

# WILDCAT CANTER

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY AG EQUINE PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

More than 400 participants capitalized on the chance to apply professional skills they've learned in their classes to real-world networking at the Kentucky Signature Industries Career and Opportunity Fair.

For Gillian Guerra, being involved with Thoroughbred racing's highest echelons is more than just a career step.

UK, The Bill Gatton Foundation and Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment present The Bill Gatton Foundation Speaker Series: The Human-Animal Bond, starting Nov. 4.



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The University of Kentucky, The Bill Gatton Foundation and Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment invite the UK campus along with the local and state community to The Bill Gatton Foundation Speaker Series: The Human-Animal Bond, starting Nov. 4.



## UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Nov. 2-3 ~ Weekend of Service  
Nov. 6 ~ Experience Equine Day  
Nov. 8-10 ~ Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup  
Dec. 5 ~ Internship Showcase  
Dec. 19 ~ Graduation Reception  
Feb. 15 ~ Pre-Vet Experience Day

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



# WELCOME

My name is Korie Burgess and I have the pleasure of serving as the academic advisor for students in the Equine Science and Management program. In my role, I meet with students once a semester to discuss their interests, involvement around and across campus, career interests, experiential learning opportunities and class registration.

I am not far removed from the college experience myself, as I graduated from Auburn University in May 2021 and received my Master's in Agricultural and Extension Education and Evaluation from Louisiana State University in May 2023. There, I worked as a graduate assistant during my first year and mostly worked on research within agriculture education. After my first year, I knew I needed a change and began working as the graduate assistant for Louisiana 4-H. In this position, I worked to oversee the state enrollment system and facilitated trainings and tech support. I realized I missed interacting with students and knew I needed to go back to working alongside them. Now, here I am!



In the advising world, there are many theories and philosophies that drive our work. Personally, I operate within the developmental advising philosophy. Essentially, developmental advising goes beyond discussing classes. Instead, it focuses on the holistic development of students and meeting each student where they are, academically, personally and professionally. In addition, it focuses on fostering relationships so that both parties have a responsibility in the decision-making process. Since I was in their shoes not too long ago, I understand the importance of having someone invested in my development as a student, a professional and as a leader in the agriculture industry.

Like I've said, developmental advising not only focuses on fostering a relationship, but contributing to one's holistic development. Because of COVID, we have seen a national spike in mental health concerns. Students are continuing to be impacted by anxiety, depression, self-isolation, discrimination and substance use. It is because of this mental health epidemic that I find it increasingly imperative to foster trustworthy relationships with each student so that I can serve as a sounding board for these concerns. We have many resources across campus that are equipped to handle these concerns and I act as a bridge between students and these resources.

In addition to the mental health crisis, 75% of our student population within the program are out-of-state students. Our Fall 2024 cohort is comprised of 29 different states and two countries. While our in-state population seems to be increasing, our out-of-state students continue to experience the majority of barriers. Some of these barriers include, but are not limited to, financial costs, belongingness, homesickness, academic preparation and transportation. As an advisor, I see myself as a "go to" contact about these barriers so that I can connect students with campus resources. Rest assured, our university is equipped to combat these barriers and students have many opportunities to seek and receive assistance.

On a more positive side of my job, I get to develop relationships with some incredible young adults. These students are talented, driven, intelligent and high achieving. The absolute best part of my job is watching these students grow in their talents, skills and career interests. I have seen them come in as quiet, unknowing first-year students and am watching them leave as incredible young professionals ready to change the world and the equine industry. While barn management and veterinary medicine are popular aspirations, students continue to widen their interests and desired impacts within the equine industry. Our curriculum is flexible and versatile enough that our students are being exposed to many opportunities outside their original career interests and it is so inspiring to see and witness.

Perhaps the most encouraging thing to witness is watching students participate in a class, or internship, or job opportunity that perfectly suits them. To see their smile and spirit be one of pure happiness makes it hard to deny the smile on my own face. I have been that student who has no idea what I want to do and know the stress it can project. To see students come out of that space and finally find their footing within the industry is truly moving. These students will become incredible trainers, veterinarians, lawyers, researchers, educators, entrepreneurs, business owners, breeders, geneticists, chiropractors, rehabilitators and so much more! If I can impact them as much as they impact me, then I can confidently say I have done my job and I have done it well. It truly is an honor to be included in such a wonderful network and I cannot wait to see the lasting impact these students leave on others' lives.

