

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE UK EQUINE INITIATIVE AND GLUCK EQUINE RESEARCH CENTER

Ed Squires Named New Equine Initiative Director

Ed Squires, PhD, Dipl. ACT (hon.), executive director of the UK Gluck Equine Research Foundation, the director of advancement and industry relations at the Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center, and a pioneer in equine research, has been named the University of Kentucky Equine Initiative director and Dickson Professor of Equine Science and Management beginning April 1.

Squires takes over leadership of the initiative, an umbrella program for all things equine within UK's College of Agriculture, from James MacLeod, VMD, PhD, John S. and Elizabeth A. Knight chair and professor of veterinary science at the Gluck Center.

"UK's equine program is uniquely positioned to become one of the prominent equine programs in the world," Squires said. "I look forward to this new challenge and building upon the strong base developed by the previous leadership.

"Having spent more than 30 years in an equine sciences program and being involved in teaching, research, and outreach has prepared me well for this position. One of my strengths is facilitating

people to work together," Squires added.

Squires will split his time equally between this position and his current role as executive director of the UK Gluck Equine Research Foundation and director of advancement and industry relations. He will also continue as editor of the *Journal of Equine Veterinary Science*.



Dr. Ed Squires

UK's equine stakeholders were widely supportive of Squires' new position.

"I think it is a win-win for both Gluck and the Equine Initiative," said David Switzer, executive director of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association and Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders, UK Equine Ad-

visory Committee member, and Gluck Equine Research Foundation Board member. "Ed was involved in the initial development of the Colorado State University equine program, and his fundraising for the Gluck Equine Research Center has been successful in the short time he has been here. Anytime you can get someone with his breadth of experience, it's important to take advantage of it."

"Dr. Squires brings a proven reputation of excellence coupled with vision for teaching, research, and service," said Norm Luba, executive director of the North American Equine Ranching Information Council and chair of the UK Equine Advisory Committee. "That vision will be propelled by the tremendous team effort that

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Eastern Tent Caterpillar Egg Hatch Under Way

Weed of the Month: Poison Hemlock

UK Reporting an Increase in Placentitis Cases

Student Spotlight: Kenny Burdine, MS

Nielsen Accepts Parasitology Position at Gluck Center

Invasive Plant Species' Abundance Similar at Native and Introduced Sites

UK Equine Reproductive Health Group Goals

Comprehensive Planning for Equine Organizations

Equine Career Fair

Upcoming Events

(ED SQUIRES ...)

has built a foundation for excellence in equine programming at the University of Kentucky.”

Squires is a Morgantown, W.Va., native who received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from West Virginia University and his doctorate in endocrinology and reproductive physiology at the University of Wisconsin. From 1976 to 2008, Squires was a professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences at Colorado State University.

He also is a pioneer in developing embryo

and horse breeders.

Squires has received numerous awards and honors for his research, including the Oliver P. Pennock Distinguished Service Award; the George Stubbs Award; Animal Physiology and Endocrinology Award; and Horse Person of the Year Award from the Colorado Horse Council. He was inducted into UK’s Gluck Equine Research Foundation Equine Research Hall of Fame in 2007.

“Ed has made major contributions to reproductive science in horses that have resulted in new products on the market. He also brings a vast network of supporters from many breeds as well as many sectors of the pharmaceutical industry. Most of all, Ed likes horses and horse people.”

Scott Smith, Dean of the UK College of Agriculture

transfer techniques. His other research areas include reproductive endocrinology of the non-pregnant and pregnant mare, hormonal regulation of the estrous cycle, and preservation of stallion semen. His most recent research has centered on developing assisted reproductive techniques such as oocyte collection and transfer, oocyte maturation, *in vitro* fertilization, embryo freezing, superovulation, and sexed semen.

