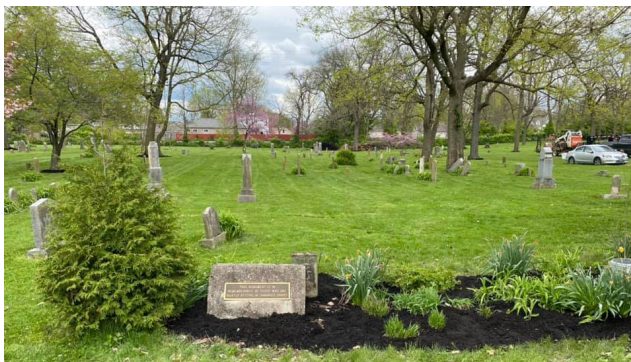


Wildcat Canter

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY AG EQUINE PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER



April 2021



UK Ag Equine Programs' students, partners give back during Spring into Service day

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Welcome to the publication stable...the Graduate Gallop

PAGE 8

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Connect With Us



UK Ag Equine Programs hosts Virtual Experience Equine Week

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From April 19-23, UK Ag Equine Programs and the Wildcat Wranglers, the student leadership team from within the Equine Science and Management undergraduate degree program, hosted a virtual Experience Equine Week.

HIGHLIGHTING RESEARCH
AND OUTREACH EFFORTS AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

APRIL 2021
ISSUE #0013

EQUINE SCIENCE

April Equine Science Review recap

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The Equine Science Review: highlighting research and outreach efforts at the University of Kentucky is a monthly newsletter from the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment that highlights the important equine work happening at the university.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES

- May 10-13 - Final exam week
- May 11 - Equine Senior Turn Out at Gluck Equine Research Center from 3-5:30 p.m.
- May 16 - UK Commencement for College of Agriculture, Food and Environment at 12 p.m.
- May 18 - Virtual Equine Senior Send-off at 6:30 p.m.

Springtime in Kentucky tends to be somewhat magical each year, particularly for the equine community, as the Bluegrass comes back to life and the equine events begin. The days of breaking frozen water troughs are replaced with happy horses turned out in lush grass fields, foals seen dotted across local farms, Land Rover Kentucky 3 Day Event returns and senior students at the University of Kentucky are taking their last finals in preparation to graduate.

The year 2021, following the pandemic, came with an increased desire for normalcy. The horse world is unique in that there is not the option to Zoom in and work from home. Horses are essential as are the many occupations that revolve around them. This has brought resilience to equestrians due to the very nature of the sport.

The pandemic forced a 2020 Land Rover Kentucky 3 Day Event cancellation and the community was not prepared to allow that to happen again in 2021. When a lack of funds threatened to shut down the only 5* event in the United States, the equine community stepped in and crowdfunded the necessary amount in the extremely limited time frame required to keep the event alive for 2021. There were still limitations surrounding the event, including no in person spectators, but what an inspiring feat to have played a role in the fulfillment of so many dreams of top riders from around the world. Even to the spectators, the atmosphere was electric and loved by many horse people of all backgrounds.



"To witness the competition is to gaze upon the Everest of our sport, and its impact should not be underestimated. It's right here in our backyard, and what a backyard. The world would be a little less bright for many without this event," said Olympic eventer, Kyle Carter.

Growing up as an eventer myself, I am perhaps a little biased, but this event is what first led to my love of the Bluegrass state, deciding undoubtedly at 15 years old that I would not only attend the University of Kentucky majoring in Equine Science and Management, but also to develop my equine career in Lexington.

Fast forward years later, and I have accomplished just that. I owe much of my inspiration and motivation to this event that spurred the love of the state, community, university and ultimately the horse. For these reasons, it is inspiring to see the tradition continue, despite dire circumstances, to foster the magic of these events in the future generations to come. As an alumnus, I realize the importance of the connection between UK and the local equine community. Allowing current students to interact in the equine community is priceless and so educational. Only in Kentucky can certain opportunities exist that bring value to the students in the equine program.

Kentucky 3 Day Event is just one example of that and UK Ag Equine Programs participation each year is a chance to reconnect current students, alumni and professors plus meet with future potential students. The annual tailgate hosted by Equine Alumni Affiliate Network on cross country day has become a treasured tradition to me and I am proud to be a small part of this network.

That same resilience that saved Kentucky 3 Day Event 2021 is what defines the equine community as a whole. This resilience sets us apart. We are not average in any sense of the word. I hope all soon-to-be graduates remember this as you cross those finish flags of your degree and enter into your career in the equine industry!

Bennett Adkins ('17)

Kinetic Vet

Harley Heights Eventing, trainer

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UK Ag Equine Programs' students, partners give back during Spring into Service day

By Sydney Carter

Photos by Steve Patton, UK Agricultural Communications



University of Kentucky Ag Equine Programs, in conjunction with the UK chapter of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences, MANRRS, hosted a student-driven Spring into Service event at the African Cemetery No. 2 in Lexington. The day of service was sponsored by Central Kentucky Ag Credit.