KORIE BURGESS  
ESMA ACADEMIC ADVISOR



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*In addition to this publication, UK Ag Equine Programs has other reads in its publication stable. Check out the latest issues of the Equine Science Review or the Graduate Gallop or subscribe here.*



# UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS WELCOMES INTERNS LORALYE PAGE AND SARAH ZIESE



PHOTO COURTESY LORALYE PAGE.

Growing up in a military family, having access to horses wasn't always possible, so I have been so grateful for the opportunity that UK Ag Equine Programs has given me to get my start in the equine industry. Without it, I never would have thought it possible to step into this industry with as little experience as I had.

Going forward, I hope that this program can offer that same experience to many more students like me and I would love to have had a helping hand in that. Through this degree program, I have gotten to shadow, interview and intern with many industry partners of UK Ag Equine Programs.

My name is **Loralye Page**, and I am an Equine Science and Management senior. I am so excited to be one of the new interns for the program. With this internship, I am excited to get to know more of the program's staff and help with all the events that they plan and attend. Having been a Wildcat Wrangler for the previous two years, I have had the opportunity to help with many of these events, so I am looking forward to seeing them from a different perspective.

This internship will give me many opportunities for networking and resume building. In my time here, I would like to leave the program better than when I found it and to improve the program for the students to come. Being in my senior year, I have seen what has and hasn't worked, meaning I can lead other students down the path of success. I also have the unique opportunity as the president of the IHSA Western Equestrian Team to be in the office with our team advisor where we will be able to improve the team and provide them with more opportunities for networking and growth.

Being a student in the program, I have frequented the office, and it's always been nice to see a familiar face sitting at the front desk. I hope to be that familiar face for the students walking through the door this semester. Whether they are coming in for career advising or to pick up flyers, my goal is for those students to always feel welcome and to have easy access to all that they need. I also look forward to the lasting connections I will make while here in the office; everyone here is someone I wish to stay connected with well after graduation. The atmosphere of the UK Ag Equine Programs office is one that I hope to add to and amplify.

From my first day on campus freshman year, I could tell that there was something special about this program. They care about who we are as individuals and that has proven itself time and time again with how everyone here goes above and beyond to help us students get where we need to go. I look forward to calling myself a part of this team and continuing to foster this family style atmosphere so that everyone feels welcome and supported in this office!



Hello! My name is **Sarah Ziese**. I am from a small Western North Carolina town called Laurel Springs, in Ashe County. I am a senior majoring in Equine Science and Management and minoring in Agricultural Economics.

Originally, I had attended Appalachian State University to pursue a degree in graphic design. I was a yearbook kid in high school, so, I thought this would be the perfect path for me. However, I was missing being involved with horses and it had always been a dream of mine to go to UK. As soon as I toured, I knew this was the right place for me! Next thing I knew, I was loading up my two Paint horses to haul them to Kentucky.

After one semester here, I got a job at Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital. I spent a year there as a nursing tech, loved it, and then parted ways to experience other things in the industry. I still do not know what I want to do as a career, so, I thought it would be good to gain experience in a variety of things, to get a better understanding of what I do and do not like.



PHOTO COURTESY SARAH ZIESE.

I got into photography at a young age. My mom was always behind a camera, which inevitably had me interested and wanting to do the same thing. I took pictures of flowers, dogs, friends and then, eventually, sports in high school. My photography evolved as I grew up, and now I am \*very slowly\* launching a part time photography business. Equine sports photography has always been my favorite because of horses and the challenge of fast-moving subjects. However, I am still learning and want to photograph as many things as possible to get better and expand my portfolio. In fact, I just shadowed my first wedding shoot this fall and was very pleased from the feedback.

Outside of school and photography, my interests include anything to do with coffee, thrifting, loving on my two cats and, of course, horseback riding. I tried out for the UK Hunt Seat Team my first year at UK and did not make it, but I came back for a second time and ended up making it! There was an opening for the team's public relations chair. I believed this was the perfect opportunity to combine graphic design, photography and horses. I was voted into the position. As PR chair, I control all the team's social media accounts as well as photography and videography. I love showing off the team!

