as we anticipate the new year and set new goals. For me, the end of 2023 means the closure of one chapter of my professional life after a little over a decade with UK Ag Equine Programs. It also brings much excitement and anticipation as I am set to start a new adventure as the Education Coordinator at Spy Coast Farm at the start of 2024. With that said, lately my reflections have not only been about this past year, but also about my entire time here at the University of Kentucky, the relationships built, the impacts accomplished and what helped me along the journey.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." This quote resonates with me in so many ways. Not only did I have it painted and gifted to our first graduates who served as Wildcat Wrangler student ambassadors, but when I think about it, it is what I have strived to do in my role all these years as I started in a new position I got to direct and to help build the program to where it is today. My goals have included striving to build community, educating and mentoring our students and overall making the program better than I found it, for others to continue to be successful and make a difference in the lives of our equine students and local industry.

As I sit here and reflect, with all the emotions I may add, I hope that I have made a positive impact on each person I have been able to work with, teach and mentor. There are some key pieces I've learned, through trial and error, that have helped me along the way.

Work where your passion lies. Using the horse as the vehicle to educate others is exactly where my passion lies. Sometimes that education is not about the horse; it is about identifying others' strengths and weaknesses, helping them navigate a hard situation and/or celebrating their successes. With that said, "the horse" is always at the heart of what we are doing and if I can have the opportunity to combine education about the horse and helping others, that is where my passion lies. So, as you make decisions about your career pathway, I challenge you to incorporate your passions into what you strive to do in the future so that you continually love what you are doing and believe in the impact you can make.

Network and build relationships. I have always believed that you are only as strong as those around you. It's so important to network, get to know others and support one another even if you don't always agree. Celebrate the wins and learn from your losses together. That friendly smile, thank you note or one specific relationship you've cultivated might open a door for you that you never knew was going to happen. For me, as one career pathway was ending, a new opportunity at UK presented itself and wouldn't have happened if not for the friendships and connections I had made long before.

Get outside of your comfort zone. Do the things that make you most scared. You will not continue to grow as a person and professional if you don't try something at least once. You may find that it's something you like, but you'd never know if you didn't get a little uncomfortable and trust that you will survive. Apply for that internship you never thought you'd get, get up and speak in front of others even if it makes you uncomfortable or serve in a new leadership role to continue building your skills and learning.

Be innovative and take the risk. It's okay to change what's always been done, to think of something new and/or to try a crazy idea you've been thinking about. Without innovation, things will stay stagnant, and you will not challenge yourself in ways that will help you to continue to grow both personally and professionally. Grab by the reins new opportunities and change and hold on tight because you never know where it will take you, even if it might make you feel a



little uneasy. Often it will lead to new adventures that you never imagined possible, but you never will know unless you say “yes” as they come along.

Find what balance works well for you. The term “work-life balance” can be so cliché to some, but I have found that it’s so important to take a break, take the trip, buy the tickets, ride the horse and spend time with your family type things. Burnout is real and work will always be there whether you believe it or not. Be flexible. Be sure to remember “you” and set time aside for the things that make you happy. Identify those happy things ahead of time and carve time out into your schedule, not only once you’re in a job, but also as a student.

Be true to yourself. Your values, morals and goals matter. Be sure in every decision you make, both personally and professionally, that you always come back to those and what you are feeling at the time. They are what will help you shape your future. Living true to yourself will lead you to your own happiness in life and new opportunities that you may have only dreamed of.

As you look into the new year, I challenge you to set goals that make you feel uncomfortable, to make a difference and create new pathways for you to grow both personally and professionally through those experiences. It’s okay to take the path most comfortable, but you will grow and leave a lasting impact for others if you select where there is no path and blaze a trail for others to be part of in the process. I have grown so much in the past 11 years during my time at UK Ag Equine Programs and it has been wonderful to be part of the team that has built, grown and made it what it is today.



KRISTEN WILSON, SENIOR ACADEMIC COORDINATOR



MASTHEAD

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UK Ag Equine Programs bids farewell to Kristen Wilson



Kristen Wilson, senior academic coordinator within UK Ag Equine Programs, has closed one professional chapter and has opened another in a new position. She will be missed by students, staff and faculty within the program. Her passion, innovation and hard work on behalf of the program will be missed. Our team wishes her the very best in her new role. As she was transitioning out, she agreed to a Q&A reflecting on her time here.

YOU'VE BEEN A PART OF THE AG EQUINE PROGRAMS' TEAM FOR 11 YEARS. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS YOU HAVE HELPED CREATE AND/OR IMPLEMENT THAT YOU ARE MOST PROUD ARE PART OF YOUR LEGACY?

Legacy is a really big word. I just hope that I have been able to have a positive impact on those that I've been fortunate enough to work with over the last 11 years. The program has grown drastically and changed in so many ways during this time. For me, I want our equine students to feel as though they are part of our equine community, even though we are a very large major. We've been able to do that through events and new initiatives. Those start with prospective students at events such as Experience Equine Day, continue to our current students with events such as our Welcome Back BBQ and UK Equine Week of Service and remain with our alumni at our graduation open houses and equine alumni events such as the Land Rover Three Day Event tailgates.

I also believe in the power of data. During my time here we have been able to make strong and impactful decisions about our curriculum and pathways for our students. We have done this through assessment exercises, such as the curriculum mapping, becoming an Essential Employability Qualities (EEQ) certified program and creating a strong student learning outcome assessment plan. This foundation will hopefully continue to help others with making programmatic decisions for years to come.

