UK Ag Equine University of Kentucky

BLUEGRASS EQUINE DIGEST

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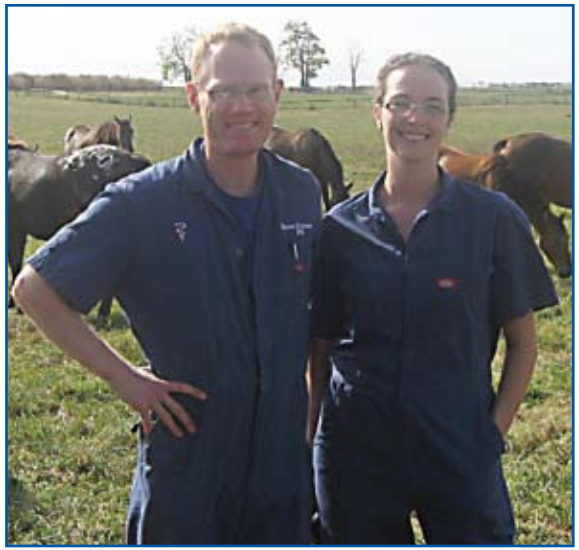
Visiting Scientists Target Endometritis

The University of Kentucky Gluck Equine Research Center plays host to visiting scientists from around the world, and this summer was no exception. Mette Christoffersen, DVM, and Morten Petersen, PhD, DVM, Dipl. ACT, both from the University of Copenhagen, and Pauline Peugent, a French student working on her master's degree, have spent several months in Lexington researching equine reproduction.



Morten Petersen and Mette Christoffersen

Christoffersen and Petersen learned about the opportunity to study at the Gluck Center from Department of Veterinary Science chair Mats Troedsson, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACT, who has a strong partnership with the University of Copenhagen.

Peugent

Christoffersen's research focuses on the immunologic response to bacterial endometritis in resistant versus susceptible mares. Endometritis is an infection in the superficial layer of the uterus. Mares with signs of persistent endometritis that are unable to clear their uteri of bacteria and inflammation within a normal time period are often called "susceptible mares." Christoffersen studied the inflammatory response in the uterus and systemically. She hopes to soon begin a new study at Gluck that will compare the effectiveness of two treatments (dexamethasone and immunomodulating compound) on bacterial endometritis in susceptible mares.

Petersen, who has studied at the Gluck Center through support by the Albert and Lorraine

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

(ENDOMETRITIS ...)

Clay Fellowship, also focused on endometritis in mares. Some bacteria can establish infections deep in the uterine wall and become inactive. Their presence affects uterine gland secretion and could potentially lead to pregnancy loss. Inactive or "dormant" bacteria, located deep in the endometrium, are difficult to identify and treat effectively. Petersen's research sought to discover a new diagnostic tool for uncovering unapparent endometrial infections.

Petersen and Christoffersen agreed the Gluck Center's facilities made it easy to conduct extensive studies: "You don't see this amount of research horses in many universities," Christoffersen said.

"In this area of research you can get valuable information from samples collected from broodmares, but you need control animals [studied without a given test for comparison]. That's where research animals come in," Petersen said.

Both scientists have narrowed their fields of interest to equine reproduction over the course of their careers. Christoffersen's family owned Standardbreds, and she spent three years in private veterinary practice in Denmark before beginning her PhD. During her time as a veterinarian, she became fascinated with the value of broodmares as economic vehicles, as well as their importance to their owners.

Petersen's fascination with bacterial reproduction diseases, however, is more mental:

"I see it as a challenge; to see if you can crack the code of biology and improve reproductive efficiency … it's fascinating how, on one side, an animal tries to cope with infections and, on the other, how the bacteria modulate to maximize

UK Livestock Lab Name Change and Broader Focus

The University of Kentucky Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center is now the UK Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (UKVDL). The name change was implemented to reflect the broad focus of the lab, which includes services beyond livestock species.

"The UK Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory is a full-service animal-health diagnostic facility," said lab director Craig Carter, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVPM. "We hope our new name will better convey our mission to the public. With the former name, we felt 'livestock' implied food animals only, and our reach extends beyond that. We also felt like 'disease' had a negative connotation. Also, the former name didn't reflect the fact that we have veterinarians on staff and that we are a laboratory, not a clinic."

The University of Kentucky Veterinary Diagnostic Lab

Along with the name change, the UKVDL is designing a new website (http://vdl.uky.edu) detailing all its services and information about faculty, staff, current animal health risk outlook and bulletins, and tests offered.