One thing I knew I wanted to learn more about was the racing industry. In one of my classes I met a girl, Sydney Richmond, who later came to me about reviving the UK Horse Racing Club (HRC). She said it had been shuttered due to COVID and there had been no effort to bring it back. I told her it would be a learning experience for me, but it sounded like a good idea. She took the reins, so to speak, and we are now the president and vice president for the HRC. As VP, I overlook chair positions as well as assisting Sydney with anything she needs done. My favorite activity we have done so far was touring WinStar Farm.

The entire time I have been at UK I have felt so welcomed by Ag Equine Programs, so I am excited to be part of the team! I am looking forward to bringing new ideas to the office and expanding my knowledge of different media outlets.





# UK SIGNATURE INDUSTRIES CAREER FAIR SUCCESSFULLY PRESENTS JOB SEEKERS WITH EQUINE AND DISTILLING OPPORTUNITIES

By Holly Wiemers, Photos by Matt Barton



More than 400 participants capitalized on the chance to apply professional skills they've learned in their classes to real-world networking at the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Kentucky Signature Industries Career and Opportunity Fair. The annual event featuring two of the state's most iconic industries, equine and bourbon, was held Sept. 26 at the Gatton Student Center.

Attendees represented 75 UK majors and academic programs as well as six other universities. Participants met with more than 65 recruiters UK and employers from the equine and distilling industries.

According to Savannah Robin, UK Ag Equine Programs lecturer of career and professional development and event co-organizer, the fair continues to evolve to serve student and industry needs.

"I am so thrilled to see this event continue to grow. Our students and campus are seeing the vast opportunities within both industries, and that networking is essential to finding their space within them," she said. "Standing back to observe our students shining as industry professionals at this event is one of the highlights of my year. I am so proud of the work they put into growing their professional skill set throughout their time in the program." For equine senior and soon-to-be graduate AJ McCoy, attending the fair was valuable.

"It was a fantastic experience. It gave me a chance to connect with potential employers, explore different career paths and sharpen my networking skills. I found it helpful to have direct conversations with recruiters and learn what companies are looking for in new hires, which will help me in the future," he said. "I'd encourage other students to make the most of these opportunities, even if they're unsure about their career goals. It's a great way to get exposure, ask questions and build confidence in professional settings. You never know what connections you might make."



For one alum, attending a past fair led to her current position in the distilling industry.

"I'll admit, I was one of those students who thought professors were overhyping the career fair. But I was proven wrong!" said Cynthia Wells, operations and leadership development professional at Northwest Ordinance Distilling. "The Kentucky Signature Industries Career and Opportunity Fair completely changed my perspective. It was such a great experience and directly helped me land my internship, which ultimately led to the job I have today at the Sazerac Company. I had a strong resume, but so did other students. Attending the career fair well-prepared and dressed professionally allowed me to put a face to my experience and really stand out. I spent time chatting with the Sazerac table and others, showing them who I am beyond my resume. That personal connection made all the difference." Wells graduated from the Gatton College of Business and Economics with a business degree focusing on marketing and management. She added a certificate in distillation, wine and brewing as well as a minor in international business.

The impact of both industries on the state is significant. The most recent Kentucky Equine Survey reported the state is home to 209,500 horses on 31,000 operations with \$2.1 billion in total income from sales and services. According to the most recent Kentucky Distillers' Association study, the bourbon industry generates more than 23,100 jobs, with annual wages and salaries of \$1.63 billion, producing \$9 billion of economic output. It is estimated that Kentucky produces and ages 95 percent of the bourbon sold in the world.

"Kentucky's important cultural heritage in both areas reflects a long and deep history. Horses and distilled spirits truly are signature industries for the Commonwealth," said James MacLeod, UK Ag Equine Programs' director and professor in the Department of Veterinary Science. "The growth and diversity of career opportunities across multiple STEM, social and business disciplines is evident. In addition to their historical and cultural significance, these two industries will continue to provide valuable economic opportunities for Kentucky citizens."