REFLECTING BACK, WHAT ARE SOME EVENTS OR PROGRAMS THAT WERE ESPECIALLY MEANINGFUL TO YOU OR MEMORIES THAT REALLY STAND OUT?

It's really hard to just pick just a couple. If I had to choose, overall, working with our students in leadership roles to make an impact for hundreds of others is what has been so meaningful to me. The first program would be helping create the Wildcat Wrangler equine student ambassador program. Out of this initiative has come so much creativity and innovation from our students. Most notably are their two pillar events – UK Equine Week of Service in the Fall semester and the Horsey Hustle 5K in the Spring semester. The second initiative would be the curricular changes made to EQM 101: Intro to the Horse and Horse Industry and the peer mentor program that runs alongside it. EQM 101 is the first course our equine students take and many changes were made to the course to welcome our students and help them be successful in their first semester. The EQM 101 peer mentors are not only a friendly face and resource to our incoming students, but they have been able to serve in a leadership role learning so much about themselves throughout the process. The growth our students make in these leadership roles is something exciting to watch and be a part of.

DURING THIS DECADE PLUS OF TIME WITH EQUINE PROGRAMS, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU FACED?

Wow! This is a hard question. I think the biggest challenge I have faced in the past decade has been the COVID-19 era. What a time of uncertainty and unknown. A time to help you really reflect and understand yourself and your priorities deeper. However, through that time, it challenged us all to have a different perspective, think differently and develop some great new skills. For me it was to learn new technologies, allowing me to teach the same course in three different modalities, and to learn a different approach of extending grace, not only to others, but also to myself as we navigated the unknown. It also allowed us to explore further what the definition of community for the Equine Program looked like and how we could accomplish that moving forward. During this time as we went back to campus, UK Ag Equine Programs and the Wildcat Wranglers wanted to find ways to connect with our students because they were on campus, but many classes were remote. This resulted in the inaugural year of the UK Equine Week of Service, where students could get off campus and be out in the industry serving. This event has now continued for four years and resulted in nearly 2,000 hours of service given back to our local equine community.

WHAT WILL YOU MISS MOST ABOUT BEING A PART OF THIS PROGRAM?

I have made so many meaningful relationships during my time at UK, but I will miss the students the most. It's been so rewarding to witness thousands of students grow over their four-year undergraduate career during my time here. Each student is unique with the experiences they have, the opportunities they choose to participate in and the end results at graduation. The students I have been able to work with have helped to also shape me as the professional and parent I am today. I will forever be grateful for the relationships I have been able to build with them and continue as they go out into the industry to work. They have been my "why" throughout my career here at UK.

WHAT WILL BE YOUR NEW TITLE AND ROLE WITH YOUR NEXT JOB?

My role at Spy Coast Farm is new and I will serve as their Education Coordinator. Job responsibilities will include helping to manage undergraduates and veterinary students through internship and externship opportunities and high school students during their work experiences on the farm. In addition, I will also coordinate the outreach education initiatives to support underserved populations through education and employment opportunities in partnership with many local organizations in the Central Kentucky area.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS YOU ARE MOST EXCITED ABOUT IN YOUR NEXT PROFESSIONAL CHAPTER?

There are two things that I am most excited about in this new professional chapter specific to the job. First, I'm excited that I still get to work directly with students in a hands-on capacity. Secondly, I'm very excited to get back to my outreach education roots, as that is something I truly miss about my previous job at the University of Maryland. In addition, my commute to work will be much closer, and I'll even have a parking spot when I arrive, so I'm hoping that will allow me to have more time with my family. Overall, I'm excited to explore, learn and help to figure out what educational programming looks like with this new role and the impact we'll be able to make with so many different audiences using the horse as the mechanism to do so.



Check Out Our Newest Wildcat Alumni!

Satya Benoit
Colleen Ellzey
Mackenzie Grunden
Grace Hamilton

Maddie Hart
Allison Heard
Kylie Konar
Alex Rudder

Delaney Ruoff
Abigail Shepherd
Stephanie Smith
Ava Stachowski

Alec Townley
Jen Zimmerman

EQUINE SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT FALL CLASS OF 2023

CONGRATULATIONS

SATYA BENOIT

MARIETTA, GA

Satya completed an internship with APHIS as a veterinary medical science student trainee.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am proud to possess a rich repertoire of skills and an in-depth understanding of various equine topics, spanning from the intricacies of the industry to the complex science of horses. My sense of accomplishment is heightened by the unwavering resilience I have consistently demonstrated throughout my educational journey."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was attending the career fair for the first time. Stepping into a venue filled with employers, professionals and opportunities was a pivotal moment that significantly impacted my perspective on the transition from academia to the professional world."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I will embark on a journey of professional growth and self-discovery through enrollment in an MPH program, laying an additional foundation for pursuing a DVM program. During my time in the MPH program, I will contribute to the field by working in a veterinary clinic where I aim to continue immersing myself in the practical aspects of veterinary care."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“ Stay dedicated to your passion in the ESMA program. Embrace challenges as opportunities to learn and grow. Surround yourself with a supportive community. Your journey is unique, enjoy every step. ”



CONGRATULATIONS

COLLEEN ELLZEY

ELLISVILLE, MS

Colleen completed an internship with 6666 Ranch.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am very proud of completing my internship in Texas last spring."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"Training my first 4 Paws dog who went on to become a seizure alert service dog."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I am currently applying for positions at equine reproduction facilities or stallion stations. I will eventually move to Arkansas to manage an up-and-coming Quarter Horse breeding program that I am helping build now."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“Focus on your long-term goals and always take any step you can to move forward, but do not forget to enjoy the small moments along the way!”

