

SPRING 2025 EDITION

# WILDCAT CANTER

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PROGRAMS  
HOSTS ANNUAL  
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# HIGHLIGHTS



## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE, UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS HOSTED AN ALUMNI REUNION APRIL 12

Attendees were provided food, drinks and complimentary tickets to the races that day. Additionally, all alums who attended were given their special anniversary edition of an Ag Equine Programs lapel pin.

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## UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS HOSTED SUCCESSFUL 4TH ANNUAL UK HORSEY HUSTLE 5K APRIL 13

The event serves as a fundraiser for the Student Experience and Applied Education Fund as well as UK equine-focused clubs and teams. This year's event hosted 75 participants and raised more than \$8,000.

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## EXPERIENCE EQUINE DAY HELD APRIL 25

The Spring 2025 Experience Equine Day was held April 25 for prospective students to learn more about UK's Equine Science and Management degree program. Held at Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital, a total of 14 prospective students representing eight states (3 KY, 3 VA, 2 WV, 1 IL, 1 IN, 1 NC, 1 OH, 1 TX) and one country outside the U.S. (Australia) joined in.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 36*

## UPCOMING EVENTS & IMPORTANT DEADLINES

### JUNE - JULY

**6/17-18**

State 4-H Horse Contests

**6/23**

Equine Field Day

**6/28-July 2**

State 4-H Horse Show

### AUGUST

**8/9**

Cost Share Field Day

**8/25**

First Day of Fall Semester

### SEPTEMBER

**9/25**

Signature Industries Career Fair, featuring Agribusiness, Distillation and Equine

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

# WELCOME

HEATHER MACKENZIE  
ESMA ALUM AND GRAD STUDENT



As spring arrives in Kentucky and the landscape begins its familiar transformation, with green pastures and foaling season wrapping up, I find myself reflecting on how fitting it is that this season of growth and renewal coincides with an important milestone, 20 years of the University of Kentucky's Ag Equine Programs.

My name is Heather MacKenzie, and I'm proud to be an alumna of this incredible program. During my undergraduate years, I had the privilege of serving as an intern, a peer mentor and a teaching assistant, roles that allowed me to immerse myself in the culture, mission and heart of this program. As a non-traditional student, I brought with me a unique perspective and life experience and, from the beginning, I was welcomed into a community that values dedication, curiosity and individuality.

Ag Equine Programs is a special place. It's where passion for horses meets academic excellence and professional preparation. It's where students – no matter their background – can find direction, support and a sense of purpose.

It was here that I found a home and deepened my commitment to bridging the gap between science and the people who care for horses through education, communication and extension efforts that make research more accessible and impactful.

I'm continuing my journey through a Master of Science in Community and Leadership Development in the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. I chose this program because of the strong foundation I received as an undergraduate in Ag Equine Programs and the guidance of Holly Wiemers during my internship, which has helped shape my path forward. That support sparked my desire to guide others as I was mentored. The program taught me that leadership is about understanding people, listening closely and building trust across communities.

With faculty as dedicated and engaged as those in Ag Equine Programs, students benefit from exceptional support both academically and personally. Dr. Savannah Robin is a perfect example. Her guidance helped me understand the impact of thoughtful student development and encouraged me to step into leadership roles I hadn't previously envisioned for myself. Her mentorship was rooted in compassion and unwavering support, helping me find the confidence to use my voice in ways that truly mattered. Her belief in

me became the foundation for believing in myself.

There are so many more who continue to impact my journey. Dr. Mick Peterson guides me to ask hard questions and pursue knowledge that serves a larger purpose. His continued support helps me bridge the gap between academic interest and practical application. Dr. Rebeka Epps helps me make the connection between graduate programs and industry impact. Dr. Bob Coleman provides guidance about the positive role of extension and its synergy with the equine industry.

Now, as Ag Equine Programs celebrates two decades of impact, I feel both proud and humbled to be part of its legacy. This program has grown and evolved, but its core remains the same: a commitment to preparing thoughtful, capable individuals who will serve and shape the future of the equine industry.

Spring is a season of motion and momentum, and the same can be said for Ag Equine Programs. With each new year, it continues to build on its strengths, provides meaningful opportunities and contributes to Kentucky's signature industry in real, lasting ways. Its growing cadre of alumni are professionally and profoundly impacting the industry's trajectory.

To the faculty, alumni, partners and supporters who have helped shape this program over the past 20 years, thank you. I'm honored to be a part of this program and excited to see what the next 20 years will bring.