New clinical pathology tests are available to measure levels of progesterone, cortisol, phenobarbital, thyroid hormones, and canine trypsin-like immunoreactivity.

Lab hours for animal and specimen receiving are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

Carter said he is grateful for clients' patience as the faculty and staff of the UKVDL move into some of their new facilities, including the new clinical receiving and necropsy areas. Carter said the lab also is gearing up to provide diagnostic services if needed during the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games.

Aimee Nielson is an agriculture communications specialist at the University of Kentucky.

(ENDOMETRITIS ...)

their chances of establishing an infection, and we need to understand both aspects. As a clinician I try to observe, diagnose, and treat, but primarily prevent," he said.

Assisting Petersen and Christoffersen in their research was Peugent. She came to the Gluck Center in July for the 10th International Symposium on Equine Reproduction and saw the facility as an opportunity for specialized study.

Peugent completed the equivalent to a bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering and is focusing on applied biology of animal products for her master's degree. While interested in horses and fascinated by the lab work she did with Petersen and Christoffersen, Peugent said she has not yet committed to a specific field of study.

All three visiting scientists said working in America's horse country was an excellent opportunity. Researchers at the Gluck Center were equally happy to host them.

"It has been a real pleasure to have so many visiting scientists come to work in Dr. Troedsson's lab at Gluck," Kristen Scoggin, PhD, said. "Each person brings his or her own expertise and unique set of skills such that we can all learn from each other."

"Collaborations with researchers and research groups around the world [are] part of the Gluck Center's national and international leadership," Troedsson said.

Troedsson said the Clay Fellowship is vital for international scientists wanting to do research at the Gluck Center, calling it "very valuable in our interactions and collaboration with scientists around the world."

The Gluck Center does not have a formal application process or program for interns or scientists from other countries, and those interested should contact Troedsson personally.

For more information about the Gluck Center and its programs, visit www.ca.uky.edu/gluck/index.htm. UK

Natalie Voss is a UK equine communications intern and recent graduate in equine science and management.

WEED OF THE MONTH

Common name: Horsenettle
Scientific name: *Solanum carolinense* L.
Life Cycle: Warm season perennial
Origin: Southeastern North America
Poisonous: Yes

Horsenettle

Horsenettle is distributed widely across most of the United States, especially in the eastern half and the western coastal states. This relatively low-growing perennial is easily recognized by its erect to spreading growth habit. The stems and leaves contain sharp prickles that inhibit grazing and make hand weeding undesirable. Horsenettle flowers are white to pale violet with yellow anthers. Seeds are encased in a berry that is initially green but turns a bright yellow at maturity. The berry can persist for several months before decomposing to release the seeds. Horsenettle also reproduces from spreading, fleshy rhizomes (rootstalks). This weed occurs most often in poorly managed pastures and has been reported to be toxic to several animals, including horses.

Horsenettle control is challenging, particularly because mowing is generally ineffective and the plant's spines and deep roots make it difficult to remove. Herbicides are available to provide effective control when applied in August and September. Consult your local Cooperative Extension Service personnel (www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension) for herbicidal control in your area. UK

William W. Witt, PhD, a professor in the plant and soil sciences department at the University of Kentucky, provided this information.

10TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON EQUINE REPRODUCTION:

The Pregnant Mare and Perinatology

The 10th International Symposium on Equine Reproduction July 26-30 at the University of Kentucky was presented in four sessions: the non-pregnant mare, the stallion, conception and early development, and the pregnant mare and perinatology. Irwin K. Liu, PhD, Department of Population Health and Reproduction, School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California, Davis, recaps the pregnant mare and perinatology session:

Investigations on manual reduction of twin pregnancies suggests that location of twins does not significantly affect foal mortality, but age of the mare (greater than nine years old) yields lower live foal rates. Veterinary experience did not play a role in live foal rates, as all individuals had performed more than 20 reductions previously.

A few studies focused on placentitis (inflammation of the placenta) in the pregnant mare. The investigations revealed that measurement of the combined thickness of the uterus and placenta alone was not a good indicator of pending abortion. One report examined several pregnant mares that exceeded the normal upper limits of uterine-placental thickness (combined thickness of the uterus and placenta) yet delivered live and normal foals without evidence of placentitis. Thus, other signs of pending abortion, such as placental separation, vaginal discharge, and amniotic fluid opacity are essential in the diagnosis of impending abortion in the mare. Other studies also indicated that early intervention of placentitis with antibiotics was essential for a successful outcome and that antibiotics were most important when compared with other treatments, such as progesterone, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents (NSAIDs), or aspirin. Another study indicated that mares that have successfully foaled following the diagnosis and treatment of placentitis should be treated post-foaling, as bacteria continue to be present in the uterus.