CONGRATULATIONS

MACKENZIE GRUNDEN

GRANVILLE, OH

Mackenzie completed an internship with Hagyard Equine Medical Institute as an internal medicine undergraduate intern.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

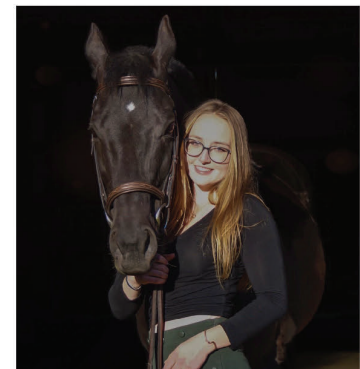
"I am proud of the article I wrote for EQM 305, titled 'Speaking Horse or Force?', which was published in the *Wildcat Canter* in 2021. This class provided me with the opportunity to discover something that I am passionate about, and I was excited to work on the paper and coinciding presentations."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"One of my favorite memories was getting to help with one of the research projects at Maine Chance Farm. It was a great group of people and horses, and I learned a lot in just a few short days."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I will be managing a hunter/jumper barn near my hometown in Ohio, and I plan on attending graduate school for animal welfare and behavior."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“Don't be afraid to change your plans! I came into the program with an idea of what I wanted to do, and I am coming out with a completely different plan.”

CONGRATULATIONS

GRACE HAMILTON

BLUFFTON, SC

Grace completed an internship with Jonabell Farm as a Godolphin office intern.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am most proud of the experience I had during my for-credit internship with Godolphin at Jonabell Farm. I got to learn a lot about the industry and participate in some great research projects that allowed me to grow as an equine industry professional."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"Probably getting to explore the Irish horse industry with the UK equine study abroad to Ireland experience. I not only got to learn a lot about the industry, but I made some of the best friendships that I've made in my time at UK while I was there."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I will be going to the Irish National Stud in Kildare as part of their 2024 Thoroughbred Breeding Management Course as a Gerry Dilger Scholarship recipient. The course runs from the middle of January through June and I'm looking forward to continuing to learn about the Thoroughbred industry internationally."



WORDS OF WISDOM

"I would highly recommend trying to get as much experience in the industry as possible during your time at UK. The industry is full of people who are happy to help students."

CONGRATULATIONS

MADDIE HART

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, GA

Maddie completed an internship with Champagne Run as a working/riding student.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am most proud of the accomplishments and connections I have made along the way with my peers, teachers and mentors. I am happy to have been a part of such a welcoming community that has helped me grow my knowledge of the equine industry."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"Working and learning with the horses at Maine Chance Farm for EQM 105 Equine Behavior and Handling."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I plan to explore a few different opportunities in the equine industry, working under an equine vet in a rehabilitation facility."



WORDS OF WISDOM

"Take advantage of your professors' office hours to ask questions and/or get feedback."

CONGRATULATIONS

ALLISON HEARD

NASHVILLE, TN

Allison completed an internship with Lake Bryn Mawr Camp as a riding staff liaison.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

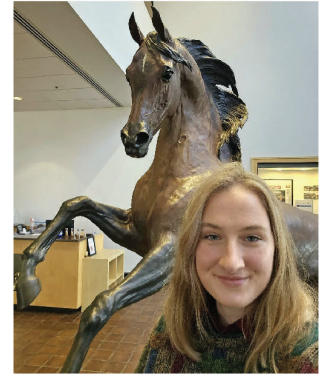
"My EQM 305 paper on disaster preparedness for horses in wildfires."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"Naming a Thoroughbred foal at Maine Chance Farm."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I am moving back home to Nashville to gain experience in the therapeutic riding industry."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“If you don't know what you want to do with a career in horses, that is normal. Take advantage of the variety of equine opportunities in Lexington to find what is right for you.”

CONGRATULATIONS

KYLIE KONAR

CHARLOTTE, NC

Kylie completed an internship with Silver Star Partners as a senior corporate trainer.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am proud to be the first college graduate in my family."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"Meeting my best friend through the equine program."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I will be pursuing a job in the equine community through marketing."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“Make sure you have a clear plan regarding the three emphasis areas.”

CONGRATULATIONS

ALEX RUDDER

LEXINGTON, KY

Alex completed an internship with Diamond View Farm as an assistant trainer.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am proud of the professional growth I have gained from my equine courses at the University of Kentucky."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite moment was being accepted as the Jockey Club's intern for the summer of 2022."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I will continue to explore opportunities inside and outside of the equine industry. I also plan to travel around the world and experience the different cultures and gain knowledge."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“Don't be afraid to take a risk; get comfortable with being uncomfortable. If you do this, you will be amazed at the opportunities that show up.”

CONGRATULATIONS

DELANEY RUOFF

AUDUBON, NJ

Delaney completed an internship at Pickering Equine as an equine rehabilitation intern.