"Spring into Service was a unique event that allowed us to learn about the African American heritage within the equine community and also allowed our students to give back to the local community," said Kristen Wilson, academic coordinator within UK's Equine Science and Management undergraduate degree program and advisor for the program's student leadership team, the Wildcat Wranglers.

The community service event, coordinated by the Wildcat Wranglers, contributed to the upkeep and overall enhancement of the local cemetery. The same student team planned and organized the inaugural Equine Week of Service during the fall 2020 semester. That story is available [here](#).

The old Benevolent Society No. 2 Cemetery, now known as African Cemetery No. 2, was originally established in a rural setting, according to the cemetery's website. It is in the process of being preserved and restored.

The cemetery was the first burial site of Isaac Burns Murphy, winner of three Kentucky Derbys and the first African American inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame in 1955. It also holds the remains of Oliver Lewis, the jockey who won the inaugural Kentucky Derby in 1875; Abraham Perry, the trainer of Joe Cotton, winner of the Kentucky, Tennessee, Coney Island and five other derby races in 1885; and James "Soup" Perkins, who tied a record as being the youngest jockey to win the Kentucky Derby in 1895. More information about the cemetery can be found [here](#).

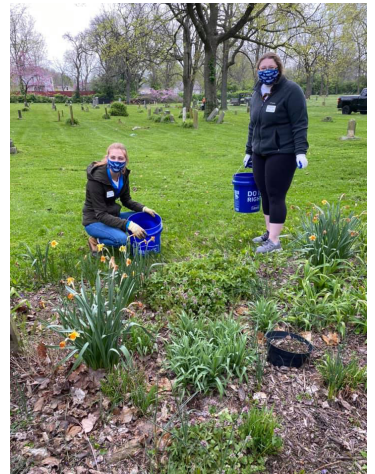
The service event brought together more than 50 student, alumni, faculty and staff volunteers for a day to clean up and make landscaping improvements to the property.

"The first shift of the day focused on picking up all sticks and debris from the eight acres. The second shift focused on weeding the main flower beds and weeding around the many trees on the property. The third shift focused on putting new mulch in all flower beds and around all trees – we called it Mulch Madness!" said Grace Camp, a Wildcat Wrangler student and event co-chair. "Overall, the event was a big success that allowed students and faculty to come and volunteer their time on a beautiful day and also learn about the history and importance of the cemetery within our community."

“This was by far one of the best organized and hardest working group of students who have ever volunteered in the cemetery and their efforts show in the improvements to the grounds they made during their visit. We are deeply appreciative of their efforts,” said Mark Coyne, African Cemetery No. 2 chair and a faculty member within the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment’s Department of Plant and Soil Sciences.

“My sentiments center on pride for our students and program together with admiration for the broad historical foundation of horses – Thoroughbreds, Saddlebreds, Standardbreds and, more recently, all breeds – in the cultural and agricultural heritage of Kentucky,” said James MacLeod, director of UK Ag Equine Programs and John S. and Elizabeth A. Knight Chair within the Gluck Equine Research Center.

According to Camp, the Wildcat Wranglers look forward to putting on a service-oriented project each semester and are excited to pursue a partnership in the future with the African Cemetery No. 2. Their now annual Week of Service, held during the fall semester, is scheduled for Oct. 4-11, 2021.



Congratulations to our 2021-2022 Wildcat Wrangler Team!

Margaret Babiarz
Olivia Bryant
Charles Churchill
Nick D'Amore
Daniel Deatrck

Gabby DiLemme
Emily Elkins
Harrison Goode
Ryn Harris
Madelyn Leahey

Piper McGehee
Maddie Moore
Olivia Nuñez
Isidra Powell
Jen Zimmerman



Welcome to the publication stable...the Graduate Gallop

By Kristen Wilson



UK Ag Equine Programs is excited to announce our newest publication, The Graduate Gallop, curated for our equine alumni to stay connected and informed. April was the inaugural issue of monthly e-newsletter, which includes event and program information, a career connections category including job postings, networking and volunteer opportunities, a highlighted professional tips topic each month, dates and deadlines and alumni features. It also includes a section for UK's Equine Alumni Affiliate Network (EQAAN).

The April issue can be found online [here](#).

To join our mailing list, please complete the [form](#) to subscribe. Once you subscribe, you will receive confirmation email you will need to click to finalize the subscription.

UK Ag Equine Programs and student leadership team, Wildcat Wranglers, host Virtual Experience Equine Week

From April 19-23, UK Ag Equine Programs and the Wildcat Wranglers, the student leadership team from within the Equine Science and Management undergraduate degree program, hosted a virtual Experience Equine Week.

Over the course of a week, program videos and information were shared via the program's Instagram and Facebook pages, as were student testimonials about the program. In addition, members of the Wildcat Wranglers hosted Zoom sessions.