There were many studies of early or late pregnancies that attempted to define what physiological or chemical factors and signals are associated with the development of the fetus, its interaction with the uterus, and what keeps this marriage viable. While this area of investigation is of little practical significance, it is important to understand what is normal before determining what is abnormal and thus, developing treatment strategies to maintain pregnancies in the mare.

A relatively new modality to veterinary medicine is three-dimensional ultrasonography. This modality was presented by a group from Japan that clearly demonstrated its value, potential usefulness, its accuracy in the analyses of fetal normality and abnormality, and gender determination during early and late stages of pregnancy in the mare.

Investigations on uterine blood flow in the pregnant mare while under a short-term (70-day) treatment of pentoxiphylline (an agent that increases blood flow) did not increase blood flow in aged pregnant mares with endometrosis (chronic degenerative endometritis, an inflammation of the lining of the uterine wall after breeding).

A high abortion rate in mares in one region of Australia indicated the abortions were similar to those caused by Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome (MRLS) in Kentucky and were attributable to a certain species of caterpillars. Another presentation suggested the Australian abortions, MRLS in Kentucky, and *Nocardia* placentitis are similarly linked and are likely variations of one another. UK

10TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON EQUINE REPRODUCTION:

The Non-Pregnant Mare

The 10th International Symposium on Equine Reproduction July 26-30 at the University of Kentucky was presented in four sessions: the non-pregnant mare, the stallion, conception and early development, and the pregnant mare and perinatology. Dale Paccamonti, DVM, Dipl. ACT, professor and head of the department of veterinary clinical sciences, school of veterinary medicine at Louisiana State University, recaps the non-pregnant mare session:

A study from the labs of Xavier Donadeu,

DVM, PhD, and Stephanie Schauer, PhD, et al. reported that administration of purified equine luteinizing hormone every 12 hours in early transitional mares (between diestrus and regular estrous cycles) stimulated the growth of follicles that could be induced to ovulate with the hormone human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG). A different approach was taken by Simon Staempfli, DVM, Dip ACT, Dip ABVP Equine, MRCVS, et al., in which mares in early and late spring transition were given a single dose of long-acting progesterone. They found that while there was no effect on mares in early transition, 83% (10 out of 12) of mares treated in late transition ovulated within 10-24 days of treatment versus 25% (three out of 12) of nontreated mares. Further work with a larger number of mares will need to be performed to reaffirm this success.

Working with mares during the normal breeding season, David Beehan, DVM, examined serum progesterone levels after hCG treatment to determine if the levels could be used to predict ovulation. Mares receiving hCG had significantly higher progesterone 24 hours after ovulation than mares that did not receive hCG; however, these levels were not useful to predict ovulation.

Dominik Burger et al. examined mares' mate choices. Studies in mice and humans have demonstrated that mating preferences are influenced by the major histocompatibility complex (MHC). Mice and humans tend to choose companions with dissimilar MHC, which is believed to help avoid inbreeding and increase chances of offspring survival. In the study, free-roaming mares were placed one at a time in a barn with six stabled stallions. The mare was allowed to choose her preferred stallion, who was then removed from the stable. She was then allowed to choose her preferred stallion out of the remaining stallions, who was then removed, and so forth until only two stallions were left. The mares were tested in estrus and in diestrus and with or without their vision blocked. The mares were then compared to the stallions on the basis of MHC. During diestrus, choice was not related to MHC differences, but during estrus, there was a tendency for mares to pick MHC dissimilar stallions.

Two reports took a closer look at the uterine lining. Robert Causey, DVM, PhD, et al. looked at the uterine epithelium and found an alteration in chronically infertile mares. One of his aims was to clearly define criteria for differentiating normal versus abnormal uterine lining. Peter Morresey, BVSc, Dipl. ACT, Dipl. ACVIM, et al. used scanning electron microscopy to examine ciliated endometrial cells from reproductively normal mares and from mares with delayed uterine clearance. Cilia are an essential component of the clearance mechanism in the respiratory and reproductive tracts, acting like a broom to sweep debris from the lining. This study found the pattern of distribution of ciliated cells was different between normal mares and those with delayed clearance.

Ryan Ferris, DVM, et al. developed a PCR to detect the presence and identify the strain of bacteria from a uterine swab, cytology (examination of the cells), or lavage sample. The PCR might provide a rapid test for identifying bacteria, yeast, and fungi found in the uterus.