Squires’ research efforts have resulted in 265 refereed publications, 254 nonrefereed publications, 29 book chapters, 14 books, and 118 articles. He has lectured extensively to national and international veterinary and scientific groups

“Ed has made major contributions to reproductive science in horses that have resulted in new products on the market,” said Scott Smith, PhD, dean of the UK College of Agriculture. “He also brings a vast network of supporters from many breeds as well as many sectors of the pharmaceutical industry. Most of all, Ed likes horses and horse people. He takes over the reins from the capable leadership of Jamie MacLeod and will be sharing a half-time appointment with the Gluck Equine Research Foundation. The foundation was an early catalyst for the Equine Initiative, and the initiative certainly adds breadth to the foundational

science programs in the Veterinary Science Department. We are very enthusiastic about the future of equine programs at UK.”

During MacLeod’s three years as director the Equine Initiative grew in size and scope from a Commonwealth Collaborative program to one with universitywide participation. The initiative includes more than 50 faculty and staff members from eight departments within the college, as well as key partnerships across UK and with important stakeholders in the equine industry. More than 170 undergraduate students are in its degree program, and it offers enhanced equine research and extension activities. The Equine Initiative’s mission is to discover, share, and apply new knowledge that will enhance the health, performance, and management of horses commensurate with the signature status of Kentucky’s equine industry.

“Serving as the first director of the Equine Initiative and Dickson Professor has been an honor,” MacLeod said. “I am very proud of the scope and breadth of UK’s equine programs and our ongoing commitment to collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork. The Equine Initiative has made an encouraging start, but it is just the beginning. Our dedication to academic innovation will maintain the true spirit of ‘initiative’ in the Equine Initiative, and I look forward to working with Dr. Squires on this continuing vision.” **UK**

Holly Wiemers, MS, is communications director for UK’s Equine Initiative.

Eastern Tent Caterpillar Egg Hatch Under Way

Experts report that Eastern tent caterpillar eggs have begun hatching in Central Kentucky, just as leaf buds are swelling on wild cherry trees. While it is too early to tell what 2011 caterpillar numbers will be, populations have been increasing gradually over the past several years.

Controlling Eastern tent caterpillars is vital to area breeding farms, as UK research results have strongly linked the caterpillars with Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome (MRLS) outbreaks, which can cause late-term foal losses, early-term fetal losses, and weak foals.

According to Lee Townsend, PhD, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture entomologist, the newly hatched eggs, which caterpillars laid last June, are easy to identify by the small holes tiny larva chew in them as they exit. In about two weeks the “tents” should be baseball-sized and easy to spot in trees.

Townsend urged horse farm managers to inspect wild cherry and related trees for Eastern tent caterpillar activity to determine whether management is necessary. If control measures are needed to reduce numbers, implement them before the caterpillars leave their trees.

“The small caterpillars will stay near the egg mass for a short time before moving to feed on expanding leaves. Eggs will continue to hatch through early April,” Townsend said.

WEED OF THE MONTH

Common name: Poison Hemlock
Scientific name: *Conium maculatum L.*
Life Cycle: Biennial
Origin: Eurasia
Poisonous: Extremely



Poison Hemlock

Poison hemlock is distributed across the United States and grows most frequently along fence borders in shady and moist areas. Seeds germinate in the fall or early spring, and flowering occurs May through July, depending on location. This robust plant can grow up to 10 feet tall. The leaves are alternate or basal (grow from the lowest part of the stem) and are three to four pinnately (featherlike) compound. Stems are erect, smooth, and hollow and have purple mottling. The weed is sometimes confused with wild carrot (Queen Anne’s lace), but the purple mottling is one method of distinguishing it from wild carrot.

Poison hemlock is extremely poisonous to horses and humans. All plant parts contain the poisonous alkaloids; however, the fruits contain the greatest concentration of the alkaloids. Poison hemlock gives off a bad odor when crushed, and horses rarely eat this plant because of its low palatability. Poison hemlock plants harvested with hay maintain the toxic properties; care should be taken to avoid feeding hay containing this plant.

