

JUNE 2022
EDITION

WILDCAT CANTER

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY AG EQUINE PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

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HIGHLIGHTS



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2022 KENTUCKY EQUINE SURVEY HITTING MAILBOXES NOW

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES

July 2-7, Kentucky State 4-H Horse Show

July 30, Hats Off to Kentucky's Horse Industry Day

Aug. UK First Day of Classes

Aug. 25, Equine Programs Welcome Back BBQ and Clubs/Teams Meet and Greet

Sept. 29, Kentucky Signature Industries Career Fair featuring the equine and distilling industries

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

WELCOME, FROM OUR NEWEST INTERN

Hello, my name is Claudia Harding. I am a rising equine senior here at the University of Kentucky and the new communications and student relations intern for UK Ag Equine Programs.

My love for horses started like any other little girl but grew into a passion when I fell in love with the competition. Since I was 6 years old, I have been riding and showing mostly western all-around at 4-H and American Quarter Horse Association breed shows.



I am originally from New Jersey and chose to turn my passion for horses into a career by studying Equine Science and Management at UK when I fell in love with the atmosphere of Lexington and the versatility of the Equine Science and Management major. After graduation, I plan to pursue work for an equine company in communications and marketing.

Outside of school, I serve as the vice president of the UK Intercollegiate Horse Show Association Western Equestrian Team. I have been riding on the team since I was a freshman and have had the chance to ride some amazing horses with the help of our coach, Bennie Sargent, and the opportunity to learn a new skill by competing in the ranch riding class. I have made many great memories of traveling and competing with the team. The beauty of the equine major is how diverse everyone's equine background is, but you are still able to find those who share the same interests even if they come from different parts of the country, like the students on the western team.

I have made so many amazing connections in Kentucky with the help of the program. In my freshman year, Savannah Robin guided me through the process of applying for an internship and gave me the tools I needed to be successful in my interview and on my resume. She helped me gain an internship at AQHA headquarters in Amarillo, Texas, in the show department. Unfortunately, the internship was canceled due to COVID-19. Her help gave me the confidence to apply for more internships the next summer. In my sophomore year, I interned at the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) headquarters at the Kentucky Horse Park in the compliance department.

This year, I am excited to be a part of the Ag Equine Programs team and grateful for the opportunity to represent this amazing program. I hope to grow my writing and communication skills through this internship, create closer relationships with the staff and students and hopefully impact prospective students!

CLAUDIA HARDING
'23, UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS INTERN



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By Holly Wiemers
Photo by Hannah Waroway

University of Kentucky's Ag Equine Programs and the Kentucky Horse Council are again partnering on the 2022 Kentucky Equine Survey, a statewide comprehensive survey of all horse breeds. The study is in conjunction with the Kentucky field office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Ag Statistics Service and is a follow-up to the study completed 10 years ago.

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service is selecting 15,000 "horse-holds" to provide vital data about Kentucky's equestrian industry. Organizers urge those receiving a survey in the mail to promptly complete and return the information. There is an online option to completing the survey as well.

"If you receive a questionnaire in the mail, please complete it. It will take some time and effort, but the information that is collected is important to the future of our state's signature industry," said Jill Stowe, UK agricultural economics professor and project leader. "We are excited that the time has arrived, and we look forward to a strong response from Kentucky's horse operation owners."

The study seeks to obtain an accurate inventory of all equines in the state by breed and use. Horses, mules, donkeys and ponies being inventoried include those on owned farms as well as those being boarded at equine boarding and breeding facilities.

According to Sarah Coleman, executive director of the Kentucky Horse Council, accurate counts equines in Kentucky will improve equine health care, inform workforce development, aid in supporting proposals for business ventures and grants, identify emerging markets, and empower state and local policy makers with critical information to make informed decisions.

All farm and individual names are confidential and will not be available to any state or federal agency, nor to UK or the Kentucky Horse Council. Stowe said they expect to have summary results from the survey in December, with in-depth results arriving in early 2023.

The study was partially funded by a Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund grant; additional funding has been secured by UK's College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, the Kentucky Horse Council and myriad equine industry supporters.

For more information about the Kentucky Equine Survey, visit <https://equine.ca.uky.edu/kyequinesurvey> or the Kentucky Horse Council, <http://www.kentuckyhorse.org/>.



ANNUAL UK EQUINE FARM AND FACILITIES EXPO HELD JUNE 16

By Claudia Harding
Photos by Stephen Patton

The 2022 University of Kentucky Equine Farm and Facilities Expo, held at Newtown Anner Stud Farm in Lexington, showcased the best practices of horse farm management and barn design. UK Cooperative Extension Service and UK Ag Equine Programs held the event on June 16, which featured educational talks from industry professionals, a wagon tour of Newtown Anner, trade fair vendors and a dinner provided by the event's sponsors. Approximately 110 people were in attendance.

Hanzly Albina, Newtown Anner barn manager, spoke on behalf of the facility. He talked about the farm's recently renovated barns and how the facilities were designed so the barns stay well maintained for years to come. Albina explained that Newtown Anner chose to build one barn with cinderblock because it provides better biosecurity, and while he recognizes the risks of a horse getting injured by kicking stall walls, they went with cinderblock because the farm's horses are turned out most of the time. He noted their choice of vaulted ceilings to help with ventilation as well as the addition of wood paneling to help keep birds from nesting. Newtown Anner is in the process of updating its older tobacco barns.