Connect With Us



REGISTER NOW

We can't wait to meet you!



Why did you chose to attend UK?

“ I chose to attend UK because, being in Lexington, I have the option to try out many of different horse-related opportunities that I wouldn't have had at another school. I also like that I can focus on the management side but still learn about the science of horses at the same time. UK seems like a second home to me and everyone in the equine program is so friendly and helpful! ”

Student Testimonial



Isidra Powell
ESMA Freshman



What is the best thing about UK Ag Equine Programs?

“ The professors and professionals in the Equine Program are truly the best. They are always willing to help, give advice and advise you in the right direction. They care about their students and treat you like colleagues. They constantly are helping you network and thrive within the industry! ”

Student Testimonial



Maggie Rumbaugh
ESMA Senior



Why did you chose to attend UK?

“ I chose UK Ag Equine Programs not only because my father is a UK Pharmacy alumni ,but also because it was a dream. I knew that the Equine Program was the best in Kentucky and would be able to help me network in the industry to find the right job for me. ”

Student Testimonial



Brittany Sparks
ESMA Senior



What is your favorite class in UK Ag Equine Programs?

“ My favorite class has been EQM 105 with Dr. Rossano. I really enjoyed the hands-on aspect with the horses we got to do every week, and it made me really excited to continue working in the equine industry! ”

Student Testimonial



Kayla Schneider
ESMA Senior



April Equine Science Review recap

By Holly Wiemers

The Equine Science Review: highlighting research and outreach efforts at the University of Kentucky is a monthly newsletter from the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment that highlights the important equine work happening at the university. UK is home to world-class research and service excellence in equine health, safety, nutrition, pasture and forages, economics, engineering, environmental compliance and many others. Programs at UK offer the depth and breadth of scope fitting its location in the heart of horse country. Have updates delivered to your inbox each month by subscribing to the Review [here](#).

The April issue of the Equine Science Review is [online](#) or can be read in [Issuu](#). Some highlights of this issue include identification of a novel rotavirus, Eastern Tent Caterpillar hatch underway, pasture management begins with good scouting and much more!

Stories this month include:

- [UK Gluck Center, VDL Preliminarily Identify Novel Rotavirus](#)
- [Eastern Tent Caterpillar Egg Hatch Now Underway in KY](#)
- [Veterinary Student and Gluck Student Intern Wins Prestigious Scholarship](#)
- [Science Sleuths: the Science that Shapes Diagnostic Tests: Infectious or Contagious – Which Is It?](#)
- [Pasture Management Begins with Good Scouting](#)
- [Urschel Co-Authors Nutritional Influences on Skeletal Muscle & Muscular Disease Review](#)
- [Alfalfa Weevil Populations Exploding](#)
- [Paraprobiotic Effective Against Large Roundworm Parasites](#)
- [Gene Expression in the Equine Placenta](#)
- [Equine Disease Quarterly: Commentary by Dr. Peter Timoney: Reporting Disease Events](#)
- [UK to Host Fencing Schools in May](#)
- [UK's Equine Science Review Celebrates One Year](#)

HIGHLIGHTING RESEARCH
AND OUTREACH EFFORTS AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

APRIL 2021
ISSUE #0013

EQUINE SCIENCE REVIEW



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GLUCK CENTER, VDL PRELIMINARILY
IDENTIFY NOVEL ROTAVIRUS, 3
UK researchers preliminarily
identified a novel Rotavirus.

INFECTIOUS OR CONTAGIOUS, WHICH IS
IT?, 5
Similar and related, they are often
used interchangeably or incorrectly.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT BEGINS WITH
GOOD SCOUTING, 7
I believe pasture management be-
gins with knowing what you have.

EQUINE SCIENCE REVIEW CELEBRATES
ONE YEAR, 12
A year ago, UK launched this pub-
see highlights from the past year.

UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment announces new senior director of philanthropy



Brent McCauley will be joining the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment as senior director of philanthropy.

McCauley has a background and understanding of agriculture and the land-grant mission. He has advanced throughout his career in philanthropy and currently serves as the interim executive director of advancement for the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

“We are excited to have Brent join our excellent team in the college’s Office of Philanthropy and Alumni,” said Nancy Cox, dean.

McCauley has a bachelor’s degree in agribusiness management with a minor in international agriculture from the University of Missouri. He also holds a master’s degree in higher education and student affairs (development track) from the University of South Carolina.

“As a donor-centered professional, I am a firm believer in the land-grant mission and the ethos it produces,” McCauley said. “I have always wanted to remain at a land-grant university as I progress through my career. This position aligns perfectly with my desire to do just that at an innovative institution that values student success, basic and applied research, and statewide engagement.”

He will assume his new duties June 1.

UK Equine in the News

University Program Celebrating Debut Winner Averly Jane

Averly Jane was foaled and raised by University of Kentucky students.