Poison hemlock control is relatively easy with herbicides. Mowing and hand-weeding should occur well before flower production to prevent seed production. Consult your local cooperative extension service personnel (www.csrees.usda.gov/extension) for herbicidal control in your area. UK

William W. Witt, PhD, a researcher in Plant and Soil Science at the University of Kentucky, provided this information.

“Eastern tent caterpillars grow and develop as long as the temperature is above 37 degrees Fahrenheit; the warmer it is, the faster they will

grow,” he added. “Cold temperatures will slow them down, but the tent and the general cold hardness of the species will keep them from

(EASTERN TENT CATERPILLARS ...)



Five newly hatched Eastern tent caterpillar eggs are visible.

being affected drastically, even if temperatures drop below freezing at night.” Townsend said it is too early to tell if 2011 will follow the recent trend of higher caterpillar populations, but stressed that population variability occurs with many insects. It is also normal for insects to be abundant in some parts of the county and moderate to low in numbers in others.

During the 2001-2002 MRLS outbreak, an estimated 30% of that year’s Thoroughbred foal crop was lost. The state suffered an economic loss of approximately \$336 million in all breeds of horses.

In the wake of the outbreak UK researchers conducted epidemiological and field studies that

demonstrated that MRLS was associated with unprecedented Eastern tent caterpillar populations on Kentucky horse farms. Studies since the 2001-2002 outbreak have revealed that horses will eat the caterpillars inadvertently, and the caterpillar hairs then embed into the lining of the alimentary tract (which includes the pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, and colon). Once that protective barrier is breached, normal alimentary tract bacteria can gain access to and reproduce in sites with reduced immunity, such as the fetus and placenta. Fetal death from alimentary tract bacteria is the hallmark clinical sign of MRLS.

UK entomologists recommend that unless horse farm managers have been aggressive in managing Eastern tent caterpillars or removing

host trees (e.g., cherry trees), they should keep pregnant mares out of pastures bordered by hosts for the next several weeks.

Townsend offered the following recommendations for controlling moderate to large caterpillar populations if horses cannot be moved to avoid possible exposure:

“Foliar sprays for caterpillar control can be made when tents are about the size of a baseball,” he said. “Another option is the injection of trees with a systemic insecticide by commercial pesticide applicators or arborists. Regardless of the treatment used, it is important to revisit the sites in about five days to assess caterpillar activity.” **UK**

Holly Wiemers, MS, is communications director for UK’s Equine Initiative.

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY REPORTING AN INCREASE IN PLACENTITIS CASES

The University of Kentucky Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center and Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) have reported an increase in fetuses and placentas submitted to the laboratory and diagnosed with nocardioform placentitis.

This is a unique form of bacterial placentitis that affects late-gestation mares and can cause abortion, stillbirth, or foals born alive but compromised. Nocardioform placentitis was first diagnosed in Central Kentucky in the 1980s and has also been reported in other areas of the United States and abroad.

The number of nocardioform placentitis cases fluctuates from year to year. Researchers have not yet determined how mares become affected. However, nocardioform placentitis is typically a sporadic occurrence on a farm, and no evidence exists indicating affected mares pose a risk to other mares in their herd.

Mares that experience nocardioform placentitis breed back normally and are not at an increased risk for re-occurrence in subsequent pregnancies. While the number of cases has increased this year, incidence within the overall mare population is very low, with nocardioform placentitis causing less than 1% of reported abortions.

(PLACENTITIS ...)

According to researchers at UK, based on past observations it is likely that the number of cases will return to average levels in future years.

The VDL's epidemiology department constantly surveys the occurrence of animal diseases and notes and monitors any trends. A detailed epidemiological study is currently under way to identify risk factors associated with nocardioform placentitis.

"The VDL has constant surveillance for trends and emerging problems that allowed for early identification of the increase in placentitis cases," said Neil Williams, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVP, professor and associate director of the VDL. "We will continue to monitor for the occurrence of this and other problems through epidemiology and diagnostic testing. The increased capabilities for surveillance we have built in the past several years allow us to catch syndromes early."

A survey will be sent to farm managers in the near future, and results will be used to complete a first-line analysis for risk factors. UK will then distribute a report of the findings.