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**EQUINE  
SCIENCE  
REVIEW**

  
**THE GRADUATE**  
*gallop*

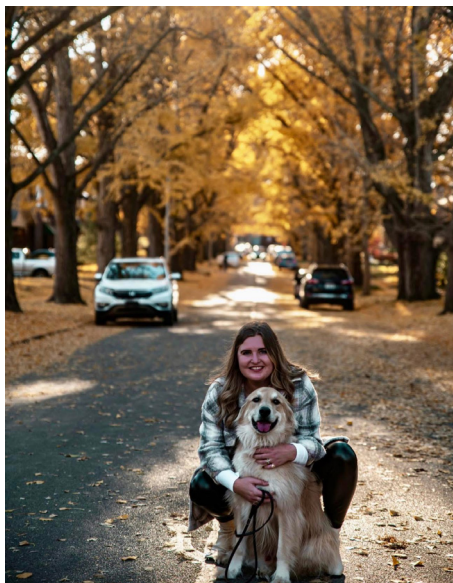
**IN ADDITION TO THIS PUBLICATION,  
UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS HAS OTHER  
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**CHECK OUT THE LATEST ISSUES OF  
THE EQUINE SCIENCE REVIEW OR THE  
GRADUATE GALLOP OR SUBSCRIBE HERE.**



# UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS WELCOMES ERICA RUGG

## MEET ERICA



*Erica Rugg is UK Ag Equine Programs' newest face. She serves as administrative assistant, with a concentration of focus on helping to enhance the program's work in career and professional development as well as program communications. Read more about her below.*

Hi, my name is Erica Rugg! I am excited to meet everyone and be a friendly face and resource for you at the front desk in UK Ag Equine Programs. I grew up in Marshall, Michigan. If you haven't heard of it just ask and I will raise my right hand to show you where it is! I graduated from Michigan State University in 2015. (Go Spartans!) Right after graduation I packed my bags and moved to Kentucky with the Kentucky Equine Management Internship program. This past January marked a decade of living in my favorite state.

Since moving to Kentucky, I have completed two internships: KEMI and the Kentucky Equine Research Internship. I have held multiple jobs

in the equine industry over my time here, from being a groom, foreman, assistant broodmare manager and an administrator of equine lending. I have worked on broodmare, yearling and stallion divisions on large Thoroughbred farms such as Three Chimneys and Lanes End. A fun fact about me is I have foaled out or assisted mares in giving birth to more than 1,000 foals! I have also been lucky enough to work Thoroughbred sales in Kentucky, New York, Maryland and even England.

Outside of work, I have a Golden Retriever mix named Quincy, Q, or, when he is naughty, Quincy Adams. He is 7 years old and my best friend. I also own a 17-year-old Quarter Horse mare, Kaycee, who was known as KM So Bodacious when she was my show mare. I currently lease Kaycee to Justin's Place, a therapeutic riding center in Wilmore, Kentucky. She loves her job helping children with special needs learn to ride and learn basic horse husbandry skills.



I am very close with my family even though I live 450 miles away from them. On weekends, you can catch me and Quincy driving north (even in the snow) to catch one of my niece's dance recitals

or my nephew's second birthday. My parents have been married for 40 years and I have an older sister, Corrin, who is also an MSU alumna. Corrin has been married for 10 years to her high school sweetheart, Joe Day, who is also an MSU alumnus. One could say we bleed GREEN. They have blessed me with my favorite title and that is Auntie Erica. I have a 4-year-old niece, Kenna Lee, and a 2-year-old nephew, Brody Dean. My parents still live in my childhood home. They also own a vacation/retirement home in Traverse City, Michigan. My dad built the home himself, not too shabby for being 62! Speaking of my dad, Dean, he is a heavy truck mechanic and has been for over 40 years, as well as a guy who can fix/build anything. My mom, Kim, is a retired literacy specialist she worked as an elementary school teacher for 20 years.

I recently sold my first house and home of five years in Versailles, Kentucky. I am working on building a home in Winchester, Kentucky, so I can live out my dream of having a "mini farm." I am excited to rescue all the ponies and doggos. I am currently living in my first apartment since college and let's just say Quincy isn't an apartment dog. However, life is all about transitional phases and I am excited for the new adventures of 2025! I have a close group of girlfriends that keep me sane and have become the backbone of my support system here in Kentucky. They all work in the horse industry, and we met through KEMI and KER internships.

Whew!! That is enough about me. I am very excited for this new adventure with the University of Kentucky. Go Cats!

# UK AG EQUINE INTERNSHIP REFLECTION BY INTERNS KIERSTEN LARSSON, LORALYE PAGE AND SARAH ZIESE

## KIERSTEN LARSSON



The communications and student relations intern position with UK Ag Equine Programs has been an experience that I will never forget. I have grown in more ways than I could have imagined, and I am grateful for all the guidance along the way. I came into this internship with little to no experience in communications, but I am leaving with a completely new skill set.

Improving upon any skill you have is difficult but learning at least five new ones was not a straightforward task. I had little to no knowledge of communications, meaning I learned how to create an effective graphic and use the Adobe Creative Suite. Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Lightroom and Express are only a few of the programs I ventured into. The path to learning these programs is not simple and the key to success is being willing to adapt to the programs.

My favorite part about this internship over the past year would be seeing how much I have grown. I improved my grammar, learned AP Style and now have better flow throughout my writing. But the largest growth I have seen in myself is being able to ask for edits and allowing my creativity to be improved upon by someone else. Nothing is going to be perfect on the first, second or even third try. Edits are enhancements, and they make you a better creator because you learn what to look for and change for next time.