Late Breaking News: Averly Jane won the Kentucky Juvenile Stakes by three lengths and is now two for two. Thus, her dam Sh Sh Shakin in the UK broodmare band has now produced two stakes-winning foals from three to race, earning their black type at Saratoga and Churchill Downs. Very exciting!

Source: BloodHorse, April 25, Eric Mitchell

Sh Sh Shakin didn’t want to be a racehorse and when her career path veered toward the show ring, she apparently wasn’t going to find a bright future there either. The daughter of Richter Scale eventually found her place as a rising star in the broodmare band at the University of Kentucky’s Maine Chance Equine Campus, known as the North Farm.

As a broodmare, Sh Sh Shakin has produced three foals of racing age that are all winners. Her most recent winner is Averly Jane , who won her racing debut April 15 at Keeneland, where she crushed a field of six other juveniles by 8 3/4 lengths. The filly is owned by Gatewood Bell's Hat Creek Racing partnership group and trained by Wesley Ward, which enjoyed a successful run at Keeneland.

Ward and Hat Creek Racing in partnership with Cheyenne Stables celebrated another first-out winner April 22 when Golden Bell , a 2-year-old by Macho Uno , won in gate-to-wire fashion by 5 1/4 lengths.

Averly Jane rolls right into stakes competition April 28 at Churchill Downs where she's entered in the five-furlong \$150,000 Kentucky Juvenile Stakes. She is the 8-5 morning-line favorite.

"Based on her production, Sh Sh Shakin is probably our No. 2 broodmare at the moment," said Dr. Laurie Lawrence, an equine nutritionist and faculty adviser for the U.K. Department of Animal and Food Sciences horse unit. "We have one other mare who has produced a graded stakes winner, but Sh Sh Shakin is now three-for-three with a stakes winner."

Read the entire story [here](#).

UK's Equine Science and Management undergraduate program providing opportunities through internships

Source: *Kentucky Farm Bureau magazine, April 29*



In Kentucky, the equine industry remains a top economic driver while touching many different sectors, providing a wealth of intern possibilities.

The use of internships has long been a bridge between students looking to gain valuable work experience and employers looking for perspective employees.

No one knows that better than Savannah Robin who serves as the University of Kentucky (UK) College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment's Equine Science and Management Undergraduate Program Internship Coordinator.

Her goal is to get as many students as possible into internships in as many different equine-based areas as are available.

"An internship in general is an invaluable experience because the student gets a hands-on opportunity to apply what they're doing and what they've learned in their classrooms," she said. "We hope that they take the core of what they've learned and then are able to apply it in a real-world setting."

As well as being the instructor for students involved in the internship program, Robin also teaches two classes, one of which is the Equine Careers class that helps to guide and direct students and provide valuable career advising from their freshman year to their senior year.

"We try to teach them the importance of networking as early as their freshman year, which is a huge piece of the careers class that I teach," she said. "A lot of times, we're preparing kids for jobs that don't even exist yet, which is really cool. But for them, by the time they get to an internship, we want them to realize they're learning what they do and what they don't like. A lot of our students will walk away knowing that particular job is not for them, or they find it is definitely their path."

Students may also find they are building a relationship with their intern employer that may enable them to get connected to other opportunities.

"Our employers find our internship program really valuable to them because they are then preparing for the future of the industry," Robin said. "We have a lot of people in the industry who know that we need to create the next generation of equine industry leaders, and so our internship supervisors get a chance to do that through our program. They get to mentor our students, they get to foster those relationships, and they get to train them, potentially as a future employee."

Since it began in 2009, the internship program has helped numerous students connect with a multitude of equine-related industries, so gauging the success of the program is important, Robin emphasized.

Read the entire story [here](#).

Racing's social license to operate: The evolution of public attitudes

Source: *Thoroughbred Racing*, Daniel Ross, April 26, 2021

Fifteen years ago, California was at a crossroads.

In response to calls for heightened equine safety measures, the state industry's governing body mandated a switch from dirt to synthetic racetrack surfaces, what would prove for various reasons a largely ill-fated venture resulting in all but one chanceling track making the switch back to dirt only a few years later.

The precipitating factor behind the synthetics experiment — the high number of fatalities — had spilled over into the media, though largely confined to California-centric publications like the San Diego Union-Tribune. Among those familiar with the boardroom chatter, this watershed move was largely industry-driven, an effort in-house to lasso a problem before it bolted from the barn.

Cut to the Santa Anita welfare crisis of two years ago, and media and public scrutiny couldn't have been more different, with national and international media outlets like CNN turning their lens to the Southern California facility. Television news trucks camped out during morning training. A single article in the Los Angeles Times, regarding the 23rd fatality at Santa Anita that spring, had nearly 4,800 shares. That paper maintains a running count of equine fatalities to this day

A parallel with the photo that circulated of Irish trainer Gordon Elliott astride a dead horse in his care, and the volcano of disgust that erupted, is obvious: A sense that the industry, like the fabled Rip Van Winkle, had been asleep for an extended period, only to wake in a world vastly changed.