According to Mats Troedsson, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACT, ECAR, Gluck Center director and chair of the department of veterinary science at UK, the Gluck Center, VDL, and area veterinarians are currently engaged in collaborative research to better understand, diagnose, and treat nocardioform placentitis, as well as placentitis in general.

Farms are encouraged to submit to the lab any aborted fetus (including placenta), as well as placentas from any live foalings where the placenta is judged to be abnormal or the foal is compromised.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

To highlight equine research projects by graduate and doctorate students in the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, the Bluegrass Equine Digest newsletter will feature a different student's work in each issue.

Kenny Burdine, MS



Hometown: Nicholasville, Ky.

Degrees:

B.S., Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky, 1999

M.S., Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky, 2003

When it comes to getting an updated economic forecast for Kentucky's equine industry or understanding the economic tools horse owners have at their disposal, one of the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture's most trusted resources is Kenny Burdine, MS, a graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Economics.

Burdine is one of the key players in the group of extension economists, whose role is to help farmers reduce economic risk by providing the tools to make wise marketing and investment decisions.

Burdine currently serves as an extension marketing specialist covering beef cattle, equine, dairy, and forages. In this role he provides a market outlook and forecasting for beef, dairy, and equine industries; price risk management education for beef and dairy; and he teaches a course in livestock and meat marketing.

Kentucky horse owners might have heard Burdine speak at UK equine field day events over the past several years, where he has provided valuable economic information, including how to evaluate the cost of hay in feeding programs.

Burdine, who hails from Nicholasville, Ky., earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural economics from UK and is currently working on his PhD dissertation, which is related to factors affecting feeder cattle prices with an emphasis on Kentucky cattle. Upon completion of his PhD, Burdine plans to continue as extension marketing specialist within the department.

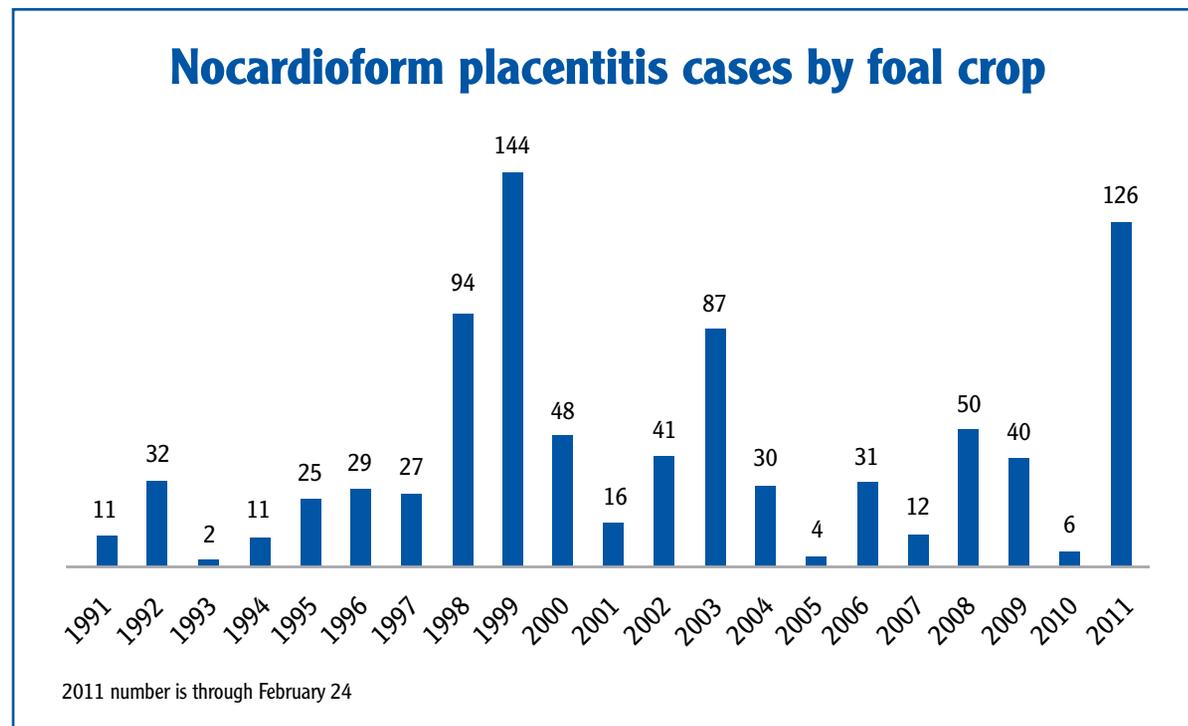
When asked why he chose to pursue his graduate degree in economics, he said, "I find economics both challenging and rewarding. I really like having the opportunity to apply economics to agriculture in an extension setting." **UK**