Other studies included:

- Ester Botha et al. examined the reversibility of gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) vaccination to suppress ovarian activity in a large group of mares over a two-year period.
- Carolyn Arnold, DVM, Dipl. ACVS, and Charles Love, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACT, evaluated oviductal patency in the standing mare.
- Alejandro Esteller-Vico et al. examined vascular elastosis in the uterus and its effect on uterine blood flow in cyclic mares.
- Evidence that the mare responds differently depending on the type of bacteria that gain entrance into the uterus has been mounting. Two studies looked at the response of the uterus to infection with either *E. coli* or *Streptococcus zooepidemicus*.
- Yasuo Nambo, DVM, PhD, et al. examined the effect of extended photoperiod (number of hours of exposure to daylight) on reproductive endocrinology and body composition in Thoroughbred yearlings and weanlings.
- Juan Cuervo-Arango, LV, MSc, CertVRep, MRCVSab, and John Newcombe, BVetMed, MRCVSa, examined ultrasound images and correlated changes in endometrial edema score following mating with pregnancy rate in mares. UK

TOXIN TOPIC ALSIKE CLOVER AND RED CLOVER

Alsike clover (*Trifolium hybridum*) and red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) are valuable forage crops in North America and are often included in pasture seed mixes. However, these plants can be associated with disease conditions in all animals including horses. Alsike and red clovers can be associated with slaframine production in horses (described in the July 2010 Bluegrass Equine Digest) as well as less common conditions such as photosensitivity and liver disease. The specific toxins that cause these conditions have not yet been identified and are hypothesized to be either mycotoxins or secondary plant metabolites that are produced only under specific circumstances.

Alsike Clover

Horses with photosensitivity due to clover ingestion develop sunburn-type lesions on nonpigmented areas of skin and mucous membranes. Affected areas are red, edematous (fluid-filled), ulcerated, and sloughing. Treatment involves removing horses from sunlight and clover exposure. Horses with clover-associated liver damage often show neurologic signs such as depression, listlessness, head pressing, circling, ataxia (incoordination), poor appetite, and other unusual behaviors. Other signs include weight loss, poor body condition, and poor hair coat. Blood tests show abnormalities indicative of liver failure. Treatment consists of supportive care and ceasing exposure to clover. Horses that show only signs of photosensitization have a good prognosis, while others that develop liver damage or liver damage combined with photosensitivity have a poor prognosis.

Clover-related photosensitization and liver disease occurrences vary greatly from year to year and region to region, which suggests the toxin involved might be influenced by environmental conditions. Signs can be associated with ingestion of clover in pasture or hay and can occur any time of year, although cases are less common in winter months. The exact amount of clover that must be ingested before signs develop is unclear. However, most cases have been associated with diets consisting of at least 20% clover, and consumption of the flower appears to increase the risk for disease. Sporadic cases in a herd might be related to individual predisposition or feeding preferences (e.g., some horses will seek out clover while others might avoid it). Clinical signs can develop within weeks after the start of clover ingestion, or they can take months to develop. No specific diagnostic tests are available, as the toxin(s) involved have yet to be identified. Presumptive diagnosis is based on clinical signs and blood test results indicative of liver damage, along with a history of exposure to clover in the diet.

Prevention is key and consists of minimizing or avoiding clover in equine diets. Much work still needs to be done to better understand the conditions and identify the toxin(s) associated with these diseases. UK

Cynthia Gaskill, DVM, PhD, clinical veterinary toxicologist at the University of Kentucky Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (formerly the Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center), provided this information.

Equine Research Featured in UK's *Odyssey* Magazine

The fall 2010 issue of the University of Kentucky's *Odyssey* magazine features three articles on equine research in the Department of Veterinary Science.

Odyssey is published by the Office of the Vice President for Research and covers the latest research advances, innovative scholarships, and outstanding people that are part of UK's research enterprise.

The featured equine article topics include:

- UK serves Kentuckians and the horse industry. The article focuses on the UK Gluck Equine Research Center and its accomplishments and contributions to the equine industry.
- Unlocking the equine genetic code. Ernie Bailey, PhD, geneticist and professor at the Gluck Center, is interviewed about his genomics research and the horse genome project.
- UK's Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center. The article gives an overview of the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (formerly the Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center).

A sidebar features James MacLeod, VMD, PhD, the John S. and Elizabeth A. Knight chair at the Gluck Center and director of UK's Equine Initiative, and Jennifer Janes, DVM, a graduate student in MacLeod's lab. In 2009 MacLeod received more than $1 million from the National Science Foundation to develop computer-based methods to study gene expression. Janes recently received a $100,000 grant from the Morris Animal Foundation to study wobbler syndrome, a devastating neurologic disease that pinches the spinal cord and causes a horse to lose coordination.