Indeed, British journalist Lydia Hislop wrote a typically insightful analysis of the Elliott photo in which she asks the question: "What I want to address is why the racing industry has chosen this incident, above all others, on which to visit loud, unprompted and more or less unanimous censure?"

In it, Hislop gives a nod to the slippery complexion of shared morality, and the idea that attitudes and social mores that were commonplace as recently as five years ago are suddenly "outdated and inappropriate to contemporary eyes."

And so, if public sentiment towards the use of horses for sport and entertainment is indeed undergoing a rapid metamorphosis, what's next for the racing industry?

The court of public opinion

Camie Heleski, a senior lecturer at the animal and food sciences department of the University of Kentucky, has spent many a waking hour thinking about the evolving nature of the human-animal bond. Her first port of call with her undergraduate students is a primer on semantics.

"We spend some time initially talking about the difference between animal welfare and animal rights," said Heleski. "If they're not clear on that, it's hard to even have a logical discussion."

Many of the articles Heleski has co-authored on this issue can be read as cautionary tales — a turning on of the lighthouse beacons when the storm clouds have already gathered and the waters are choppy.

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

Ask the Experts: Not Just Horsin' Around

Source: Wallet Hub, featuring Fernanda Camargo, associate professor and equine extension specialist within the Department of Animal and Food Sciences.

We posed the following questions to a panel of leading horseracing experts in order to better understand both the Kentucky Derby and the equine industry more generally. You can check out their bios and responses below.

1. What measures should be adopted to better protect the health and well-being of race horses?
2. Will the Kentucky Derby be different in 2021, in light of last year's racial justice demonstrations following the death of Breonna Taylor and the demand to cancel the event?
3. Who do you think will win this year's Kentucky Derby?

What measures should be adopted to better protect the health and well-being of race horses?

If I were to cite one item that could improve their health and welfare, it would be increasing turnout time. The reasons why racing horses are not turned out more frequently range from lack of turnout space in racetracks to the greater possibility of injuries that can occur when horses are allowed to freely run in a paddock. These horses do not lack exercise or fitness, but they probably would benefit from being allowed to "horse around". Positive, and already ongoing, measures include the fact that breeders and owners have been actively trying to breed higher quality horses, which in turn provides higher intrinsic value to each foal, and the incredible effort that has been put toward "retiring" these horses into a second career. These measures have been remarkable steps for the welfare of racehorses.

Will the Kentucky Derby be different in 2021, in light of last year's racial justice demonstrations following the death of Breonna Taylor and the demand to cancel the event?

People in our community and across our nation are hurting, and have been hurting, because of racial inequalities. Our fellow Kentuckians and fellow Americans are asking and deserve to be heard, but I personally do not believe that manifestations against the Kentucky Derby are the answer. When we stop and think, we can only conclude that The Kentucky Derby and racing, in general, have an enormous economic impact in Louisville and Kentucky, benefitting multiple industries, including thousands of members of the black community.

Who do you think will win this year's Kentucky Derby?

I am rooting for Essential Quality. I know he is the favorite, and that does not mean much when it comes to the Derby, but have you seen the way he walks, like he owns the place?

Source: Wallet Hub. Read the entire story [here](#).

\$21 TO HONOR A 2021 GRADUATE

Congratulations to our 2021 Equine Science and Management Graduating Class! Please consider making a gift of \$21 to honor a 2021 grad. Your gift supports alumni activities, networking events, educational and social activities, and other programmatic opportunities that make our program so unique for the students we serve. Learning does not end with graduation. Our vision is both life-long learning and a life-long relationship.



Adulting 101 helps teens transition to a successful future

By Carol Lea Spence

As teenagers approach adulthood, life can come at them fast. Whether it's making the leap from high school to college or getting that first job and moving out of their parents' home, young people face a lot of new situations in a short time span. The University of Kentucky is offering a web-based course this summer to help students hone important life skills to make that transition easier.

Adulting 101 is an eight-week summer course beginning on June 15 and meeting every Tuesday through Zoom. Or-



ganized by the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and the UK Cooperative Extension Service, the course is open to teenagers nationwide, no matter their goals. Adulthood 101 originated as a county-based family and consumer sciences extension program piloted in Central Kentucky.

"We are excited to be growing and expanding the program through this partnership," said Jennifer Hunter, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension assistant director. "As an advisor and professor, I have had the opportunity to work with numerous students as they transition from high school to college and then into the workforce. Starting the conversation early, while students are still in high school, gives students the opportunity to practice important life skills, such as time management, budgeting and stress management."

Young people often flood social media with posts that complain about burned meals, maintaining a car, managing their money, living with a roommate, and studying when there are so many distractions. Adulthood 101 specifically focuses on well-being and life skills that help smooth the transition to campus life or the workforce, so that young people feel more prepared to focus on their next step.