CONGRATULATIONS

ABIGAIL SHEPHERD

BURGIN, KY

Abigail completed an internship with Bryn Mawr Riding Camp as a group leader.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am most proud of myself for juggling many activities, setbacks and other issues and still pulling through to receive my degree."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory would have to be during my internship, building lifelong friendships and being able to pass on my knowledge to young kids there."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I am unsure where I am going after graduation. I am looking to be a substitute teacher at Burgin Independent School while I am deciding my long-term goals and aspirations."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“ Just stick with it. Sometimes it's hard but pulling through to get that degree and making connections with teachers, advisors and peers will be so rewarding. ”

CONGRATULATIONS

STEPHANIE SMITH

WINCHESTER, VA

Stephanie completed an internship with UK's Plant and Soil Science Department forage group as an extension intern.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"My time as a Wildcat Wrangler and all of the community events we organized for the program."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"Interning for the UK Horse Pasture Evaluation Program. I made great friends and met so many amazing people."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I plan to explore opportunities in Cooperative Extension and outreach education."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“ Don't be afraid to try new things because you never know what you might discover that you're passionate about! ”

CONGRATULATIONS

AVA STACHOWSKI

AURORA, OH

Ava completed an internship with John T. Jones stable.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am proud of all of the amazing connections I have made through the equine program."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My internship showcase."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"As of right now, I am planning on possibly continuing school."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“ Take advantage of all the great opportunities the program has to offer. There are a lot of great people you will meet along the way. ”

CONGRATULATIONS

ALEC TOWNLEY

CINCINNATI, OH

Alec completed an internship with Double C Training Center.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"My ability to network with industry professionals."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My job shadowing experience with the broodmare manager at Three Chimney's Farm."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I will attend graduate school to pursue my Master of Science in finance."



WORDS OF WISDOM

“ When it comes to your dreams, remember this quote, 'One day or day one.' ”

CONGRATULATIONS

JEN ZIMMERMAN

DETROIT, MI

Jen completed an internship with Red Horse Training as a farm intern.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the equine program?

"I am most proud of how I have grown as a person. The learning and leadership opportunities I discovered in this program have given me a safe place to step out of my comfort zone and try new things. From hands-on horsey labs to student-organized activities and community service, I am so proud of the person I have become and the equine family I am a part of."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory is joining the Wildcat Wrangler team. This was my first real shot at leadership and was a big step out of my comfort zone. Looking back, I am so proud of everything our team completed. I am grateful for how it grew my network with faculty, staff, current students, new students and industry professionals."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I plan to attend graduate school at the University of Kentucky where I will hopefully attain my Master's in Agricultural Economics while working for the university. My future career includes focusing on human resources in agriculture and advocating for a better workplace environment for farm workers."

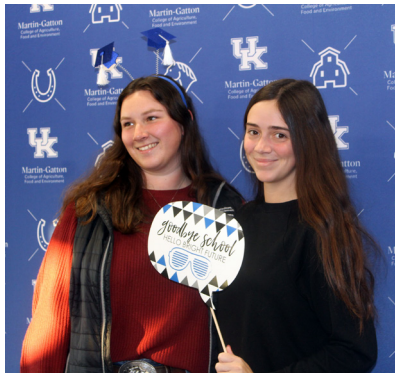


WORDS OF WISDOM

“Get to know your professors and always ask for help. Don't be afraid to build relationships because it makes asking for help that much easier!”

FALL 2023 GRADUATION RECEPTION

Dec. 14, Maine Chance Equine Campus





FALL INTERNSHIP RECEPTION SHOWCASES STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Approximately 20 students who completed their internships this past summer and fall semesters showcased their internship posters to students, faculty, staff and industry stakeholders on Nov. 28 at E.S. Good Barn. Awards were presented for Outstanding Intern and People's Choice.



OUTSTANDING INTERN AWARD (SUMMER '22) WAS AWARDED TO HEATHER MACKENZIE, WHO INTERNEED WITH UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS.



OUTSTANDING INTERN AWARD (FALL '22) WAS AWARDED TO REBECCA HUTCHISON, WHO INTERNEED WITH THE GLUCK EQUINE RESEARCH CENTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY SCIENCES.



PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD, AS VOTED ON BY ATTENDEES, WAS AWARDED TO JEN ZIMMERMAN, WHO INTERNEED WITH RED HORSE TRAINING.

UK TO HOST INAUGURAL PRE-VETERINARY EXPERIENCE DAY FEB. 17

by Holly Wiemers

The University of Kentucky Pre-Veterinary Advising Program, in conjunction with UK Ag Equine Programs and the Kentucky Horse Council, will host an inaugural Pre-Veterinary Experience Day Feb. 17 at the Kentucky Horse Park. The day-long event is open to all college students with an interest in veterinary medicine.

The event offers attendees insight into current veterinary medicine issues, addressing topics such as student debt, mental health and work-life balance.

"Many students have an interest in becoming a veterinarian, but finding the best pre-vet pathway can sometimes be challenging," said Colette Tebeau, event organizer and pre-veterinary academic coordinator within the UK Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Department of Animal and Food Sciences. "This event is designed to provide clarity on application requirements while introducing students to current industry challenges and many available opportunities within veterinary medicine."

During the morning session, attendees will choose between informational sessions based on their level of knowledge and preparation for veterinary school. Those early in their pre-veterinary pathway investigation may select sessions focused on assessing veterinary schools and preparing a competitive veterinary school application. Those students further along in the process can opt into sessions providing insight into the Veterinary Medical College Application Service application and the diverse veterinary career possibilities.

In the afternoon, students will participate in one of four veterinary career path explorations with focus options including companion/small animal, livestock, equine or government/academia. These tours will allow attendees an opportunity to view a veterinary facility and learn more from a professional in their specific area of interest.

There is an optional dinner event for attendees featuring networking opportunities.

"My hope is our Pre-Veterinary Experience Day will ignite our participants' passion while providing necessary information to pursue a career in veterinary medicine," Tebeau said.

The cost to attend is \$25 per ticket. Space is limited and spots are expected to fill quickly. Registration can be completed [here](#).



PRE-VETERINARY EXPERIENCE DAY

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17 AT THE KENTUCKY HORSE PARK

Interested college students are invited to learn about academic preparation, application processes, career pathways and other topics related to veterinary medicine.