Extension specialists Bob Coleman, Morgan Hayes, Bill Witt and Ray Smith led educational talks discussing barn design and ventilation, controlling Johnsongrass and other summer species and how to assess pasture health.

The event was generously sponsored by Central Equipment, Central Kentucky Ag Credit, Derby State Equipment Sales, Farm Credit Mid America, Hallway Feeds, McCauley Feed, Meade Tractor, NTRA Advantage-Equine Discounts, The Drinking Post, The Pond Lady and Tribute Equine Nutrition.



2022 KENTUCKY STATE HORSE CONTEST HELD JUNE 1-3

The 2022 Kentucky State 4-H Horse judging, knowledge and communications contests were held June 1-3.

The judging contest was held at Spy Coast Farm with approximately 50 contestants. Participants were evaluated in the categories of in-hand and performance classes and seniors defended their placings through oral reasons. Spy Coast was an excellent host and the facility has been booked for the 2023 judging contest.

Organizers also expressed gratitude for the horse providers and riders for the contest, without whom the judging contest could not happen. They included Judi Baumann, Joyce Brinsfield, Mary Broyles, Blair Cecil, Sarah Coleman, Ellen Huffman, Sharon Ohler and Jen Roytz.

The knowledge and communications contests were held at the Hardin County Cooperative Extension Office in Elizabethtown. There were approximately 100 entrants throughout all categories, including horse bowl, hippology, public speaking, individual and team presentations, photography, arts and crafts and equipment.

According to organizers, the youth competitors were competitive and knowledgeable.

The next steps for some of these youth representing Kentucky are Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championships, in Perry, Georgia; All American Quarter Horse Congress, in Columbus, Ohio; and Eastern National Horse Roundup, in Louisville, Kentucky.

Organizers also pointed to the incredible support from county 4-H agents and volunteers that aided in the success of these contests.



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James N MacLeod, director of UK Ag Equine Programs and faculty member within the Department of Veterinary Science, thanked Urschel for her stellar work as DUS the past five years and thanked her for her continued participation in and support of the program and its students.

PERSPECTIVES FROM OUR STUDENTS

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.

The Million Dollar Question: The Horse or the Sport?

By Grace Barrier

I believe that all horse lovers and equestrians can agree, no matter what your skill level, discipline, or ultimate goals are, at the end of the day, we do it for our love of the horse.

Something about a horse once touched our souls no matter how young or old we were at the time and sparked our passion for the horse.

However, I believe we can all also agree that being involved with horses, in whatever sense, can also bring along many challenges. It is no secret that horses and their industry are both expensive and extremely hard to make it in sometimes. Even those of us with a little more wiggle room in the budget can find ourselves holding our breath as we fork out tons of cash on vet bills, show fees, board, you name it. Horses are just flat out expensive. Period.

Beyond just paying for basic necessities to partake in the equine industry at any level, there can also be unforeseen challenges that can leave equestrians and horse lovers feeling caught between a rock and a hard place. One issue that is particularly close to my heart, and also to a lot of my friends in the industry, is having to choose between the horse and the sport.

When I say, "Choose the horse or the sport," I am referring to the internal struggle riders face when they find their current mount and their goals not matching up. This could be due to the horse's age, an injury inhibiting ridability and so much more. Unfortunately, for most of the equestrian community, we cannot afford to comfortably retire every single horse we ever own while simultaneously buying new horses that will help us achieve our riding goals.

This issue raises the sometimes heart wrenching question, "Do I sell my horse in order to still be able to financially support my goals?" This extremely hard question is sometimes essential for ambitious riders to ask themselves if they find their equine partners are unable to continue to climb up the levels with them.

For some people this question, though hard to think about, becomes a very quick decision in either direction. Some of us decide that the connection we share with our animals is more important than any goal we could set for ourselves. Others of us, no matter how much we love our horses, know in our hearts that we will be left unhappy and unfulfilled if we quit on our goals to stay stagnant at our horse's abilities. No answer is the right one, it just depends on what we feel is right for ourselves.

Personally, I decided to choose the sport over the horse. I have aspirations to one day show in the adult amateur Grand Prix classes for dressage, however, my budget is very limited. That being said, two years ago I decided to sell my first horse, Striker. It was an extremely hard and emotional decision to make, but ultimately it was the right decision for both of us. I bought Striker in middle school as a trauma ridden, middle aged, somewhat green Quarter Horse. Not exactly what you might think of as a dressage prospect, but there was something about him that spoke to me. Many challenging years later, we made our second level debut at a USDF rated show in Aiken, South Carolina.

I could not be more proud and thankful for everything he taught me, but ultimately, he was not going to be an FEI horse. His age was starting to show, and I knew it wasn't fair to continue to push him past his body's ability. To be quite honest, I wouldn't have been able to afford the maintenance on him to continue to keep him comfortable at the higher levels. As much as I would have loved to keep him until the day he crossed the rainbow bridge, I financially wouldn't have been able to continue to fund my goals and retire him in the way he deserves. So, I found a wonderful older lady looking to start getting into lower level dressage but still have a trusty trail partner as well. They were the perfect fit for each other, and I still get to see him whenever I'm home. Now I can continue to chase my dreams without feeling guilty about compromising Striker's care.

So, if you are finding yourself in the position where you have to decide between the horse or the sport, don't panic. It can, and often-times will, be a very difficult and emotional decision to make. No answer is the right one, and you shouldn't let yourself or anybody around you make you feel guilty about what you decide to do. The only decision you can make is what you truly feel is right in your heart. If you make the decision you know is right for both you and your horse, you've already won.



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