Holly Wiemers, MS, is communications director for UK's Equine Initiative.

(PLACENTITIS ...)

This will help researchers better understand the scope of the situation and provide research data.

To assist farms during this time of economic challenge, the cost of examination of placentas from presumptive cases of nocardioform placentitis will be waived, thanks to support from the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders and the College of Agriculture Department of Veterinary Science. Broodmare owners should limit the submission of placentas to those that are judged to be abnormal. [UK](#)



NIELSEN ACCEPTS PARASITOLGY POSITION AT THE GLUCK CENTER

Martin K. Nielsen, DVM, PhD, an assistant professor at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, has accepted an assistant professor appointment in parasitology at the University of Kentucky's Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center. Nielsen will join the UK Department

of Veterinary Science as a faculty member in August.

"The opening of a faculty position in equine parasitology at the Gluck Equine Research Center and the appointment of Dr. Martin Nielsen to this position is a response to real challenges in

parasite control as a result of increased resistance of parasites against known drugs," said Mats Troedsson, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACT, ECAR, Gluck Center director and chair of UK's Department of Veterinary Science.

"Dr. Nielsen is a young and enthusiastic veterinary scientist who already has gained international recognition for his research contributions in the field of equine parasitology," Troedsson continued. "He will bring new expertise and energy to an exceptionally strong existing team of parasitologists at the Gluck Center (Gene Lyons, PhD, and Daniel Howe, PhD), and



Dr. Martin K. Nielsen

I am confident that their combined research efforts will be of great value to the horse industry in Kentucky and around the world."

A native of Denmark, Nielsen received his doctorate in veterinary medicine from the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University and his PhD from the University of Copenhagen. Prior to his current position he was a practicing veterinarian in equine medicine at Dyrlaegegruppen Laugo v/Klavs Alexander and was a clinical veterinarian at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University.

At the University of Copenhagen, Nielsen teaches several classes, advises graduate students, is a member of the night duty emergency

(NIELSEN ...)

team, and a leader of the large animal clinical service and research laboratory.

“In an ideal scenario, where I could pick the job in the world I wanted the most, I would pick the Gluck Center,” Nielsen said. “It has the proud traditions within equine parasitology, the expertise, the resources, and the research culture.” Nielsen’s research interests include endoparasite infections of horses, clinical and molecular diagnosis, epidemiology, surveillance, and control.

“Equine parasite control is facing huge challenges these days, and many questions are arising,” Nielsen said. “With help and support from other faculty members I hope to be able to provide answers for some of these.”

Nielsen has published more than 20 scientific research papers, a book chapter, and more than 100 abstracts, poster presentations, and lay articles. In 2009 he was awarded the Young Elite Scientist Award from the Danish Research

Council. Other recent awards include the 2010 Aage and Edith Dyssegaards Foundation for high-quality research within medicine, veterinary medicine and animal production; 2008 Albert and Lorraine Clay Research Fellowship, University of Kentucky; and the 2007 AAVP-Intervet Outstanding Graduate Student Award, American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists. **UK**

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

Invasive Plant Species’ Abundance Similar at Native and Introduced Sites

Many land managers know firsthand the damage invasive plant species can do to natural resources, but no one knows exactly why these species are able to outcompete native plants.