Organized by the UK Pre-Vet Advising Program, UK Ag Equine Programs and the Kentucky Horse Council.

KENTUCKY YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN INAUGURAL EQUINE IS FOR ALL

By Christopher Carney



The first Equine Is For All event invited Kentucky middle and high school students to learn about the equine industry and educational programs, along with grooming and basic horse handling, maneuvers and commands at the Spy Coast Farm Equine Education Center.

Organized by the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Office of Diversity, UK Ag Equine Programs, UK Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) and Frankie's Corner Little Thoroughbred Crusade (FCLTC), students experienced in real-time how to work with horses through several workshops and trainings — supervised by current UK MANRRS students in the equine science and management and animal and food sciences programs, and professional expert.

One of those professional experts was Jermo Reese, founder and clinician of FCLTC, who teaches equine to youth using an education-based curriculum and basic horsemanship. Reese also first imagined Equine Is For All.

Over half of the students in attendance were novices regarding their knowledge or personal interactions with equine. For Reese, this was a big opportunity to introduce many students to the industry and horses.

"We're giving students across Kentucky an opportunity to learn hands-on skills," Reese said. "Equine is one of the largest sectors in Kentucky. Occupations such as law, any type of business or any type of medicine, can apply to the equine world as well."

During the showmanship clinic, students observed Reese and the trained UK MANRRS group safely leading their horses, walking and trotting, communicating basic commands forelimbs and hindlegs, as well as simple steps to begin developing trust and bonding with the horse.

Students also learned about other facets of equine, including the equine science and management program and a showcase from UK Polo and UK Equestrian, part of the UK Ag Equine's clubs and teams.

Additionally, members of the City of Lexington's police department, representing the Mounted Unit, talked about the value of horses in keeping the city safe. A professional animal communicator also discussed the importance of listening, setting boundaries, and having empathy to establish a better relationship with horses.

Tyler Crutcher, a student at Leestown Middle School, shares why he's attending Equine Is For All.

"I didn't really know much about horses, so I thought it'd be good to explore and dive into new things," Crutcher said. "I appreciate everyone using their time to teach me and everybody else about horses. Being here is opening my eyes to new things."

Mia Farrell, associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion, and her team, partnered with Reese to bring Equine Is For All to fruition.

"We wanted to ensure that all students knew what opportunities were available in the equine sector," Farrell said. "Sometimes you don't know what you can be if you don't see it. Many of these students have never seen, heard or touched a horse. This event is bridging the gap. It's truly exposing our young people to the equine sector and giving them confidence about careers in this industry. This is the first step to show them that yes, you do belong!"

At the event conclusion, students demonstrated what they learned, including proper grooming, leading, turning, setting up, and moving their horse in a fun competition before judges.

Reese is optimistic about how the kids will use this experience to elevate their leadership and launch their possibilities in the equine world.

"The horse looks to you to be the leader," Reese reinforces. "My hope is that this opportunity will keep our kids' light sparked and expose them to these beautiful, amazing animals that we work with every day."

Event sponsors included: Aleseria Farm, The Cornett Family, Ed Brown Society, Fayette County Urban Government, Frankie's Corner Little Thoroughbred Crusade, Horse Kicks, Keeneland, Lion's International, One Lexington, Spy Coast Farm and Visit Lex.

For more information about future Equine Is For All programming, visit <https://diversity.ca.uky.edu/programs/equine-all>.



KENTUCKY 4-H HORSE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

The December issue of the 4-H Horse Program Newsletter can be found online [here](#).





Note from editor: An important part of the mission of our program includes undergraduate education, specifically with our Equine Science and Management undergraduate degree program. In a class taught by Camie Heleski, a faculty member and lecturer within the program, is one designed to present provocative, often controversial issues that are current to the equine industry. In EQM 305, "Equine Industry Issues," students are introduced to topics, heard from speakers, researched information and communicated about industry issues in written and oral formats. The course is designed to expose students to hot button issues in the industry and encourage them to research and formulate well-communicated opinions about those issues. One avenue made available to this course is publishing some of those stories here.

WOMEN'S DISCRIMINATION IN THE HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Blog submission by Kamryn Barth

Systemic sexism is an ongoing problem that women face in many aspects of their lives. The most common place that women are not seen to be equal as men is in the workplace. All jobs have their issues when it comes to systemic sexism within their specific profession but an industry that needs attention is the horse racing industry, not only in Kentucky, "The Horse Capitol of the World," but all over the world.

Read the blog in its entirety [here](#).



HERBAL SUPPLEMENTATION AS A REPLACEMENT FOR MEDICINAL DEWORMERS

By Meghan Sorcabal

As a pre-vet student, I understand and encourage people to medicate their horses using actual medication, and by working at Gluck Equine Research Center in the parasitology department, I deeply encourage people to deworm their horses on a regular and productive basis.

So you can imagine when I was shadowing an ambulatory vet in my hometown of Milton, Georgia, and seeing people deworming their worm-ridden horses with turmeric and garlic, all of the red flags and alarms in my brain went off. These owners went on to say that they had read several articles about how dewormers are very bad for your horse and that natural remedies are the way to go. In complete shock, the vet and I just stood there maintaining a respectful silence.