Besides writing and creating content, I learned how to be more personable with real world experiences. I was able to work at the UK Ag Equine Programs' booth multiple times during large events, such as the Pony Club Championships and Festival and the Defender Kentucky Three Day Event, both held at the Kentucky Horse Park. At these events, I represented UK Ag Equine Programs and explained the uniqueness of our program to perspective students, families and other interested parties. As we talked about the program, the conversations evolved into their story and why they were interested in joining the herd here at the University of Kentucky. Those are the memories that I hold onto because they are an added learning experience that will help me connect better with others.

The skills I acquired during this past year include things that I believed I would never find in an equine program. Before taking this position, an equine degree meant working directly with horses, which most people in the program want to learn, but I wanted more. Being a

communications intern meant that I could enlighten people on what this program has to offer and guide students to their correct path. From being a communications intern, I can now head down my own path of equine photography and journalism. I hope to use my creative skills to show the world the beauty of horses, people and their story.

## LORALYE PAGE



As my time with UK Ag Equine Programs and the University of Kentucky comes to a close, I want to express gratitude for the opportunities I've had. This internship was a pivotal moment in my career journey that I didn't know I needed until I was in it.

I'm thankful to have spent the last year of my undergraduate experience with an office staff that



supported and challenged me to grow as a professional. During my time here, I discovered a passion for event planning and graphic design in marketing, an interest I hadn't fully explored before.

I gained many skills over the past year, from creating event graphics to helping create an elementary-level curriculum. The Ag Equine Programs office plans many events each year, including the tailgate and booth at the Kentucky Three-Day Event, for which I had the pleasure of designing the save-the-date and map graphics. For National Agriculture Day, I collaborated with a fellow student to create an equine-themed curriculum to share with Kentucky elementary schools. This was an especially meaningful project because I have always had a love for teaching and had never thought to approach it in this way.

I have greatly enjoyed my time here and always enjoyed seeing friendly faces stopping by the office. I will miss the family that I have found in UK Ag Equine Programs, both as an intern and as a student. It's bittersweet to be graduating and moving on, but I know I've been taught and prepared by the best of the best. Even as I take my next steps in my journey, I'm confident that this community will always welcome me with open arms.

To the students wondering if they should apply for the internship or job, just do it. The best thing I did was try new things and submit applications, even when I didn't feel qualified. I had already completed my for-credit internship before taking on this one, and I wasn't sure if I should get another internship or start looking for a more permanent job. But if it wasn't for this internship, I wouldn't be applying

to the full-time roles that I am now. The networking and support that I have received through this office staff has changed the trajectory of my future for the better.

## SARAH ZIESE



Reflecting on my time as an intern with the UK Ag Equine Programs' office, I'm leaving this experience with a full heart and a stronger sense of direction for my future. It's been a semester of growth, learning and meaningful discovery that helped me become more confident in my abilities.

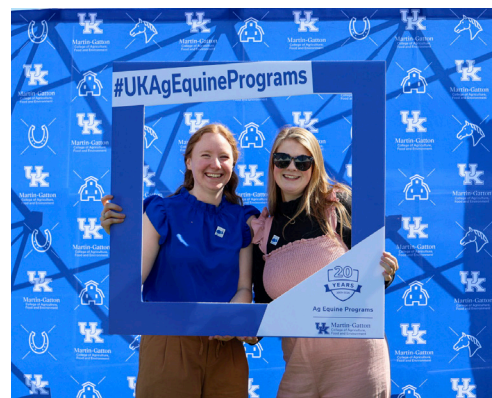
At the beginning of the semester, I was still finding my footing—navigating where I fit in and how I could contribute. That uncertainty was challenging at times, but it also taught me the importance of communication and self-advocacy. When I took the step to ask for more projects, everything shifted.

I became more engaged, motivated and confident in my role. Adjusting my schedule gave me the space to be more present, and I'm proud of how I finished the semester strong. These moments of growth reminded me that progress often comes from pushing through uncertainty.

One of the most rewarding parts of this internship was the opportunity to work in event photography and graphic design, two creative passions of mine. Combining my love for visual storytelling with my background in the equine industry made this experience fulfilling. I'm grateful for the creative freedom I was given and the chance to contribute in a way that felt both meaningful and exciting.

Of course, no internship is without its learning curves. This experience helped me better understand the realities of busy office dynamics and how to adapt within a fast-paced environment. I have so much admiration for Holly Wiemers and all the work she balances. Her ability to manage three interns while keeping everything running smoothly is inspiring, and I've learned a lot from watching how she leads with both efficiency and kindness.

Overall, I'm incredibly thankful for this experience. It pushed me to grow professionally, helped me build confidence in my work and made me realize that I am passionate about equine communications. Thank you to Loralie Page and Kiersten Larsson for being wonderful co-interns and thank you to the entire team for being so supportive and welcoming. I'm walking away with new skills, great memories and excitement for what's ahead.





# UK WELCOMES DIBIASIE AS EQUINE PHILANTHROPY DIRECTOR



Caitlin DiBiasie has been named the new director of equine philanthropy in the UK Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

DiBiasie has nearly 10 years of experience working in higher education and non-profit leadership. Most recently, she worked in the UK President's Office under Federal Relations Director Eric King. In this role, DiBiasie supported all federal relations efforts by working closely with members of Congress and their staff, preparing legislative updates, supporting faculty with special research requests and facilitating annual meetings as well as D.C. fly-ins.