Invasive species are common throughout the world. A long-held theory developed by biologists hypothesizes that invasive plants are more numerous in introduced sites than in their native (or home) range, because an ecological change occurs during their invasion that gives them an advantage over native plants. This theory is known as the abundance assumption.

An international team of scientists—called the Nutrient Network—that includes Rebecca McCulley, MS, PhD, a grassland agroecologist with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, tested this assumption on 26 invasive plant species at 39 grassland locations on four continents. Their results were contradictory to the abundance assumption, indicating that most species (20 of 26) had similar or lower abundances at the introduced sites than at their home range sites.

McCulley and her lab members contributed two Kentucky sites to the study: a pasture at Spindletop Farm in Lexington and Hall’s Prairie, a restored native



Some invasive species, such as Kentucky bluegrass, benefit state forage systems.

tallgrass prairie in Logan County. Eight species from both sites were considered invasive and included in the study. For the most part, McCulley’s observations about the invasive species in Kentucky fell in line with the international findings. However, two species from Spindletop—Kentucky bluegrass and plantain—were more common there than at their native sites.

“In Kentucky we don’t consider some of the species on the list (such as Kentucky bluegrass) to be invasive. They are widespread throughout the state and have proven beneficial to our forage systems,” said McCulley. “However, they aren’t native to the United States, and some states do consider them to be invasive and problematic.”

(INVASIVE SPECIES ...)

One species found in Kentucky, Canada thistle, is widely considered an invasive, noxious weed that threatens ecosystems throughout North America. Results from this study indicate this species tends to be less abundant in its invasive range than in its home site worldwide.

“The results suggest that it’s relatively unusual for invasive plants to have a population explosion at introduced sites,” McCulley said. “Instead, abundance at native sites, in most cases, can predict abundance at introduced sites.”

The scientists’ findings also held up across diverse climate zones. McCulley said sites in Kentucky, New Zealand, and Switzerland had as many as six shared invasive species, all with similar plant abundances.

These findings might help scientists speculate how new invasive species will behave once introduced to a foreign site.

The Nutrient Network’s work was funded by a research coordination network

grant from the National Science Foundation’s Division of Environmental Biology. The UK College of Agriculture helped fund McCulley’s research.

The Nutrient Network is the first group to bring together international scientists to conduct grassroots level research evaluating humans’ impact on ecological systems at nearly 40 grassland sites worldwide.

“The research was simple, but because of the global collaboration, the Nutrient Network will provide a new, global approach for addressing many critical ecological issues,” she said. “It will tell us information we need to know about invasive species and changing climates, as well as alterations to nutrient availability.”

The group’s findings were published in *Ecology Letters*. This was the network’s first published study. [UK](#)

Katie Pratt is an Agriculture Communications Specialist at the University of Kentucky.

UK EQUINE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH GROUP GOALS

The equine reproductive health group at the University of Kentucky Gluck Equine Research Center has developed a number of strategic goals to help enhance reproductive performance in horses.

Conveniently centered in the largest Thoroughbred nursery in the world, Gluck Center researchers have formed productive and important partnerships with Bluegrass horse farms and equine veterinarians. The Gluck Center also addresses the reproductive technologies used by all other breeds in Kentucky.

The reproductive health group consists of four faculty members: Barry Ball, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACT, the Albert G. Clay Endowed Chair in Equine Reproduction; Karen McDowell, PhD,

associate professor; Ed Squires, PhD, Dipl. ACT (hon.), director of the UK Equine Initiative, executive director of the UK Gluck Equine Research Foundation and the director of advancement and industry relations at the Gluck Center; and Mats Troedsson, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACT, ECAR, director of the Gluck Center and chair of the department of veterinary science at UK.