This interaction got me thinking about the capacity at which herbs can be used medicinally. I mean, I always feel better after drinking echinacea tea when I'm sick, so maybe there's something to these people's claims. Placing myself in their shoes I dug into the internet to see what they were seeing that would lead them to believe that dewormers are the devil. One of the first searches that came up was a blog titled Holistic Horse by Dr. Shari Frederick, a naturopathic medical doctor who graduated from the University of Texas, titled, "Wormers, TOXIC Reaction & NATURAL Alternatives." The first couple of lines in this article are, "Today's horses are experiencing extremely adverse side effects to chemical wormers at an alarming rate! Ranging from mild to severe, stress reactions within one hour of chemical worm-

ing may include loss of control resulting in the horse dropping to the ground, tongue hanging from mouth accompanied by drooling, swollen neck, puffy lips and tongue, noticeably red gum burns, etc.” (Frederick)

If I was a newer horse owner and did not know a lot about dewormers, I would not let them anywhere near my horse after reading this. I brought this topic to my boss Dr. Martin Nielsen (DVM, Ph.D., and DipEVPC), one of the world’s leading experts in equine parasitology. In an interview conducted with him, he said that dewormers can cause these symptoms if the horse has a strange allergy or if the dosage is given incorrectly. Factors that affect dosage are age, breed, medical problems, weight, etc.

He gave an example of a farm in Kentucky that had a barn of three mares with their foals, with all the foals rapidly getting very sick and all of them dying. The symptoms that they were showing were signs of a deworming overdose, but only the mares had been medicated. After a thorough investigation on the part of the barn, they discovered that the employees who administered the dewormer did not do so properly. Instead of giving a direct oral injection into the mare’s mouth, they put it in the feed, which the foals then ate, which means that these foals got an adult horse’s dosage, an amount equivalent to twice the amount they would’ve needed. (Nielsen)

This instance could very easily get twisted in the media saying dewormers kill foals, but in actuality, bad practice and human carelessness kill more horses than dewormers do. This is why it is very important to read what the dewormer is intended for, what type of horse/animal, how to administer it and the dosage that the animal it is intended for needs.

Not wanting to be completely dismissive of the idea of a natural dewormer, I looked at a study done with donkeys in 2019. In this study, a team of researchers took a group of donkeys who were naturally infected with intestinal strongyles (a very common parasite found in all horses and equids) and split the group in half to have a control group and a treated group. The three treated group was given an unnamed polyherbal dewormer that was marketed as having deworming properties. They ran egg counts on days 0, 14, 21, 35 and 42 to monitor the effectiveness of the polyherbal dewormer. By the end of day 42, they discovered that the control group’s egg counts were lower than the treated group’s egg counts, with some having a difference of 335 eggs. There are a variety of explanations as to why this happened, but the overall takeaway from this experiment is that the polyherbal dewormer was not effective.

After talking with Nielsen about this study, he explained that he has seen a lot of studies such as this one where the results are all the same thing, with the herbal dewormer not working. He also went on to talk about how in vitro (outside of the horse; e.g. a petri dish) properties of garlic and turmeric have shown signs of deworming properties. However, in vivo (inside the horse when garlic/turmeric is eaten by the horse) it is ineffective. He explained that this is because the body breaks down the compounds that have the deworming properties. The level of these compounds needed to effectively treat the horse would be toxic levels. (Nielsen) With herbal dewormers being proven ineffective, medicinal dewormers are what’s left for treatment.

Thinking from these horse and equid owners’ points of view I have some good news. Ivermectin is technically a natural dewormer. This drug was formulated from a fungus and manufactured into one of the most effective dewormers we have found so far. For those who want its slightly better cousin, Avermectin is available. However, its natural structure derived from the fungus has been modified to be more effective, so it technically is not 100% natural.

Overall, properly deworming your horses is very important to their overall health and well-being. Natu-

ral dewormers such as the ones marketed, such as garlic and turmeric, simply are not effective in treating your horse in the way that it needs.

Ivermectin and Avermectin would be your best basic dewormers for treating your horse (assuming your horse has no known allergies to these medications), and the additional supplementation of herbs would not hurt your horse if a natural path is still something you want to explore. Talking with your vet about the options available for you and your animals should always be your go-to option for figuring out the best method for deworming your animals.

Always be sure to do thorough and unbiased research if turning to the internet is the first thing you do, so you do not get misled by outlier cases and bad practice being skewed to seem like something it is not. Dewormers are here to help you and your horse. You just need to find the option that is most effective for you and your animal.

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INTERPERSONAL INDUSTRY ISSUES - SAFESPORT SKEPTICISM

By Catherine Frost

As sports entered into the 21st Century, there were a host of issues that were rarely addressed or spoken of. With the creation of SafeSport, a movement was started to combat issues in sports where athletes found themselves in vulnerable positions with no source of support.

SafeSport, according to the U.S. Center for Safe Sport, is an umbrella program that is involved in helping "abuse prevention, education and accountability take root in every sport, on every court" [1].

With this goal comes a large backbone of support from parents, prior athletes, athletes themselves and the general public, but there are also some controversial thoughts that SafeSport is being forced to address. Things get complicated when sports shift to individual performance, like gymnastics, ice skating, golf, track and field and horseback riding. When a strong relationship between coach and student is needed, that line of concern gets more blurred. So, what is SafeSport in detail, how is it good versus controversial and how is it affecting these individual sports, specifically equestrianism?

As mentioned before, SafeSport is a nationwide program that is directly in charge of handling abuse accusations, harassment education and support for victims. The program itself is relatively new, being officially founded in March 2017. This was finalized with the passing of the SafeSport Act in 2017, or the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act. This act puts on paper the authority that SafeSport carries over sports relationships and gives the non-profit the power to combat high levels of abuse seen in all sports. Knowing this, we can move into analyzing the effec-

tiveness of the program and its movements.

SafeSport starts by introducing its efforts to enhance safety and prevent abuse. This is implemented through a range of strict policies that very clearly list the dos and don'ts of proper behavior in the equestrian world. This list contains rules concerning relationships with individuals, specifically minors and coaches. It covers locker rooms, lodging, training sessions and transportation policies as well.