Prior to joining UK, DiBiasie served at Vanderbilt University, where she supported the associate dean of development and alumni relations. Prior to Vanderbilt, she was the fundraising coordinator for Pitt Academy, a non-profit organization in Louisville, Kentucky.

DiBiasie is a native of Kentucky and is an enthusiastic fan of Thoroughbred horse racing. She served as an intern for the Kentucky Derby Festival in college and makes it a point to attend the Kentucky Derby and Keeneland every year. She, her husband, Alex, and their daughter, Lola, reside in Lexington, Kentucky. She started June 2.

## CONGRATULATIONS GRADS!



UK Ag Equine Programs congratulates its graduates. A graduation open house was held May 8 at 4:30 p.m. in the lobby of Seay Auditorium in the Agricultural Sciences building on UK's campus in recognition of the program's newest alums and their families. Below are photos from the event as well as profiles on each of the 32 May 2025 graduates.











## CONGRATULATIONS

# Michel Aguiluz

Houston, TX

Michel completed an internship with Central Kentucky Riding for Hope.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

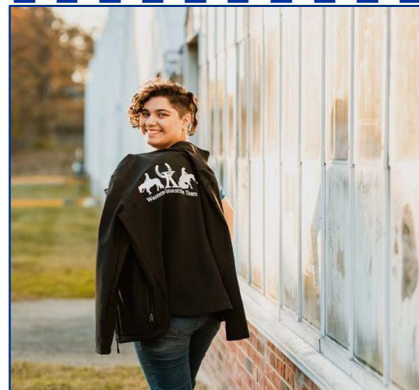
"I am most proud of taking advantage of this degree's networking opportunities. After completing my courses, I was able to find an internship, and my networking got me my full-time offer!"

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was organizing the Weekend of Service group for Central Kentucky Riding for Hope while I was a Wildcat Wrangler."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I have started a full-time position at the United States Equestrian Federation in the Member Services Department. I hope to grow my career within the organization."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"The faculty are here to help; email them and schedule regular meetings. They often get opportunities before you know about them."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Jaida Alee

Louisville, KY

Jaida completed her internship with the Keeneland Association in Thoroughbred sales.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of my determination throughout my time in the Equine Programs. The projects and extracurriculars I've been a part of along the way have taught me valuable lessons in dedication and have allowed me to develop a wide array of skills."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite undergraduate memory was working as a Wildcat Wrangler for the 2024 Horsey Hustle 5K!"

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in the Thoroughbred racing industry. I want to bring new insight to the industry in equine sales or racing operations."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Make meaningful connections with your instructors and advisors. I know I will always be able to reach out and count on the connections I have made during my undergraduate career."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Joe Archambeau

Gross Pointe, MI

Joe completed his internship with Claiborne Farm in yearling sales prep.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of just being a part of this industry and how amazing it is. I come from a background that did not relate to anything of the sort and yet I feel as if I have found my calling working in the equine industry."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory would have to be all the time I got to spend at Maine Chance Farm with the first horse I ever worked with, Tad. That's where I realized I had made the right decision when switching my major."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I would like to venture into the racing and/or marketing side of the industry, possibly working towards bringing new faces to the industry like myself. I would also love to do such work in the state of Florida or New York."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Remember why you're here. If you need reassurance go spend time on a farm or with a horse you like. The desire is always there."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Kamryn Barth

Sykesville, MD

Kamryn completed her internship with the Gluck Equine Research Center.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am extremely proud of my involvement within the UK Equestrian Team and the opportunity to serve as the team's president this past year. This team has been the highlight of my college career and has made me a better student, equestrian and person."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory from my undergraduate career was studying abroad in Scotland through Adelante Abroad. It was so incredible to share this experience with equine majors not only from Kentucky but from all over the United States."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I am hoping to pursue a master's degree and eventually a doctoral degree in the field of animal science."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Keep an open mind about parts of the equine industry you are unfamiliar with. There are many different types of equestrians in this program and you can build amazing connections."



## CONGRATULATIONS



# Lea Cooper

Stone Mountain, GA

Lea completed her internship with Equine Risk Management Group and Associates, LLC.

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Alyssa Bartosch

Bel Air, MD

Alyssa completed her internship with Stone Columns Stables as the retired horse assistant.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of the new skills I learned throughout my time here at UK. As well as completing my internship while doing six classes."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was joining the UK Equestrian Hunt Seat Team and winning third place on my favorite pony, Alaska, at Midway University."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation I plan to work for DVM John Cummins as his vet assistant at the Kentucky Equine Hospital."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Take it all in and cherish the friendships you make because it all goes by very fast!"