Equine junior Angelina Sonoqui was one of the attendees who was enthusiastic about the opportunities the fair presented.

"I have been going to the Equine Career and Opportunity Fair the past three years and have always left with several business cards and new opportunities. This most recent career fair granted me the opportunity to speak with past employers and network with new internship and job opportunities," she said. "Being an equine student interested in the law and policy aspect of the industry, I was happy to see that there were a number of organizations there that I was able to network with. I am very grateful that Ag Equine Programs puts this on every year, and I believe every student should take advantage of this amazing opportunity."







Katie Christensen, a junior studying agricultural and medical biotechnology, violin performance and the distillation, wine and brewing sciences certificate, attended for the second time this year.

“As a DWB student, I always find that I learn more about the industry and learn about new opportunities that I hadn’t considered at the career fair. For example, I learned that there are research and development internship opportunities that I could have only hoped for,” she said. “Even if you’re not sure if you’re ready for an internship, the career fair is a great place to network and connect with faculty, future employers and other students interested in the field.”

For more information, including a list of employers and details about next year’s event, visit <https://students.ca.uky.edu/KY-signature-industries>.





# 'RIDE OF A LIFETIME': UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY STUDENT LIVING OUT DREAM AT THE BREEDERS' CUP

By Jordan Strickler

The alarm goes off at 3:50 every morning, seven days a week, but Gillian Guerra doesn't mind. The University of Kentucky freshman has gotten used to rising early, juggling her classwork and working as an advisor at Doug O'Neill's racing barn at Keeneland Race Course. Each dawn signals the start of another day surrounded by a sport she's cherished since she was a little girl.

"It's been incredible to be this involved," she said. "[Former employer] Mark Davis and Doug have really made me feel like part of the team. This has been a dream come true. I'm learning so much, and every step of the way, it just deepens my passion for this sport."

The San Diego native's love for horse racing began when she was just 4 years old as she watched Zenyatta thunder down the stretch to win the 2009 Breeders' Cup Classic, an event that left a lasting impression. By the time American Pharoah crossed the wire to win the Triple Crown in 2015, Guerra knew she wanted to be part of the racing world.

Guerra has been around horses for most of her life, but being part of their rise to the world stage is a dream she couldn't have imagined when she first started waking up before the sun rose.

At age 18, she's working alongside O'Neill and Davis and living that dream with not just one but two Breeders' Cup contenders. Two horses competing at the upcoming historic Breeders' Cup World Championships is an impressive feat, even the most seasoned veterans in the sport.

Raging Torrent, the most recent winner of the Grade 2 Pat O'Brien Stakes at Del Mar, is now bound for the 2024 Breeders' Cup Sprint at Del Mar Racetrack, just north of Guerra's hometown. Another horse, So There She Was, drew into the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies. Both are currently stabled at Santa Anita in Los Angeles.

Guerra's connection to the horses runs deep. The two Breeders' Cup contenders represent more than just talented racehorses to her.

However, no horse captures her heart more than the one she just calls "Torrent."

## Early mornings and racing dreams

The relationship between Guerra and Raging Torrent began at Florida's Ocala Breeders' Sale of Two-Year-Olds in Training in April 2023, where Guerra, O'Neill and Davis spotted the colt.

"We marked a few horses we were excited to see, and Torrent was one of them," Guerra recalled. "He was gorgeous, one of those horses that you notice right away. We were shocked we got him for \$75,000—he looked like he should've gone for much more."

In an industry where horses can sell for millions, \$75,000 was indeed a bargain.

From the start, Raging Torrent showed promise. A large horse, he is built to go longer distances. At first, the team considered him for these races, even eyeing a road to the Kentucky Derby. But as the races and training went on, it became clear that while Raging Torrent had the size for two turns, his real gift was speed.



GILLIAN GUERRA, LEFT, PICTURED WITH THE FILLY SO THERE SHE WAS IS LIVING A LIFE EVEN THE MOST SEASONED RACING VETERANS HAVE ONLY DREAMT ABOUT. PHOTO BY ERNIE BELMOTE/PAST THE WIRE (PASTTHEWIRE.COM).