All this is easily accessible to the general public for free on the U.S. Center for Safe Sport website. This 27-page book of policies is full of different scenarios and situations that would be unacceptable. According to the SafeSport United States Equestrian Federation Policy Handbook, the "Center has discretionary jurisdiction to investigate and resolve allegations" that someone took part in one or more of the described violations when dealing with abuse. This automatic authority serves as a deterrent to those in a position to commit sexual assault. If an allegation is submitted and deemed serious, the Center has the right to investigate the situation completely.

During this time, USEF has the right to alter arrangements as "temporary measures based on the severity of the allegations." [2] This, along with the permanent repercussions of allegations deemed truthful, serves as a deterrent factor that will trigger a "think before you do" mentality for participants.

Anne Kurisnki, a SafeSport advocate and Olympic show-jumper, spoke to Horse Illustrated about her feelings towards the program, stating, "People know that they will get in trouble if they violate the rules."

SafeSport also works with USEF to implement an educational SafeSport training required annually for all participating athletes and trainers. Any rider registered in the organization who wants to have the ability to show in a USEF-rated show may not step into a show ring without recognized completion of the training. If the SafeSport training is incomplete on purpose, the participant will be "ineligible to participate in USEF, including competitions, and will be placed on the SafeSport Ineligibility List" [3]. This training specifically requires trainers, owners and any athlete over the age of 18, including juniors, as well as licensed officials, staff and board members to complete the training with no exceptions.

Lastly, SafeSport promotes accessible and mandatory reporting for those involved. The handbook provided by USEF goes into detail concerning exactly what is expected when reporting. For example, when concerning minors "any misconduct that includes allegations of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, must be reported to the appropriate authorities immediately" [2].

Statements like this are abundant in the reporting policies, leaving very little opportunity for questions to come up. The accessible side of the reporting is reflected through the layout of the website. On the homepage of the U.S. Center of Safe Sport, there is a large, eye-catching box that hyperlinks the information needed to make a report. This encourages people to take the step to report issues, as it is easy to find and can be done swiftly.

Despite all the efforts made to make SafeSport a positive and proactive program, there are some people who are unsatisfied with the organization. The strict rules and lack of wiggle room leave some believing that guilt is assumed rather than proven to be true. In court, people say a defendant is innocent until proven guilty, but when the allegation deals with children's sexual assault, how reasonable is it to expect people to think in the defendant's favor? With this mindset comes the possibility of collateral damage. No matter the outcome of the allegation, if word gets out that a trainer has been accused, their reputation will suffer. In a sport that thrives on connections and networking through word of mouth, this could be detrimental to the careers of the falsely accused.

So, how do trainers respond to the increasing risk? According to Horse Illustrated's interview with Jennifer Woodruff, a horse show judge and clinician, they remove themselves from any situation that could be twisted.

Similarly, Krysia Carmel Nelson, an equine industry law specialist, told Horse Illustrated, "I can't help him lift a water bucket, because I can't be alone in the stall with him" [4]

She worries she could be accused of being in violation of the Center's rules and therefore won't get involved.

As more and more trainers begin to catch wind of how quickly allegations can ruin a career, questions begin to arise from the coaching standpoint. There are worries that the harsh SafeSport regulations will lead to fewer upcoming professionals joining the training side of the equine industry.

Along with this comes false accusations. USEF and SafeSport in general provide sections in handbooks that review the legal aspects of false accusations. According to the USEF SafeSport Handbook, "Any person making a knowingly false allegation in a matter of which USEF has jurisdiction shall be subject to disciplinary action by USEF" [2].

Because the results of a SafeSport investigation can be so grave, a false accusation can be a way that some might deem the best way to get retaliation. This behavior might be explained by another type of abuse being present elsewhere that triggers this accusation. However; no matter the reasoning behind it, an accusation (true or false) can quickly end a career.

There is also the issue concerning the turnaround time from when the allegation is reported to when the sanctions are made. Evidence shows that this period of time can stretch to over a year before a case actually closes, which many people say is unacceptable.

SafeSport CEO Ju'Riese Colon responded to this during the Commission of the State of U.S. Olympics and Paralympics hearing on Capitol Hill. According to the article provided by AP News concerning the hearing on Sept. 6, 2023, the turnaround issue is partly caused by the significant increase in cases reported to the Center annually. Colon, providing statistics on the topic, said that the Center "will receive around 7,000 reports this year - after receiving around 300 in the year it opened" [6].

This shows that there is an ever-increasing amount of trust in the organization, but with this trust needs to come more resources. The lack of resources like the number of investigators, is reflected in the time taken for each case.

Lastly, once the investigation begins, everyone believed to be involved is interviewed for information concerning the participant. The investigators are forced to take a deep dive into the situation, leading to phones being searched, work relationships being questioned and past traumas being dug up. With all this, it is not uncommon to assume that eventually word will spread of the accusation and the investigation.

In a sport that revolves around tight-knit communities, the victim might receive backlash for reporting the trainer in the first place. In an article published by Bloomberg, the story of Maggie Kehring and Rich Fellers was brought to light, in which Kehring explains that she was "accused of seducing him to further her career and called a spoiled brat." [5] This shows that the investigations themselves might cause fewer people to report due to the outrage that seems to be linked with this type of justice-seeking.