To read the articles, visit www.research.uky.edu/odyssey/fall10/contents.html. UK

Jenny Blandford is the Gluck Equine Research Foundation assistant at the Gluck Center.

IRWIN FOUNDATION DONATES $10,000 TO SEMINAR SERIES

The Irwin Foundation recently donated $10,000 to the UK Gluck Equine Research Center to fund veterinary education. The money will be used to support the 2011 Department of Veterinary Science Equine Diagnostic and Research Seminar Series.

"The support of the Irwin Foundation for continued veterinary education is greatly appreciated," said Ed Squires, PhD, Dipl. ACT (hon.), executive director of the UK Gluck Equine Research Foundation and the director of advancement and industry relations at the Gluck Center. "The donation will be utilized to support our monthly seminar series, which offers one hour of continuing education credit to veterinarians."

The Irwin Foundation, located in Mt. Clemens, Mich., has provided scholarship funding for veterinary education to keep students focused on their careers instead of wondering how to pay for them. The foundation also recently purchased three Andalusian horses for another university's veterinary program.

"For over 15 years, the Irwin Foundation has provided crucial funding for the support of veterinary education," said A. Dale Ihrie III, attorney and director of the Irwin Foundation. "It is our sincere hope that these funds will enable the continuing education of veterinary professionals dedicated to equine health and welfare."

The Seminar Series is a monthly seminar for veterinarians, students, and horse owners in Central Kentucky. The seminars are held the last Thursday of each month and have been hosted by the Kentucky Horse Park while the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (formerly the Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center) undergoes renovation.

For more information on the Seminar Series, visit www.ca.uky.edu/gluck/EdCEseminar.asp. UK

Jenny Blandford is the Gluck Equine Research Foundation assistant at the Gluck Center.

UK Projects on African-Americans in Kentucky's Equine History

Lexington played a significant role in the early history of horse racing and the equine industry, but few people are aware of the African-American jockeys, trainers, grooms, and handlers who helped shape the Bluegrass' horse heritage.

Mark Coyne, PhD, professor of soil biology in the UK College of Agriculture, and David Melanson, in the UK Office of University Relations, are working to bring this long-forgotten history to light through two community-based projects in Lexington's East End.

Through the Young Equestrian Scholars Initiative and the UK Commonwealth Collaborative project, which began in April and will run through June 2011, Coyne hopes to raise public awareness of the historical importance of the individuals buried at Lexington's African Cemetery No. 2. The Commonwealth Collaborative project partners UK researchers with representatives from all sectors of a community, including industry, government, education, and health care, to offer solutions to problems that have long plagued the state and stymied economic and cultural progress.

Located on East Seventh Street, the cemetery was built in 1869 by former slaves who were members of the Union Benevolent Society No. 2. This site is the final resting place of at least 80 known African-Americans who held a prominent place in the early years of Thoroughbred racing. Some of the notable individuals include Oliver Lewis, winning jockey of the first Kentucky Derby; James "Soup" Perkins, who is tied as the youngest winning jockey of the Kentucky Derby; and Abraham "Abe" Perry, trainer of the winner of the 1885 Kentucky, Tennessee, and Coney Island derbies. Isaac Murphy, who rode three Kentucky Derby winners and holds the all-time highest winning percentage of any jockey, was originally buried there. His remains are now located at the Kentucky Horse Park.

Lexington's African Cemetery No. 2 is the final resting place of at least 80 known individuals who played an important role in Kentucky's early equine industry.

"For some, we know exactly what they did. For some, we know exactly where they are buried, but for many, we have no existing markers," said Coyne, who became involved with the community group that maintains the cemetery in the 1990s and now serves on its board of directors. "So we're trying to bring that whole story to light with this project."

During UK Fusion, a one-day service event in August, UK student volunteers spruced up the cemetery and installed markers at gravesites of known individuals in the equestrian industry.

During the school year, UK students will mentor K-12 students as they gather information from historical documents on these individuals. This information will be placed on the grave markers to contribute to an eventual self-guided walking tour through the cemetery. Some students might choose to display their findings in other ways such as artwork or public presentations.

"The more we do to bring those stories to light, the better reflection on Lexington, the better reflection on this community in Lexington, of the significance that we've had on a national basis for both the equine industry and history in general," Coyne said.

(UK PROJECTS ...)

While the project begins with individuals in the equine industry, it doesn't end there. Coyne hopes the students also are able to find information about some of the other historically important African-Americans buried at the cemetery, including Civil War veterans, buffalo soldiers, and civil rights pioneers.