"Torrent's got this incredible burst of speed, and while he's built like he could stretch out, he just loves those one-turn races," Guerra said. "He won his first race at Del Mar, and from that point, we knew he had something special."

Raging Torrent's versatility has been key to his success. He came from off the pace to claim victory in his maiden win, showing he could handle different race strategies. But these days, Guerra said, he prefers to take control.

That self-driven speed earned Raging Torrent his spot in the Breeders' Cup Sprint. After his win in the seven-furlong Pat O'Brien Stakes, the colt was eligible for the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile, but the team decided to focus on the six-furlong Sprint.

"I think the Sprint is a great spot for him," Guerra said. "He's a one-turn specialist, and while he might stretch out as he gets older, right now this is where he shines."

### From passion to profession

Guerra was first drawn to the Bluegrass State and the UK Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment for the Equine Science and Management program.

"For those interested in a life in the horse racing industry, where are you going to go besides UK?" she said. "There are other colleges out there, but I think UK is one of the best."

For Guerra, being involved in the careers of Raging Torrent and So There She Was rise is more than just a career step. Her relationship with Davis, the colt's co-owner, started years before they teamed up in racing. Guerra used to work at Davis's restaurant, and their shared love for racing brought them together. Davis had always admired her knowledge of pedigrees, especially at such a young age.

"Mark really trusts me to handle a lot of the decisions when it comes to the horses," Guerra said. "He jokes that I'm 'the boss,' but it's true—I'm often the one discussing strategy with Doug. Whether it's picking out horses at the sales or deciding which races we should target, Mark leaves a lot of that in my hands, which is amazing considering how much he's invested in this."

With Guerra's help, Davis began his horse ownership journey, and it has since grown into a 14-horse operation, with Davis even planning to buy a farm in Kentucky. But Guerra said Raging Torrent remains among his favorites.

Alicia Benben, academic coordinator for UK Ag Equine Programs Equine Science and Management program said Guerra has a great road ahead of her.

"As an instructor, it is deeply rewarding to be part of a student's professional and academic journey," she said. "Gillian's dedication to both her education and her passion for racing is inspiring. She exemplifies the balance of hard work and commitment, starting her mornings early with trainer Doug O'Neill and then diving into her academic responsibilities without skipping a beat. Her energy and focus are impressive, and it's clear that she is on an exciting path both in and out of the classroom."

### Eyes on the future

As Guerra prepares for the Breeders' Cup, she reflects on how far she's come. But she's not stopping here. With her sights set on a future in the bloodstock industry—or perhaps even training or vet school—Guerra is soaking up every lesson from this experience.

As the two horses prepare to tackle the Breeders' Cup, Nov. 1 and 2, Guerra is excited about what the future holds.

Whether the two horses triumph in their respective races or not, they have already cemented themselves as stars in the team's stable and hearts. And for Guerra, the journey is just beginning.

"This has been the ride of a lifetime, but I know it's only the start," Guerra said. "These horses have already given me so much. I'm excited to see what comes next—for all of us."

# UK Ag Equine Programs Weekend of Service

*Save the Date*

*Register by Oct. 27*



## *Proudly Serving*

- African Cemetery No. 2
- BraveHearts Equine Center
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- Masterson Equestrian Trust
- Our Mims Retirement Haven

Join us for a weekend of equine-related volunteer activities

*Transportation available*

*Sign up using the QR code or follow this link:*



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0B4CAFAB2FABFA7-52019727-equine#/>



UK Ag Equine Programs' annual service event benefiting Lexington's equine community returns Nov. 2-3 for a Weekend of Service. All UK Ag Equine Programs faculty, staff, students, alums and friends are welcome and encouraged to participate.