Major research program goals include:

1. Increasing pregnancy rates
 - Develop diagnostic tests to improve stallions’ semen fertility.
 - Increase the fertility of frozen-thawed stallion sperm.
 - Devise treatments to enhance the mare’s uterine defense after insemination.
2. Minimize early embryo losses (fertilization to Day 14 of pregnancy)

- Evaluate changes in genes expressed by the early embryo and uterus as a means to identify critical signals from the early embryo responsible for successful maternal recognition and establishment of pregnancy.
 - Evaluate the effects of progesterone (pregnancy hormone) on the uterine environment and early embryo survival.
3. Preventing and diagnosing later pregnancy losses (seven to nine months of gestation)
 - Improve diagnostic techniques for later pregnancy losses including endocrine testing, ultrasound evaluation, fetal fluid sampling, and inflammation markers that might be detected in the mare’s blood.
 - Improve therapeutic techniques that more specifically direct antibiotic therapy to the uterus and placenta.

(REPRODUCTIVE GOALS ...)

- Develop treatments to reduce uterine contractions that ultimately lead to abortion.
- Improved assessment of the outcomes of treatments for uterine contractions, including health of the neonate and the older foal from treated mares.

These goals will be realized by utilizing a combination of bench laboratory research, animal-based research, and field studies. Research studies will target multiple aspects of equine reproductive health with the goal of increasing equine reproductive efficiency. [UK](#)

Barry Ball, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACT, the Albert G. Clay Endowed Chair in Equine Reproduction at UK's Gluck Equine Research Center, submitted this information.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR EQUINE ORGANIZATIONS

In horse-related organizations, as in all business ventures, practical management skills are key to success. But according to Lori Garkovich, PhD, professor in the Department of Community and Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky, many equine organizations fail to answer essential and basic questions related to mission, economics, management, volunteer compensation, and fundraising, to name a few.

Garkovich, who has many years' experience advising equine partners, says that to achieve the success levels equine organizations desire, they must first consider how to build capacity

EQUINE CAREER FAIR

The third annual Equine Career Fair, co-hosted by the University of Kentucky's Equine Initiative and Georgetown College's Equine Scholars program, was held March 1. Exhibitors representing 30 area equine organizations were on hand to provide career information and networking opportunities to the more than 100 high school and college student attendees. Twenty-three students in the Kentucky Equine Management Internship program attended the event, in addition to those from Asbury College, Georgetown College, Midway College, Morehead State University, and UK. Students enjoyed free pizza and drinks and gained valuable networking experience. The next Equine Career Fair is scheduled for March 6, 2012.



More than 100 students attended the third annual Equine Career Fair.

through strategic planning, board training, support services, and by pinpointing the economic sectors they need to make use of and/or serve.

Step by Step

Equine organizations should have regular assessment and targeted planning sessions (sometimes by outside parties). Bill Chambers, chairman of the board for The League of Agricultural and Equine Centers, echoes this, citing his organization's early vision in 1997 of sharing information with individuals who run facilities that host agricultural/equine events and shows.

After what the board thought was a membership plateau in 1999, the organization has seen rapid growth over the past five years.

Chambers credits this to two key planning sessions the board implemented to address membership growth. Membership has shot up, and the organization has branched out to include two academic partnerships (resulting in a three-day Footing Academy and an in-depth course to become a Certified Manager of Equine Centers, which has enrollment of about 70), publishing, and consulting.

Garkovich also has a long history of helping equine organizations answer their capacity-related questions. She poses a rhetorical question: Would you pull up to Lowe's, Home Depot, or 84 Lumber, and ask them to fill up your truck with all the materials you need to build a house? No, of course not. You would spend time creating

(COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ...)

a comprehensive building plan, answering multiple questions about materials, form, function, and style. What is the house made of? Is it one story or two stories? How many rooms? Where are the windows? Only after considering these and other variables would you begin purchasing building materials. Equine organizations must conduct the same kind of thorough “house planning” to build their organizations.

Understanding the Mission

With a clearly understood and structurally supported mission, or “house plan,” the organization can develop a strategy. Volunteers and board members tend to get excited and push forward quickly, reflecting a tendency in life to “just do it.” This tendency leads to movement but little or no accomplishment. The mission is to create a foundation for success and growth in any sector of society; if there is no organizational strength, then there is no forward movement. Above all, organization members can’t forget the five P’s: Prior planning prevents poor performance.