## CONGRATULATIONS

# Alexandra Crament

Roswell, GA

Alexandra completed her internship with the Thoroughbred Daily News.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of the opportunities and experiences that I had been privileged to be a part of these past few years. I wouldn't be where I am today without those opportunities made possible by the equine program."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was being able to attend and experience all the big races at Keeneland and Churchill Downs alongside the farm I worked for."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation I will be exploring marketing opportunities in the Thoroughbred industry, and in the meantime I will continue being a tour guide at Godolphin."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Don't be afraid to reach out for job/internship opportunities. You never know what farm or company may end up wanting extra help."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Sarah Davis

Toldeo, OH

Sarah completed her internship with the Gluck Equine Research Center.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of expanding my equine health knowledge and skills."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was working with foals during the breeding season."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I have accepted the position of horse care manager at Lake Erie College, School of Equine Studies, in Painesville, Ohio."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Take advantage of being in the Horse Capital of the World. You may not have the opportunity to live somewhere so horse rich ever again."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Ashleigh Dillon

Pocomoke City, MD

Ashleigh completed her internship with Paddle Stone Equestrian Center.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud that I made it through the program."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was all of the art classes that I got to take."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I don't currently have any plans in place for after graduation."



## CONGRATULATIONS

# Selma Kamin

Pittsburgh, PA

Selma completed her internship with SpyCoast Farm in their Rehabilitation and Fitness Center.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of completing the program and knowing that I chose the right place to build my future. Throughout my time here, I not only gained valuable skills and hands-on experiences, but I am also proud of how much I have developed both personally and professionally."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My internship at Spy Coast Farm was one of the most valuable experiences I've had. I learned so much from the people there and built connections that will help me throughout my career. It also gave me confidence to believe that I can build a future doing what I love."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation I have an internship with Equine Therapy Inc. to continue learning about equine rehabilitation."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Focus on what you are passionate about and don't be afraid to make your own path."

# CONGRATULATIONS

# Kellyn Kane

Bethlehem, PA

Kellyn completed her internship as the maintenance manager at Briar Hill Stables.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am proud of increasing my capacity for management as well as gaining more experience in different sectors of the equine industry."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was my internship. I thoroughly enjoyed partaking in classes with material I was passionate about as well."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I will be working full time outside of the equine industry to make ends meet. Later I will establish my managerial experience at various farms to follow my dream career path."



## WORDS OF WISDOM

"Just do the work. Go to the meeting that may not mean anything, go to the showcase. Just DO it."

# CONGRATULATIONS

# Lauren Hall

Lakeville, MN

Lauren completed her internship with the University of Kentucky Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, shadowing in the necropsy lab and researching causes of foal mortality.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of how I took on experiences that were outside of my comfort zone, specifically my EQM 399 internship. I never saw myself loving pathology so much before that internship, but by taking a chance and putting in the effort to try something unique, I learned so much and discovered a new passion that I intend to continue to explore."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory from my undergraduate career was winning the Spirit Award with my UK Eventing teammates at the Intercollegiate Eventing Championships in 2023."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"This fall I will be attending the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine! I will be continuing to pursue my goal of becoming an equine veterinarian, with strong intentions to return to Kentucky one day."



## WORDS OF WISDOM

"Take chances on yourself. The best thing you can do is try things you may have never considered before. You never know where it could lead you."



## CONGRATULATIONS

# Kennedy Harrison

Winchester, KY

Kennedy completed her internship with Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital.

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Braden Heath

North Charleston, SC

Braden completed his internship with Three Chimneys Farm in the yearling division.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of coming into college with zero knowledge or skills about horses and leaving with the ability to be able to work with some of the best horses in the country."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory is being a Wildcat Wrangler and helping to plan a successful Horsey Hustle 5K."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation I will continue to work at Three Chimneys Farm."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Take advantage of every opportunity that is presented to you and make sure to network as much as possible."

## CONGRATULATIONS



# Emma Hyde

Baltimore, MD

Emma studied abroad in Germany.

## CONGRATULATIONS



# Emily Nelson

Lexington, KY

Emily completed her internship with Refined Social Event Design & Production.



## CONGRATULATIONS

# Savannah Meacham

Little Rock, AR

Savannah completed her internship with Central Kentucky Riding for Hope.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of getting through all of my classes."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory as an undergraduate was my internship because it's where I found the job I have now and love."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I am staying in Lexington due to my job and finding an apartment."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Just try your best and it will work out. You will find your place."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Aubree McIntosh

Lancaster, KY

Aubree completed her internship with Money M Ranch.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of balancing school, work, my internship, my personal horses and still showing up and succeeding in each aspect. I am graduating Cum Laude and have made many advances in my barrel racing career."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory as an undergraduate was running in the Friday night rodeo performance at Murray State University's Racer Round-up Rodeo, competing as a member of the UK Rodeo Team. I got to take and run my coach's mare and barely missed making it back to the short go."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I am going to work at Money M Ranch. I secured a job through my internship. I have also been accepted into Purdue University's Veterinary Nursing Distance Learning Program."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Learn from every experience, ask questions often and remember that patience and consistency build not only better horses but better people."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Bailey Ohl

Charleston, SC

Bailey completed her internship with Central Kentucky Riding for Hope.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of the confidence I've gained in myself as a professional in the equine industry during my time in the equine program."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was my internship at Central Kentucky Riding for Hope. I loved every second of it!"