"The course teaches students a lot of skills that we adults often take for granted. It's easy to believe everyone learns such skills at home, and that's not necessarily the case," said Carmen Agouridis, associate dean for instruction. "This course is a way to make sure students are getting some skills we know will be very important to them as they enter adulthood. Even if a student doesn't go to college right away, a lot of these skills will help them even in high school. How do I study? How do I take care of myself mentally and physically? How does nutrition affect me and how can I do better with that?"

This is the second summer UK has offered Adulthood 101. More than 580 students signed up for the course in 2020. In a recent survey, comments such as, "This was a great program, and I learned so much! I appreciate you putting this together and taking the time out of your summer to educate us teens!" and "I really enjoyed this class. It was very fun to take," showed that students were enthusiastic about their experiences in the course. Based on survey feedback from last year's attendees, organizers have included new topics and expanded lessons in this summer's program.

"I often remind my college students that the decisions they make today, such as the decision to take on credit card debt, will directly impact their future," Hunter said. "Preparing youth to understand the impact of their choices in early adulthood allows them to feel more confident as they step out on their own."

The registration fee is \$29.99. Capacity is limited, so organizers recommend registering as soon as possible. The registration form can be found online [here](#).

Whip use in Thoroughbred racing

By Hannah Smither

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 whip has been a part of Thoroughbred racing since the very beginning. It may look different now compared to 100 years ago, but its purpose remains the same. However, the public’s view of it has changed greatly. Whip use in horse racing has become a very hot topic in recent years. The subject has received a lot of media coverage, both from professional sources and social media comments. Animal welfare groups have been on the attack of horse racing for years, and the debates on whip use only give them more ammo. I think the main question we need to be asking ourselves is how can we meet the demands of the public in a changing world while keeping horse racing safe for all parties involved?

In June 2020, the legendary jockey Jerry Bailey said, “I have said for probably seven or eight years now, that only a very small percentage of horses run faster when hit.”

One of the biggest arguments against whip use is that the whip does not make the horse run any faster. A study in the UK published in 2020 hoped to uncover the truth about this statement. This study looked at a total of 126 races under the British Horseracing Association. Sixty-seven of these races were whip free (WF) races and were case matched with 59 whip permitting (WP) races. This study compared finishing times and safety issues (veering, heel clipping, interference, etc.) between both types of races. The aim of this study was to determine if whip use is important to racing integrity by testing the cultural assumption that whip use in racing is necessary for steering and safety (Thompson et. al, 2020). In the comparison of whipping-free and whipping-permitted races, no statistically significant differences in movement on course, interference on course, incidents related to jockey behavior, or race finishing times were found (Thompson et. al, 2020).

Despite the findings listed above, opposers of whip-free racing still claim that the whip is necessary for jockey and horse safety on the track. The Jockey Guild’s chief executive, Terry Meyocks, said, “Horses are herd animals, and a lot of horses don’t pass other horses without some form of encouragement. I wouldn’t want to be put in a jock’s position that, if you don’t use it, it could cause catastrophic injuries to horse and rider.”

While there may be some truth to this, we simply have not collected sufficient information to prove this statement true or false. A controlled setting of 10 years of whip free races might change bloodlines so that horses pass each other with less motivation. It could be a worthwhile idea to evaluate.

Eoin Harty, president of the California Thoroughbred Trainers, leans more towards a compromise in the whip-permitted/whip-free debate. He told TDN, “There’s a certain element of unpredictability in there, and for the rider’s safety, they’ve got to be able to use it [the whip] if needs be, but not to abuse.”

Another issue with whip use in the Thoroughbred industry is the lack of national and international unity about the rules and regulations of whip use. For years, whip rules and regulations were vastly different depending on what country or state you were in. Fortunately, it seems like a new era is beginning to dawn on the uniformity of horse racing. On Oct. 1, 2020, new whip rules went into effect in California. The new rules state that riders are now limited to six strikes during the entirety of a single race (Anderson, 2021). Just days after California imposed more stringent restrictions, The Kentucky Horse Racing Commission adopted rules limiting whip use to a maximum six strikes during a race (Schuster, 2020). Australia has a maximum of five whip strikes per race (Racing Victoria Staff, 2020). France also has a maximum of five strikes per race (Burton, 2019) and Great Britain has a maximum of seven strikes per race (BHA, 2021). To date, Norway is the only country to have a total ban on whip use (Thompson et. al, 2020). While all whip maximum numbers may not be the same, it is promising to see the numbers becoming so close and, in some cases, (such as California and Kentucky) the numbers becoming the same.

However, the adjustment to the new rules has not been easy on everyone. Many California jockeys claim they are having a hard time adjusting to the new rules. After being fined \$1,000 and suspended three racing days, Jan. 17-18 and Jan. 22, for separate incidents of excessive whip use, Jockey Drayden Van Dyke said the violations were not intentional (Anderson, 2021).

Van Dyke said, "It's been tough, especially when you're in the heat of the battle. I've been trying to get better. It's a challenge."