Answering Basic Questions: Form, Function, Style

Even when it might seem tedious or obvious, equine organizations must answer some management topics to stay on track and fulfill expectations:

How will the organization operate? What are volunteers’ duties? What compensation will the volunteers receive? Who or what is the primary

recipient of the organization’s work? How will funds be collected? Will the board be responsible for fundraising? Who will determine the day-to-day management and forward-planning? What economic sector uses or benefits from the organization? How can that knowledge be used to an advantage?

Motivating Factors for Volunteers: The Payoff

Equine organizations, whose volunteers perform a multitude of important duties, must create comprehensive capacity-related plans. Garkovich’s particular expertise lies in her ability to combine economic realities (the need to build capacity and exploit niche economic sectors, for instance) with sociological and management issues (for example, how to “pay” volunteers with personal fulfillment or even power in the form of leadership).

Planning from the board is critical, particularly in volunteer equine operations. People who give time, money, or both need to feel there is a measurable and equitable payoff. The payoff does not have to be monetary; indeed, for many it lies more in emotional or psychological rewards. Volunteers often find personal satisfaction in holding leadership roles, helping others succeed, discovering their hidden talents, or reaching new goals. As Garkovich points out, “fulfillment of others is self-fulfillment.” Providing volunteers with vague parameters can lead to frustration or psychological and physical withdrawal. But when a board establishes clear expectations for volunteer work

and delineates clear returns for performing that work, the organization can escape the weary cynicism that stems from unclear guidelines.

Intrinsic Connection to the Mission

Deb Balliet, chief executive officer of Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR), a national organization devoted to preserving land for equestrian use, echoed Garkovich’s thoughts about a personal payoff. Balliet said she thinks ELCR members really enjoy each other, but their intrinsic interest is in the mission of land preservation for riding. Thus, she organizes daylong riding events at Shaker Village when the group meets in Kentucky, and she has noticed such a positive response to the shared activity that ELCR now also offers an optional day of riding after the organization’s retreat.

Because ELCR is a new organization, it has limited prestige among some of the other equine heavyweights. Balliet said one of ELCR’s perks is that staff members are free to pursue avenues of specific interest to answer issues that arise.

Roundtable Discussions: Who Has to Pay?

Ginny Grulke, executive director of the Kentucky Horse Council, recently held a roundtable discussion facilitated by Garkovich on trail riding fees. Trails are an important resource for horses and riders, yet they are underfunded and served by a small number of devotees. Opening a discussion about how to foot the bill for trail

(COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ...)

maintenance offered KHC an opportunity to seek innovative ideas and bounce around different fee structures. The roundtable conversation also revealed the threshold that people are willing to pay. Still under discussion, trail riding fee ideas included a bridle hang-tag, a one-time-use pass, and yearly rates ranging from \$35-\$75.

Investing in trails through this kind of hang-tag funding can increase agritourism visits based on trail riding, noted Garkovich. Increased tourism

adds more dollars to the economy at multiple levels. And at a time when people are counting pennies, every dollar counts. When organizations implement thorough and careful planning that engages constituents and clearly defines goals, whether long- or short-term, even major changes such as the adoption of trail fees can be implemented smoothly. **UK**

Karin Pekarchik is an editorial officer in Agricultural Communications Services.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 31, 6 p.m.

Distinguished Industry Lecture Series, Ted Bassett, author of "Ted Bassett: My Life," Gluck Equine Research Center Auditorium

April 1-2

Horsemanship clinic and hands-on body condition scoring training sessions

April 12, 5 p.m.

UK Equine Internship Appreciation Reception, Spindletop Hall

April 25

UK Horse Racing Club's Trainers Panel, "The Derby Experience"



UK Equine Initiative presents

Keeneland's Ted Bassett

moderated by Dan Liebman

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