Some markers are already in place, and cemetery brochures are available at UK and the Lexington Convention and Visitors Bureau for those who want to learn more and tour the cemetery.

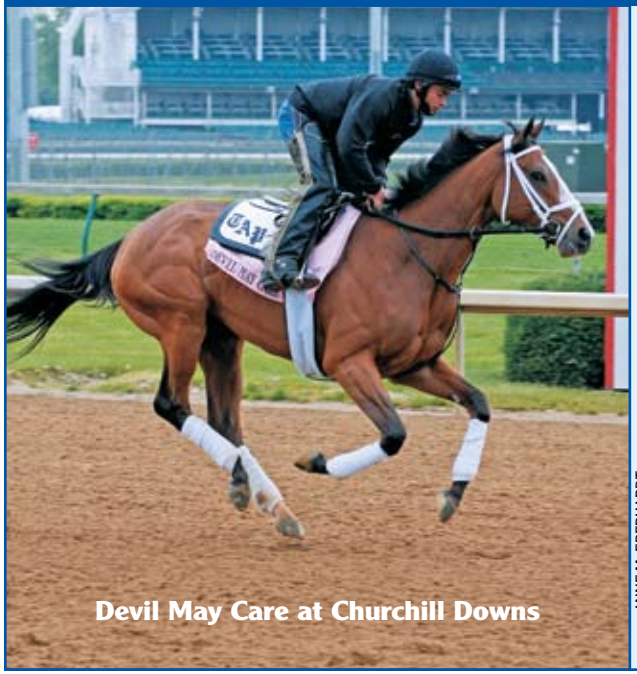
UK also has been involved in building a new park to recognize Murphy and other African-American members of Kentucky's famed equine industry. The Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden is being constructed in Lexington's East End neighborhood, where Murphy lived and raced.

During UK Fusion, UK students placed markers at the gravesites of historically important individuals in the equine industry who are interred at Lexington's African Cemetery No. 2.

"We are excited that the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden will help us share the powerful and important story of this great neighborhood," Melanson said. "African-American jockeys and horse people helped make Kentucky the horse capital of the world, and the park will allow us to tell that story to a global audience." UK

Katie Pratt is an agriculture communication specialist at the University of Kentucky.

Gluck Center to Receive Donation from Owners of Devil May Care



Devil May Care at Churchill Downs

ANNE M. EBERHARDT

John and Gina Greathouse, owners of Betfair TVG Triple Tiara series top performer Devil May Care, selected the University of Kentucky Gluck Equine Research Center, the Kentucky Horse Park, and the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation to receive a total of $30,000 in donations.

Betfair TVG will make the donations on the Greathouses' behalf.

"Donations such as these are a nice surprise," said Ed Squires, PhD, Dipl. ACT (hon.), executive director of the UK Gluck Equine Research Foundation and the director of advancement and industry relations at the Gluck Center. "We thank John and Gina Greathouse for selecting the Gluck Equine Research Center to receive a portion of the donations provided by Betfair TVG. Furthermore, we thank Betfair TVG for offering the donation funding. The donation will help facilitate further equine research."

The Greathouses' 3-year-old filly, Devil May Care, earned 12 points to top the Triple Tiara series, which included the Betfair TVG Acorn, Betfair TVG Coaching Club American Oaks, and the Betfair TVG Alabama Stakes. She earned 10 points for winning the Coaching Club American Oaks and two points for starting in that race and the Alabama Stakes. UK

Jenny Blandford is the Gluck Equine Research Foundation assistant at the Gluck Center.

Kentucky Equine Networking Association Hosts Inaugural Meeting

The Kentucky Horse Council and the University of Kentucky Equine Initiative recently announced the formation of the Kentucky Equine Networking Association (KENA) and held its inaugural meeting to a capacity crowd on Sept. 16 at Spindletop Hall in Lexington, Ky. More than 140 equine professionals attended the meeting.

KENA was established this year as an educational and networking organization for equine professionals in Kentucky, targeted specifically at those who participate in breeding and reproductive services, instruction, training, boarding, and showing.

Ed Squires, MS, PhD, Hon. Dipl. ACT, executive director of the Gluck Equine Research Foundation and director of advancement and industry relations at the Gluck Center, compared the group to the Kentucky Thoroughbred Farm Managers' Club (KTFMC) and said he believed KENA would give those involved in the pleasure and performance horse industries an opportunity to come together.

"What we're trying to do is to unite all pleasure and performance horse professionals, who in some ways weren't connected … and educate them at the same time," Squires said.