From the 1st through the 10th of January, there have been 47 rulings on the daytime Thoroughbred circuit in Southern California against jockeys found in violation of the new rules, resulting in a total of \$15,050 in fines and 28 days of suspensions (Anderson, 2021). It is hard for jockeys to completely change the way they have been riding.

Van Dyke also said, "If I'm not using the whip after six times, it looks like I'm not trying. That will keep pissing people off."

Jockeys are under a lot of pressure to get their horses to win or to do the best of their ability. If owners/trainers believe they are not giving it their all, the jockey might lose his/her mount.

Then there is the public perception. Animal advocacy groups despise the use of the whip on any animal, regardless of what the purpose is. As much as the racing world would like to discredit and ignore everything they say, that is something we cannot afford to do. These groups have influence over the public.

In a poll done by the Paulick Report in 2019, a group of 4,387 participants were asked this question: What policy should be in place regarding the use of riding crops for jockeys? The results were as follows: 10.5% of respondents said that riding crops should be banned all together; 31.5% said crops should be used for safety and steering only; 17.1% said to limit the number of strikes; 26.5% said restrict the manner in which crops can be used; and 14.4% said there should be no restrictions.

As one can see, the majority of the population thinks that we need to have some sort of regulation on the use of riding crops. How the jockeys use the whip also plays a role into how the racing industry is portrayed online.

A study in the UK and Australia found that the power relationship between human and equine was more implicit on online media (Graham et. al, 2016). Power in this sense, refers to humans being the entity that

controls what happens to the horse on a day-to-day basis.

Throughout the study, some comments claimed that horses were spoken of as “slaves, pure and simple. and their purpose is to entertain. and then die.”

Another comment said, “I understand that punters, owners and trainers love horses, but that does not extend to when they become a financial burden, then there is another younger, fitter horse to love.”

This is not to say that the majority of comments on horse racing were negative (quite the opposite actually), but it is these kinds of comments/accusations that we in the racing industry need to watch out for

Perhaps jockey A P McCoy put it best when he said, “What worries me is that the views of a small minority of people, many of whom are anti-racing, anti-everything, are driving this and their views are given equal weight to those who work with horses 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

The debate on whip use will undoubtedly continue. We have come a long way as an industry with our uniformity and reforming our rules with ethics in mind. Will the whip eventually be banned? That is hard to say. I believe more studies need to take place to gather as much information as we possibly can before making any drastic decisions. Perhaps in the future we could implement some whip-free races in the United States. I think it would be a great new way to attract new fans and an interesting opportunity to evaluate just how much impact a whip has on a race.

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Money - the root of all evil

By Rain Posner

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.

“Not everyone has your best interests at heart.”

Most people hear that phrase at least once in their lives and then experience its meaning for themselves and learn its truth the hard way. Every child had at least one person that they admire, the person they think of as their role model, or hero. Ask any elementary school child the question, “Who is your hero?” and they will no doubt already have their answer prepared, along with a long explanation as to why that person is their hero and why that child wants to be like their role model someday. And while most of these role models are great people, worthy of the admiration of that child, some are unfortunately not, and the child learns a very hard lesson.

For the entirety of my childhood that I remember, if anyone asked me who my hero was, I would, without any hesitation, answer that my horse-riding trainer was my hero. She was on the highest pedestal one could possibly be on in a child’s mind. I dreamt and believed that I wanted to be her when I grew up. And while my parents were not the most supportive of my obsession with my trainer, seeing as they expected more from me than simply becoming a horse-riding instructor, my parents did still happily support my passion for horses and for teaching, and were happy to push me towards my trainer, from whom we all knew I would learn a lot. And I did. Nearly everything I know now, both as an equestrian and as a teacher-to-be, I learned from my trainer.

Unfortunately, I learned more than just the good stuff. I was so proud of my work with her, and I felt so appreciated every time she would ask me to take over a riding lesson from her or teach a summer camp’s group of riders for her in exchange for a promise of a future lesson or a free ride on one of the lesson horses. I was working nearly every day for half a day or longer at a time, in exchange for the promise of future services of which I had no interest nor need. I had no interest in taking lessons anymore, as I no longer needed them, and I had my own horse to ride, so a free ride on a lesson horse was rather useless to me. But every time my parents would mention that I was just being used as free labor, I would argue that the experience I was gaining from helping my trainer was more than good enough for me. Along with experience, my trainer promised my parents and I that for my 18th birthday, she would finally officially hire me as her new instructor for her riding school, which was my dream job at the time. I would be working in the industry I loved, doing what I loved and, most importantly, I would be working for her.

With her promise in my mind, I made sure I was always available for her, always working my hardest and always learning everything I possibly could, so that I would become her perfect employee the second my hiring was official. A few months before my 18th birthday, I reminded her of her promise to me from years before and forewarned her that the time of officially hiring me was coming soon. That was the first time I faced the realization that maybe I was just being used. I was the perfect employee already – the hardest,

most passionate worker and I was working entirely for free. So why would she bother to hire me when I was already doing everything she needed from an employee for no charge at all?