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I am exploring internships in the British Virgin Islands, as well as Australia."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Get involved! Try as many new things as you can over the four years of college."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Jillian Ostrowske

Street, MD

Jillian completed her internship with the National HBPA as a special projects assistant.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of how much I have grown and the self-confidence I have gained through my industry experiences. I gained professional and problem-solving skills at my internship and received the Outstanding Intern award for my policy work on their employee handbook."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was contributing to the reforming of the UK Horse Racing Club."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation I plan to start working full time Godolphin and hopefully traveling to Australia to work at Newgate Stud Farm for a breeding season at the end of July."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Take all the opportunities you can to learn more about the industry and make all the connections you can. You never know where they will lead you."



## CONGRATULATIONS

# Loralye Page

Centerville, OH

Loralye completed her internship with the Certified Horsemanship Association.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of my ability to push myself out of my comfort zone and make industry connections. I wouldn't have had all the opportunities I did if I stayed within my comfort zone."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was being on the UK Equestrian Western Team and becoming president my last year. Going to horse shows and being the team hairstylist was something I always looked forward to."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation I will continue the interview process for positions in equine event planning at various associations here in Lexington."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Take all the internships you can get, even ones outside of your career path. Be well rounded. Surround yourself with a supportive and accountable community."

## CONGRATULATIONS



# Cole Parker

Paducah, KY

Cole completed his internship with Lanes End Farm.

# CONGRATULATIONS

## Olivia Petrey

Louisville, KY

Olivia completed her internship with New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of discovering my talent for bloodstock while simultaneously improving my equine handling and care skills."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory is the day I presented my internship poster. After the presentation, Dr. Savannah Robin told me how proud she is that I have overcome my challenges and disabilities, growing both as a person and a professional."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I will be moving back to Louisville for a while, but plan to eventually move to Lexington permanently to build a career as a bloodstock agent."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Whenever you feel like you can't do it, remember that you are doing this for your love of horses. That can help you through anything."

# CONGRATULATIONS

## Morgen Rader

Lexington, KY

Morgen studied abroad in Germany.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am proud to say that I learned many useful skills from this program that I can't wait to use to further my future career!"

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was the Germany study abroad trip."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I will be exploring my options within the Thoroughbred industry."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Stick with it, even when it gets hard."



## CONGRATULATIONS

# Ann Regan

Katy, TX

Ann worked for Penn Sales.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of my personal growth and how much knowledge I've gained."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was watching an equine dentist work on the senior horses at the farm for Dr. Amanda Adams' senior horse class."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I will be working in the equine industry and explore options."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Don't take life for granted."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Emma Rose

Cartersville, GA

Emma completed her internship with Equibase.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of finding my place in this industry and continuing to create amazing connections from this program."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was any time Dr. Savannah Robin would come to speak in classes. She always spreads the kindest messages while also preparing us for the life we will experience outside of this program."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I will continue work in operations at Equibase, furthering my experience in data management in the racing industry."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Explore your options. You still have a full life ahead and you don't need to know exactly what you want to do now."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Angela Veshia

Greenwood, IN

Angela completed her internship with the Gluck Equine Research Center.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of myself for balancing my academic career with my relationships and hobbies. I am mainly proud of my learning in multiple ways throughout my undergraduate career."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memories came from all the dissection labs in the courses I took. I remember them being fun, and they helped me decide on my current career path."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I will be attending veterinary school if accepted, and working in the veterinary field for the near future."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Take advantage of every resource and opportunity that you can."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Ava Vransky

Frederick, MD

Ava completed her internship with Snake River Ranch in Wilson, Wyoming.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am proud of being able to overcome obstacles and continue to excel in college."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was one roping practice sophomore year, we were tagging calves and my friend was so rushed he put the tag on backwards. My roping coach was just so happy we did it that he threw his rope in the air and hollered."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I plan to go to veterinary school to pursue large animal medicine."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"It is important to give it all you've got and go outside your comfort zone. Remember you will never get these days back. Make memories and take a deep breath, it's all a part of the journey."



## CONGRATULATIONS

# Maggie Welch

Elizabethtown, KY

Maggie completed her internship with McConathy Farm and Rescue.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of my ability to have respect for the equine community while also recognizing that this career path was not for me."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was the equine behavior and handling class. I wish there were more classes like that."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation I will be attending UK for graduate school in the CLD program."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"College isn't linear. If you need to take more time to figure out what you want and need, that is fine. This is your life, run it how you'd like."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Chloe Young

Washoe Valley, NV

Chloe studied abroad in Puerto Rico.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of my undergraduate research done with Dr. Camie Heleski, both in equine nasal-based bioacoustics and in assessments of the free-roaming horse populations of Vieques, Puerto Rico."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memory was going to New Zealand to present my research at an international conference."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"After graduation, I will be attending grad school and looking at future careers in academics or with the Bureau of Land Management."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"Plan, even as a freshman. If you want to add majors or minors, its easier to do it early and remove them later than to add them later in your undergraduate studies."

## CONGRATULATIONS

# Sarah Ziese

Laurel Springs, NC

Sarah completed her internship with the Gluck Equine Research Center as the communications and marketing intern.

What are you most proud of as a soon-to-be graduate of the ESMA program?

"I am most proud of the numerous opportunities I have taken advantage of, including Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital as a vet tech, UK Equestrian Team as PR and social chair, UK Horse Racing Club as VP, Ag Equine Programs as an intern and Gluck Equine Research as an intern."