Ginny Grulke, executive director of the Kentucky Horse Council, anticipates some crossover attendance from the KTFMC and is appreciative of that organization's efforts to educate its members and to provide a model for KENA.

For the moment, she said she is not sure whether KENA will take on memberships separately from the Kentucky Horse Council. And, as long as it can self-sustain on per-meeting fees and sponsorships, there might not be an annual membership fee. KENA's goal is to hold regular meetings at which attendees can network, dine, and listen to talks on a variety of equine topics from industry experts.

Squires noted that one of the challenges moving forward will be to form an organizing committee and to find engaging speakers whose topics will apply to a diverse group of equestrians.

Grulke hopes attendance will not be limited to professionals, but can also attract area college students, particularly for career opportunities.

"Getting a job is all about networking, meeting people, and telling them what you're looking for," Grulke said. "It's a really good thing for students."

The feature presentation of the inaugural meeting was given by Col. Walter Herd about threats to American equestrianism.

Herd's presentation focused on the current decline of horses in the mainstream consciousness in an attempt "not to solve some of these problems but to throw them out on the table and start thinking about them.

"The delta between equestrians and other Americans is growing," Herd said. "Historically, fringe elements do not survive."

Kentucky first lady Jane Beshear was on hand to applaud the formation of the group. As an active equestrian herself, she said she was pleased to see so many disciplines come together.

"The horse industry needs something like this, and there's no better time for it," she said.

Laurie Ball, a student at Asbury University, was impressed with the speakers and enjoyed the opportunity to network.

"I definitely want to be here for the next meeting," Ball said.

Squires and Grulke said they were thrilled with the response to the first meeting.

"I thought it was a great success," Squires said. "I honestly thought if we had 50 (attendees) I would have been excited, and we had more than 140."

The next KENA meeting will be held Nov. 16 and will feature Rich Wilcke, director of the University of Louisville Equine Industry Program. His presentation is titled, "Business success with horses requires committed planning."

For more information about KENA, visit www.kentuckyhorse.org/kena. UK

Natalie Voss is a recent graduate in equine science and management.

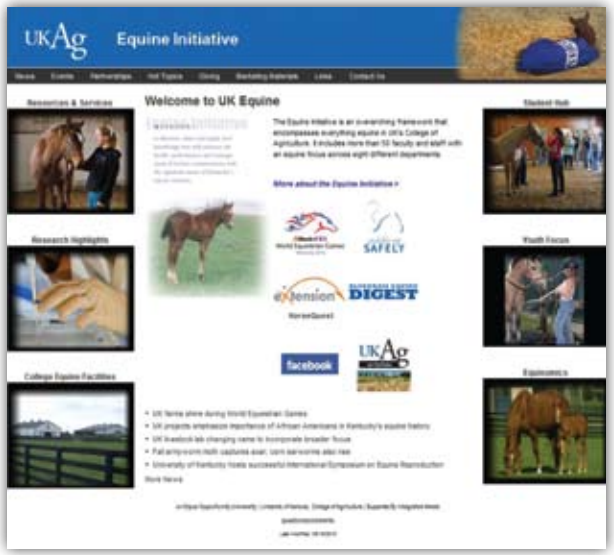
UK Equine Initiative has Redesigned Website

The University of Kentucky Equine Initiative's website got a new look when a redesigned version went live on Sept. 10.

The Equine Initiative's new homepage features six hubs to everything equine in the College of Agriculture: resources and services, research highlights, college equine facilities, student hub, youth focus, and equinomics.

The homepage also features a link to learn more about the Equine Initiative as well as the latest news; links to partner organizations such as Saddle Up Safely and HorseQuest eXtension; and links to the Bluegrass Equine Digest, the Equine Initiative's Facebook page, and UK's YouTube page. UK

Visit the website at www.ag.uky.edu/equine.



SAVE THE DATE: GLUCK CENTER SHORT COURSES

The second annual Kentucky Breeders' Short Course, hosted by the University of Kentucky Gluck Equine Research Center, will be held Jan. 22.

This year's course also will offer a Veterinarians' Day for equine veterinarians on Jan. 21. The Kentucky Breeders' Day is for owners and managers of all horse breeds or anyone with an interest in learning more about the industry.

The Kentucky Breeders' Day and Veterinarians' Day will each include a half-day session on equine metabolic syndrome (EMS) as part of a research project between faculty at the University of Kentucky and the University of Minnesota.

Registration for the Veterinarians' Day and Kentucky Breeders' Day will begin Oct. 15 on the Gluck Center's website (www.ca.uky.edu/gluck). Early bird registration for the Veterinarians' Day is $100 and for the Kentucky Breeders' Day is $35. UK

Jenny Blandford is the Gluck Equine Research Foundation assistant at the Gluck Center.