That was the beginning of a painful freefall and crash in my self-confidence and my passion for the equine industry that affected me for many years since. Even today, as I write this, I still struggle with my self-worth and have even stepped away from the industry I had promised I would work in since I can first remember anyone asking me what I wanted to do when I was older. But who is really to blame in this situation? My trainer, for leading an innocent child on for the entirety of her childhood with the promise of her dream career and using her as free labor for her paying clients? My parents, for not dragging me away at the first sign of labor abuse? Or me, for being naïve and allowing myself to be usable and expendable and arguing stubbornly with my parents who pointed out the obvious? I can't blame anyone; not my trainer, who, despite abusing me for my free hard work, gave me so many opportunities to learn and who was doing what she believes she needed to do to keep her business afloat in an expensive and unforgiving industry, nor my parents, who were just doing their best to be supportive in a less-than-ideal situation and who were unaware of the future, lasting impacts on their daughter, nor myself, a child at the time who could not have possibly known better.

Instead, I blame it on the equine industry itself for creating an environment where money matters more than riders and their horses do. It is competitive and costly, both financially and emotionally. At every horse show I have been to, both national and local, I have been hard-pressed to find anyone stress-free and just having pure fun. And just to enter these shows costs hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars. Trainers train their students to show, because having their clients show, and more importantly win, is free advertising for that trainer's work. This thought process then turns trainers to focus entirely on getting their clients "show-ready." The emphasis placed on the connection between horse and rider and the true appreciation of the art of the sport is lost as money becomes the biggest focus of everyone involved in the industry. The sad reality comes late to the naïve youth; that this industry is just, after all, a business.

If my trainer had not turned her focus away from her clients and their real passions for horses, if she had not turned her clients into money-making machines and abused the fact that they are her personal advertisements, if she had chosen to respect and appreciate her students who clearly admired her so intensely, perhaps I and her other students who praised her as our hero would not be so scarred and turned away from the equine industry. While her actions are hers alone at the end of the day, they reflect to me and to countless others what the industry really is about – money.

Exploitation of young equestrians

By Ryn Harris

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.

I have a similar equestrian journey as many people who make their way into the horse world. As a young girl, I wanted nothing more than to ride horses. From ages 5-8, my parents would take me for occasional lessons with an older woman who enjoyed teaching kids. By the time I had turned 9, the older woman had moved away and I had begun to take riding much more seriously so my parents began looking for a new place for me to lesson at. Luckily for them, the farm right up the road had just been bought out and was now offering lessons. From ages 9-12, I began riding once every two weeks and made an agreement with my parents that I could start riding every week at age 13 if I began helping with the Sunday chores at the barn. Several days after my 13th birthday, I had my very first lesson on how to muck a stall. From there I was hooked on the extra time at the barn.

Eventually, when I could drive, I made an agreement with the barn owner that I would be in charge of barn chores one day a week (occasionally two or three days a week) in exchange for one extra lesson. This story isn't unfamiliar to most equestrians who began riding at a young age, work at the barn and get paid in horse time. However, in my opinion these young people (11-15) are getting taken advantage of.

On paper, these agreements seem like a great deal for every party involved. Owners don't have to pay as much to care for their horses and students don't need to pay to be at the barn. In reality, the chores these students are asked to do can be dangerous; for example, bringing horses in and out, feeding and cleaning stalls while horses are in them. They also can take several hours to do depending on the number of students working and how many horses they are caring for. In my situation, I worked every Sunday with two to three younger girls to care for all of the horses on the property, which was between 30-40 depending on the season. It took us around seven hours to do both morning and evening chores combined. If we were each getting paid in a \$45 lesson and we worked seven hours, we each made less than \$7 an hour. That is well below the minimum wage and even less than the starting wage of \$10 an hour at most farms.

This is simply not fair to young equestrian students who are just trying to start out. They are held accountable for any issue that might occur while they are working. There are thousands of what-if scenarios of how people could be injured or sued for this type of working agreement.

During the period of time I was "working" at this farm, there were three situations that both I and the owner could have been sued. There were also countless times where I was injured but, thankfully, not seriously. This exploitation of young equestrians needs to be stopped.

I believe that as an equestrian community, we need to work together to nurture young riders and keep the industries alive. If there are people under the age of 18 working at a facility that you board at, ride at or own, you need to do your part to help make sure they aren't being taken advantage of. Anyone under the age of 16 needs to be supervised while working around horses. Someone who helps run the facility needs to be on hand to handle questions and the more dangerous aspects of horse care. This will prevent students from being taken advantage of and make barn owners/managers know that they are being watched by those in the community around them. We all want a safe community for every equestrian young and old. If you see something, say something; in the end, it's better to be safe than sorry. If you know of someone who is taking advantage of young people explain to them how they can be sued or worse.



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