What is your favorite memory from your undergraduate career?

"My favorite memories are all the show days I have had, waking up early with the team, all working together toward the same goal. There's something special about sharing those nerves and excitement with people who share the same love for horses and the team."

What are your plans for after graduation?

"I have accepted a full time position as a horse show photographer at Winslow Photography, the official photographer for the World Equestrian Center in Ohio. I plan to continue part-time communications work at the Gluck Equine Research Center."



### WORDS OF WISDOM

"If you think you are interested in trying something, just do it. You may not like it, but it's best to find out sooner rather than later. Say yes to every opportunity and keep an open mindset"

# 'ROOM TO GROW': HOW A UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY STUDENT FOUND AND CREATED OPPORTUNITIES TO THRIVE

*Jaida Alee, the 2024 Lyman T. Johnson Torch Bearer Award recipient, graduates from the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment in May 2025, with hopes of joining the equine industry.*

Story by Bailey Vandiver, Media by Brian Volland  
Source: edited news release from UK M-G CAFE

Video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyf12ABWmQM&t=3s>



As an equine enthusiast, Jaida Aleé is continuing the family business.

Growing up in Louisville, Kentucky, Aleé saw both her mother and grandmother involved in the equine industry. Her mom, Marjorie Keele, rode saddle seat, while her grandmother, Linda Alicea, used to train racehorses.

"I just kind of caught the bug for it, and I fell in love with horses," Aleé said.

Aleé started riding hunter jumpers in the sixth grade and continued competing through high school. When it was time to choose a college, she knew she wanted to study equine.

"During my college search, I was having trouble finding anywhere else with such an extensive program as UK," Aleé said.

UK seemed the most supportive for equine students, she said, with the ability to provide the most tools, resources, research opportunities and more.

Aleé graduated in May 2025 with a bachelor's degree in equine science and management, with a double minor in business and international business.

#### 'An exemplary choice' for the Lyman T. Johnson Torch Bearer Award

In fall 2024, Aleé was the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment recipient of the Lyman T. Johnson Torch Bearer Award, which celebrates Johnson's legacy and is given to one student per UK college for academic excellence and impact on others.

Kendriana Price, assistant dean for community relations and engagement, nominated Aleé for the award.

"Lyman T. Johnson paved the way for desegregation at the University of Kentucky, and Jaida continues his legacy by creating inclusive spaces for students both within and outside the college," Price said. "Jaida consistently demonstrates leadership with humility, compassion and an infectious-spirited energy, making her an exemplary choice."

Aleé said it was an honor to have been nominated by Price and to receive the

award.

"It made me feel really special and that my work is being recognized, which always feels good," Aleé said.



#### 'Fostering a sense of belonging'

At UK, Aleé found opportunities for connection—and where she didn't find opportunities, she created them.

Jaida Aleé, pictured here with Savannah Robin, is recognized for completing her internship at Keeneland.

Since her freshman year, she's been part of the Wildcat Wranglers, an equine ambassador program within UK Ag Equine Programs.

She's also held leadership roles with the UK MANRRS chapter, an agricultural professional development organization. This year, as the public relations chair, she ran the Instagram account and created the chapter's graphics.

MANRRS has given Aleé opportunities for scholarships, jobs and internships and friendships. Attending the MANRRS National Conference each year is a highlight of her college career.

"I've just gained so much from that organization, and I'm just really proud to be a part of it," she said.

Aleé has been passionate about cars since watching the "really fun" Fast and Furious movies. This fascination

led her to create the UK Car Club, an unofficial and "low-key club" for the car community at UK.

Price said "fostering a sense of belonging" is crucial for students, particularly at large universities, and Aleé has excelled at that for herself and others.

"Jaida's quiet yet impactful presence makes her an exemplary leader and role model. Though she may not be the loudest in the room, she excels at creating spaces where voices can be heard and work can be accomplished," Price said. "She leads by example, inspiring others to engage and get involved. Jaida is a great example of coming to a large university and both finding and creating the spaces that interest her and help her fit in."



Aleé has always had a strong work ethic, encouraged by her mom, and her academics and involvement with UK organizations have only grown her drive.

"Those organizations have just been a big part of fostering that work ethic that I have, and just giving me the room to grow, and giving me a safe space to just be a college student and do everything that I need to do," she said.

'The way I want to go'

Jaida Aleé's grandmother, Linda Alicea, and mother, Marjorie Keele, with horse Bad Storm Comin. Photo provided by Jaida Aleé.

When Aleé's grandmother started in the equine industry, there weren't many other women, so her working had an "impact."

Even today, it's still a traditional and male-dominated industry, Aleé said, but she looks forward to adding to the number of women professionals.

"The impact of getting more women into the industry is definitely a big

deal," she said. "Sometimes you just need a woman's opinion, so I think that'll be really good."

Within the equine industry, Alee wants to work in Thoroughbred bloodstock sales.

"I've definitely got a little bit of a knack for it, and I feel like that's the way I want to go," Alee said.

Though she knew many of her passions and goals before she came to college, Alee said being at UK in Lexington "opened me to this world of opportunity.