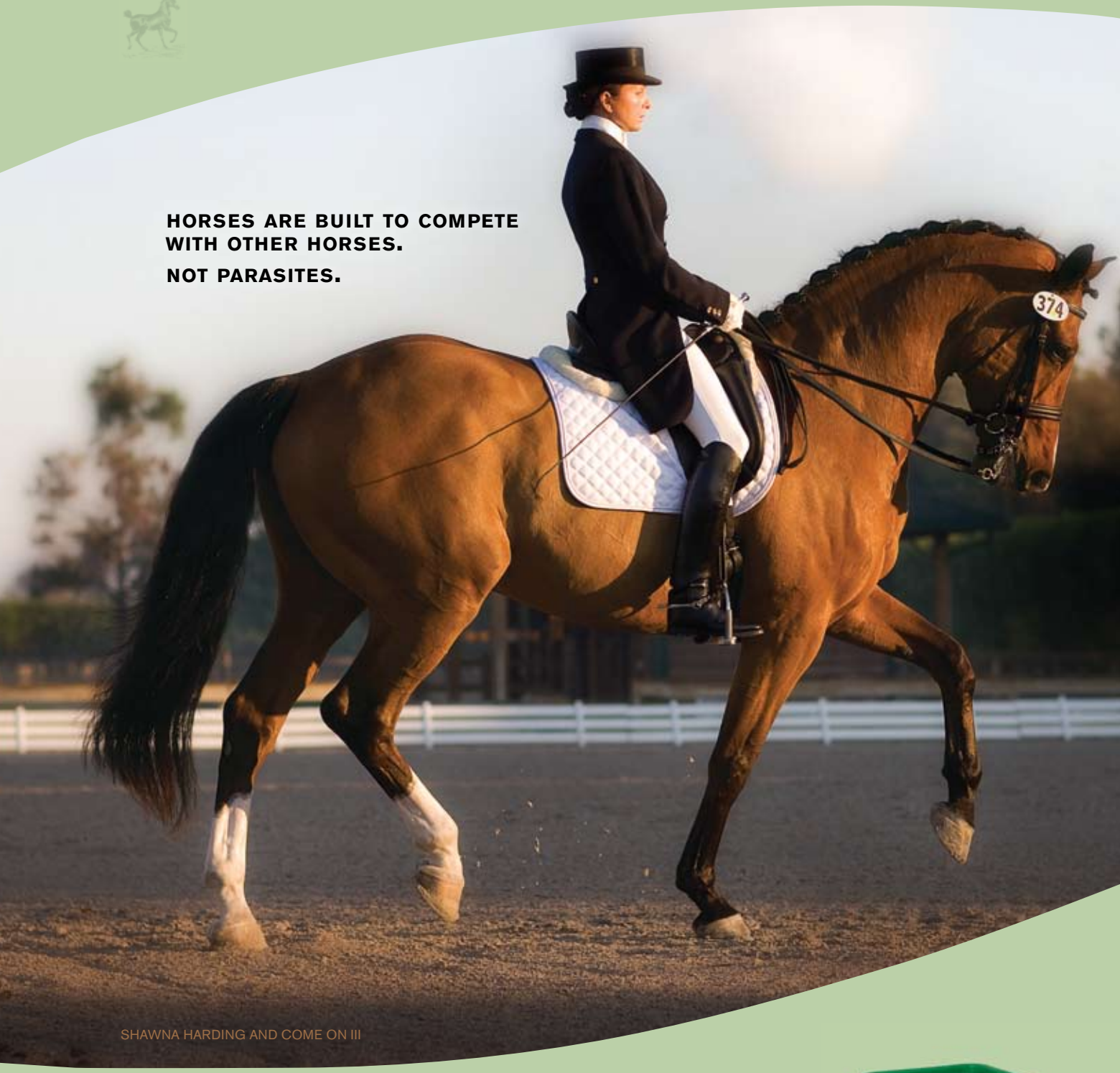
UPCOMING EVENTS

September 25–October 10
Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games at the Kentucky Horse Park.

October 2
University of Kentucky Robinson Center Mountain Ag Field Day in Jackson, Ky.

October 9
Race for Education 5K/10K in Midway, Ky.

October 28 / 4 p.m.
Dept. of Veterinary Science Equine Diagnostic and Research Seminar Series. Paul Morley, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVIM, professor of clinical sciences at Colorado State University, will speak on infectious diseases and biosecurity.



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