**PRE-VETERINARY EXPERIENCE DAY**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15 | THOROUGHBRED TRAINING CENTER

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

*Organized by the University of Kentucky in collaboration from the Kentucky Horse Council and made possible by industry partners.*



The popular Pre-Veterinary Experience Day returns Feb. 15, 2025, at the Thoroughbred Training Center in Lexington, Kentucky. Organized by the University of Kentucky in collaboration with the Kentucky Horse Council and made possible by industry partners, the event is designed for college students interested in a career in veterinary medicine. This year's event features more exploratory tracks and more available seats. Registration will open Dec. 2 and the event is expected to quickly fill again. The registration fee of \$25 will cover breakfast, snack and networking lunch, along with entry into the morning seminars, panel sessions and one afternoon focus site. Focus sites include practices and professionals focusing on equine, large animal, small animal, mixed animal practice, government/regulatory and wildlife veterinary medicine. Sponsorship opportunities are also available to businesses and organizations. For more information or to be placed on a notification list when registration opens, please visit <https://afs.ca.uky.edu/students/pre-vet/pre-vet-experience-day>.



# UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS PARTICIPATES AT INAUGURAL SPY COAST EQUICONNECT EVENT

Photos by Sarah Ziese



UK Ag Equine Programs participated in the inaugural EquiConnect: Community Equine Day Oct. 19. The event was created by Spy Coast Farm to provide a space for the local community to make resource connections and learn about the equine industry.

According to organizers, 460 participants were on hand to learn more from the nearly 40 equine and local community organizations and businesses. Demos about equestrian sport were also held throughout the day.

## 'CHANGING THE FACE OF AGRICULTURE': UK TO HOST 2024 JUNIOR MANRRS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

By Christopher Carney

The University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Office of Access, Community and Engagement (ACE) welcome all Kentucky students in grades 7-12 to the 13th annual Junior MANRRS Leadership Institute.

Set for Dec. 6-7 and themed "I Am Because You Are," this event aims to inspire students towards a career in science, technology, engineering, agriculture or mathematics (STEAM) fields. The UK Junior MANRRS program encourages young students to attend college and pursue degrees in agriculture, natural resources and environmental science.



"The Junior MANRRS Leadership Institute offers middle and high school scholars a unique opportunity to explore the University of Kentucky and the wider agriculture industry," said Kendriana Price, assistant dean for

community relations and engagement at Martin-Gatton CAFE. "We're excited to welcome these young minds for a weekend of exploration, connection and community building as we change the face of agriculture by linking hands around the world."

By attending, Kentucky middle schoolers and high school youth can:

- Gain exposure to prominent brands in the agriculture industry
- Connect with local minority-owned businesses
- Participate in professional and academic workshops
- Engage in small-group networking sessions
- Build relationships with other students
- Network with UK staff and faculty
- Engage with academic departments at UK/Martin-Gatton CAFE



In addition, interested youth can participate in several contests, including a quiz bowl, written essay, mock interview, impromptu speaking and public speaking. The full event agenda, including contest registration, can be found [here](#).

Since Junior MANRRS Leadership Institute's inception, more than 30 students have pursued their interest in STEAM—declaring a major in agriculture, natural resources or environmental sciences degree at Martin-Gatton CAFE.

"MANRRS is more than just an organization, it's a family that lifts each other," said Myka Smith-Jackson, UK MANRRS/Junior MANRRS chair. "I hope participants walk away from this year's event knowing that no matter where your college journey takes you, the MANRRS family will be there to support you every step of the way." Registration is now open for youth participants, chapter advisors, extension agents, UK MANRRS members, sponsors and volunteers. There is a \$10 registration fee, which can be paid in person during the conference or by sending a check payable to MANRRS, attention of Kendriana Price, 305 Charles E. Barnhard Building, Lexington, KY 40546.

For more information and to register, visit <https://ace.ca.uky.edu/events/uk-junior-manrrs-leadership-institute>. Registration deadline is Nov. 15, and the contest submission deadline is Nov. 22.



# UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY PRESENTS THE INAUGURAL COMPANION ANIMAL SPEAKER

By Christopher Carney

The University of Kentucky, The Bill Gatton Foundation and Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment invite the UK campus along with the local and state community to The Bill Gatton Foundation Speaker Series: The Human-Animal Bond, starting Nov. 4.

This speaker series is designed to inform and inspire attendees about the human-animal bond by identifying the important linkage of improving the lives of companion animals and humans. Furthermore, the series will explore relationships and collaborations between practice, policy and academia.



To begin this series, Kate Shoveller, professor in the Department of Animal Biosciences at the University of Guelph, will be presenting on the topic “From Hooves to Paws to Hands: Interconnectivity in the Pursuit of Innovation.”