SafeSport was founded during a time of distrust and anger during the USA Gymnastics v Nazzari trial. This anger gave rise to a program designed to provide a voice for those who feel like they can't speak out. They worked hard to create a perfect system made to catch the worst types of people, those who prey on the vulnerable. With these strict rules come harsh consequences that, when implemented on the wrong or incorrect person, can cause harm and controversy. The issues of misuse, privacy and due process are the main sources of distaste. This ongoing argument between too little and too much proves the challenge that the equestrian world faces when deciding how to handle the relationships the sport is built around.

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THE ISSUE OF OVERTIGHTENED NOSEBANDS

By Avery Cummings

Have you ever been to a horse show and thought to yourself, "Why are the horses' mouths clamped shut?"

If you've had those thoughts while spectating horse events, then you are among a growing group of individuals who are becoming more concerned with the tightness of nosebands in certain disciplines. It has unfortunately become more common practice for people to overtighten nosebands on their horses' bridles. But with the increasing popularity of overtightening nosebands, even at high levels of performance, even non-equestrians have become concerned about their function, especially because in recent years photos of extremely tight nosebands have spread on social media. This has caused many people to be concerned with the welfare of the horses that they are being used on.

There is some background information that will make understanding this issue easier. I'll start with nosebands, which are a part of the horse's bridle that encircles their mouth and lower jaw. The purpose of a noseband is to keep the horse's mouth closed. Some argue that the use of a snug noseband can increase contact with the bit, which can help to eliminate the horse's ability to perform "evasive behaviors" such as avoiding the bit by opening their mouths in an attempt to relieve the pressure being put on their mouth. There are a multitude of different types of nosebands, such as French cavesson, flash nosebands, cranks nosebands and drop nosebands, just to name a few. Tightened nosebands are most commonly seen in English riding disciplines but can also be seen when training

Western riding horses. A few years ago, nosebands were of no particular interest to anyone outside of the equine world, but interest has grown as this becomes a more commonly seen problem.

The majority of people concerned about nosebands aren't even aware of the research behind the effect tight nosebands have on horses. These people often just see negative photos and become outraged. However, they are likely unaware that there is evidence that tight nosebands do, in fact, have negative effects on the horses.

In one recent study, researchers found that horses with overtightened nosebands had higher stress responses than those with a looser noseband (Fenner et al.). These responses were measured by analyzing the common stress indicators of horses, heart rate and eye temperature. From the data they collected using those measurements, researchers concluded that excessively tight nosebands can cause horses to become stressed. It has also been theorized that, in certain cases, consistent use of tight nosebands can cause bone damage to the horse. This is still being researched, but one study was investigating the theory that consistent use of tight nosebands can cause the formation of a bony lump on the horse's nasal bone and/or jaw. Researchers not yet finalized this theory, but in this study in particular, the majority of the horses with overtightened nosebands had some kind of bone damage (Pérez-Manrique et al.) As more and more studies are coming out determining that overtightened nosebands can cause mental and physical harm to horses, veterinarians, industry professionals and the general public are all becoming more focused on regulations around this issue.

As this subject has become more well known, multiple organizations have begun to create new regulations that address over-tightened nosebands. However, issues have arisen around these regulations. Some big, well-known organizations have implemented regulations regarding noseband fit but they can be very vague.

For example, FEI's regulation on nosebands is this: "At any level of competition, a noseband may never be so tightly fixed that it causes harm to the horse and must be checked as per the Stewards Manual noseband protocol." (Para Equestrian Manual for Classifiers - FEI) Many people have taken issue with this regulation, as it is very loosely worded and there are many photos proving that this rule is not being properly upheld.

There are some organizations that make their regulation on nosebands very clear, most of them utilizing the typical "two-finger" rule. The two-finger rule is that the noseband should be loose enough that an adult can easily slide two fingers underneath the band. This is the typical, widely-accepted rule regarding nosebands but, unfortunately, in recent years many upper level riders have been neglecting it. This is in large part why this issue has gotten so much attention in recent years, and why activists are trying to get better enforcement on the current regulations at all levels of competition.

It is very unfortunate that this has become such a common practice in the equine industry, especially among people we may deem as "professionals" in the industry. I find it even more unfortunate that big organizations such as FEI are not doing more to enforce the regulations they've put into place. It is particularly upsetting that this is such a prevalent issue, even though multiple studies have proven that excessively tightened nosebands cause mental and physical stress to the horse. Beyond the mental discomfort inflicted, there is also speculation that bone damage is being done due to the consistent use of tight nosebands.

It is extremely important that riders educate themselves on the proper fit of nosebands before using one so we can hopefully avoid incorrect use of the tack, and therefore avoid causing harm to our horses. I write this article with the hopes of educating more people on this subject and to bring atten-

tion to the lack of regulation enforcement regarding the issue. I hope that we can continue to fight for the horse's rights, and can eventually prevent over-tightened nosebands from being an issue we see in any level of equine competition.

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IN THE NEWS

University of Kentucky's Maine Chance Farm was featured in [Blood-horse's Beyond the Headlines](#) series.

Watch Laurie Lawrence, professor, and Tim Jedra, research specialist, both within UK's Department of Animal and Food Sciences, discuss how this facility provides students an opportunity to learn all about the inner workings of the Thoroughbred industry including breeding and sales.



UK researchers provide insights on endophyte ingestion

Emma Adam, associate professor and industry liaison, in the Department of Veterinary Science, and Krista Lea, research analyst and coordinator of UK's Horse Pasture Evaluation Program, recently joined Rood & Riddle Veterinary Pharmacy's StallSide podcast to share information about tall fescue and the risks it poses for pregnant mares. [Give it a listen](#) on the StallSide podcast website.





Sending you peace, love and joy this holiday season.



*-From your friends with
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