Shoveller’s presentation will further explore the need for collaboration across multiple sectors—government, industry, healthcare, academia and the public—to improve the lives of companion animals and human life.

“We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Shoveller as one of the inaugural speakers in The Bill Gatton Foundation Speaker Series,” said Nancy Cox, Martin-Gatton CAFE dean. “Dr. Shoveller’s data-driven research on enhancing the lives of companion animals and their human counterparts perfectly aligns with Bill Gatton’s vision of promoting and supporting the human-animal bond.”

The event will be at the Gluck Auditorium in the Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center building on campus, beginning at 12:30 p.m. and concluding at 1:30 p.m. with a light reception to follow.

Visit [ca.uky.edu/gatton-foundation-speaker-series](https://ca.uky.edu/gatton-foundation-speaker-series) to register. Registration deadline is Oct. 28.

The series continues Nov. 6 with an additional talk by Shoveller titled, “Checking our Pulse: The Use of Pulses in Dog Food.” Taylor Richardson, research assistant studying under Shoveller, will also present on “The Pursuit for an Alternative Oil: Comparing the Dietary Supplementation of Camelina, Flax and Canola Oils to Dogs and Horses.” The speaker series serves as a foundation for launching the future Companion Animal Studies undergraduate certificate program at Martin-Gatton CAFE. Slated for fall 2025, pending approval, the certificate will provide UK students with a comprehensive understanding of the roles and significance of companion and working animals in society—encompassing topics such as animal care, management and well-being, and the human-animal bond. For questions or information on the Companion Animal undergraduate certificate program, email [CAFEadvising@uky.edu](mailto:CAFEadvising@uky.edu).

Bill Gatton, who bestowed a transformational \$100 million gift through The Bill Gatton Foundation in 2023, was a believer in the power of the human-animal bond. He passionately supported further exploration of the role of companion animals in all aspects of human health and well-being.

University of Kentucky alum and former trustee Carol Martin “Bill” Gatton bestowed a transformational \$100 million gift to the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment through The Bill Gatton Foundation. It is the largest gift to the university in its history.

Four Pillars of The Bill Gatton Foundation’s Gift are Scholarships and Student Success Initiatives; Companion Animal Program; Capital Projects and New Initiatives Fund; and Faculty Research.

At the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, we recognize that our lives as humans are closely connected with animals. As such, we are committed to developing a globally recognized program centered on the land-grant mission and focused on research, instruction and outreach related to companion animals.



## Horse Capital: Behind the scenes with the UK eventing team

*Source: edited Oct. 11 WUKY story by Samantha Lederman*

Even if you're not from Central Kentucky you may be familiar with the University of Kentucky's basketball Wildcats, or you might have heard that we're famous for being the Horse Capital of the World. WUKY's Samantha Lederman recently attended a fundraiser for the University of Kentucky Eventing Team who are combining the best of both worlds.

The UK Eventing Team numbers about 100 with a ratio of roughly 70 to 30 of competing riders to social members. It's the largest intercollegiate eventing team in the country.

Callia Englund, a marketing and management major in her senior year is the current President of the UK Team. She moved here from Washington State to attend college and has seen the team flourish in the last four years. The equestrian teams are all self-funded. Englund oversees six other Eventing Team officers and acts as the main point of communication for all the members and also the university which has to approve every competition. She estimates she probably spends three hours daily running the team, and also competes her horse alongside her regular college commitments.

The UK Eventing Team won the annual Intercollegiate Team Championships in 2021, and last year they brought the prestigious Spirit Award home to Kentucky. That's hardly surprising as this is a strong, supportive and very special community.

Grace Dilger, a sophomore studying marketing, was on that winning team last year; she's riding her ex-racehorse Whole Nine Yards, or Niner, this afternoon and would love to go back to the Championships again next May. Whole Nine Yards is by the 2005 Kentucky Derby winner Giacomo.

Grace's horse Niner's breeding is almost impeccable as her own; she grew up here in Lexington and in fact, I interviewed Grace's dad Gerry many years ago after Always Dreaming, a horse he bred, won the Kentucky Derby. The Eventing Team, Dilger says, definitely factored into her decision to attend UK.

It's not just the students who are flocking to UK and Lexington. Trainer and Coach Beth Brown moved her business and her family here from California three years ago.

Brown runs a busy training and boarding facility on Russell Cave Road and the majority of her clients are UK Eventing students; she'll admit she's still adjusting to Kentucky winters but has no regrets.

You don't need to preach Kentucky for horses to Cathy Wieschoff – she is the OG of Kentucky Eventing, based out of Carriage Station Farm on Old Frankfort Pike. Wieschoff is a trainer, coach, course designer and local eventing legend and has watched the program gain momentum with pleasure and pride.

One of the teams competing in the gala this afternoon is made up of alumni, and all four team captains are successful professional event riders who are now based here in Lexington. Along with parents, family, sponsors, owners and fans they've all come together to support and cheer their Wildcats on, an enduring Kentucky tradition.

Listen to the story and read more at <https://www.wuky.org/2024-10-11/horse-capital-behind-the-scenes-with-the-uk-eventing-team>

## Exploring KY: Hoofbeats Across the Mountains

Source: Oct. 14 Lane Report story by Katherine Tandy Brown

When you hear the term “free roaming,” a vision of herds of buffaloes thundering across the Great Plains or wild ponies galloping the beaches of Chincoteague and Assateague Islands off Virginia’s eastern shore may come to mind. But did you know that Eastern Kentucky’s Appalachian Mountains are home to free-roaming horse herds so large that an organization has been created to care for them?

These free roaming steeds mainly wander nine counties in the area: Breathitt, Knott, Perry, Magoffin, Martin, Floyd, Pike, Leslie and Harlan, with a few making it into Letcher and Clay counties. However, the largest herd is in Breathitt County, where herds can be found within a short drive of Jackson, the county seat.

Since 2014, volunteers have been photo documenting most of the herds and have inventoried more than 500 horses in the nine-county area.

Enter the Appalachian Horse Project (AHP), a nonprofit 501(3)c volunteer organization that partners with Eastern Kentucky officials, landowners, horsemen and animal lovers to ensure that the traditional practice of allowing horses to roam free in the mountain counties continues in a responsible way. Any herds of unowned horses are managed to a healthy, sustainable level, while unhealthy individuals are culled. Surprisingly, free-roaming horses appear to be doing better than some of their fellow animals kept in stalls or in small, enclosed paddocks with limited feed. The occasional underweight horse often reflects an owner that could no longer afford to feed it and has recently turned it out, or the animal is quite old and unable to chew the grasses or hay provided.

Even though the herds appear to have no owners, many of the horses are owned by locals who check on them regularly, though some were abandoned after the 2008 recession. Any horse pastured in these hills is free to roam wherever it likes. This practice began years ago because there’s little flat land in the mountains and very little pasture. After a coal company has finished working a tract of land, the company must “reclaim” it to get back bond money put on the property, so the land would be reseeded, creating a perfect environment for horses. However, the companies were having a hard time getting their money back because horses were grazing it down to the dirt, and they were having a hard time proving the land had been reclaimed.

Initially by gentlemen’s agreement, locals would only use this pasture for grazing mares and geldings (castrated males), turning them “out to pasture” on the flat terrain in the spring and bringing them up in the fall. The fact that no one allowed stallions to roam free was an unspoken rule. Once a male foal grew into stallion hood, owners would take him home. But with the economic downturn, the coal industry declined. People couldn’t afford to keep and feed horses at home. So, the number of horses living on the reclaimed property increased. Stallions would breed mares, creating foals, and causing a big challenge for AHP: overpopulation. Unchecked, the growing equine population could become a real concern. Reducing the stallion population is a current goal.

To establish numerical equilibrium in the area, the AHP—in partnership with the Kentucky Horse Council, the University of Kentucky and local veterinarians—has sponsored gelding clinics in the region to decrease the number of stallions. In addition, local horse owners are getting involved, to ensure that none of their stallions are allowed to roam free, which in turn should slow the growing equine population.

Read more here: <https://www.lanereport.com/177242/2024/10/exploring-ky-hoofbeats-across-the-mountains/>



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