"Being in Lexington is a whole new world when you think about the horse industry," Alee said. "This is the horse industry."

To learn more about UK Ag Equine Programs, visit <https://equine.ca.uky.edu/>.

Story here: <https://news.ca.uky.edu/article/room-grow-how-university-kentucky-student-found-and-created-opportunities-thrive>



## Reflection by Jaida Alee

*Shared from LinkedIn with permission by Jaida Alee*

Walking the stage this past Saturday still doesn't feel real. My name is Jaida Alee and I have successfully graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Equine Science & Management and minors in both Business and International Business from University of Kentucky and University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

When I first enrolled in the equine program, I did so because I had a deep passion for horses. But I realize that I didn't just study horses – I studied resilience, patience and a deep understanding of friendships, collaboration and connection. Every course, every field trip and every hour spent working has shaped me in ways I never imagined. Every connection made along the way has taught me invaluable lessons about leadership, empathy and the importance of being adaptable in an ever-changing world. Through it all, I've learned the importance of resilience and adaptation.

I've made it. I did not shy away from challenges; I faced them head-on, with grace, strength and determination. And with that same confidence I can face what's ahead, knowing that I have the tools and the tenacity to succeed. My education is not just a degree—it's the foundation of a lifetime of learning. The friendships I've formed, the lessons I've learned and the challenges I've overcome will always be a part of me. I'm the next leader, changemaker, caretaker and innovator.

And while there are many significant parts of my journey, it's the human connections I've forged, the lessons in collaboration and the support we've given each other that will truly carry me forward. The bonds I've created with my professors and my peers will always be a part of me. I leave here with gratitude for what I've experienced, excitement for what lies ahead and confidence in my ability to rise to the challenges of the future. I've learned to lead, to care and to be an agent of change.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me. Thank you UK MANRRS, Kendriana Price, Ed.D., Savannah Faye Robin, Keeneland Association, University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, University of Kentucky and many more individuals who impacted my college experience. Congratulations to my fellow graduates.

The future is ours.

Love, Jaida



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 2025 Kentucky 4-H

### State Horse Contest

Locust Trace Agriscience Center  
3591 Leestown Rd.  
Lexington, KY 40511



**June 17: Judging**  
**June 18: All other events**

Questions?  
Anna Draeger  
✉ Anna.draeger@uky.edu  
☎ 859-257-7501

<https://afs.ca.uky.edu/4h-youth/horse/event/ky-state-horse-contest>

## KENTUCKY STATE FAIR 4-H HORSE SHOW



KENTUCKY FAIR AND EXPO CENTER

**JUNE 28-JULY 2, 2025**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 8**

[HTTPS://AFS.CA.UKY.EDU/4H-YOUTH/HORSE/SHOW-RULES-REGULATIONS-RESOURCES](https://afs.ca.uky.edu/4h-youth/horse/show-rules-regulations-resources)

## EQUINE FIELD DAY

**KADF**  
KENTUCKY AGRICULTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND

ENDEAVOR FARM

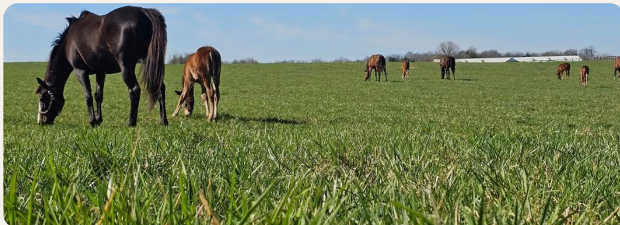
**Martin-Gatton**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
University of Kentucky

Hosted by Endeavor farm

- Free to attend
- Dinner included
- Farm tour
- Educational lectures with experts

Highlights Include:

- Improved pasture management
- Novel Endophyte Tall Fescue
- Hay evaluation



**23 JUNE 2025 | 4-8 PM**

Endeavor Farm - 3110 Old Frankfort Pike, Versailles, KY 40383

RSVP at <https://EndeavorFieldDay.eventbrite.com> or scan the QR code



## COST SHARE OPPORTUNITIES ON HORSE FARMS

Field day hosted by University of Kentucky Extension and Texata Farms

### HIGHLIGHTS

- See conservation practices on a working farm
- On-site cost share applications
- Educational lectures
- Free to attend - breakfast included!

Event Information:

**SAT., AUGUST 9, 2025**

From 9 AM - 1PM

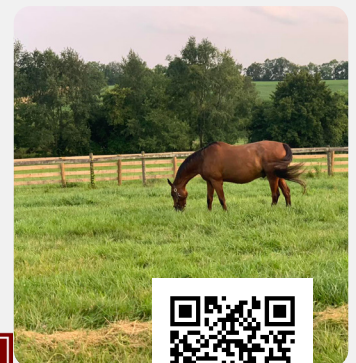
4665 Troy Pike, Versailles, KY 40383

**Martin-Gatton**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
University of Kentucky

**KADF**  
KENTUCKY AGRICULTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND

**TEXATA FARM**

RSVP at <https://CostShare.eventbrite.com> or scan the QR code







## UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS HOSTED SUCCESSFUL 4TH ANNUAL UK HORSEY HUSTLE 5K

by Holly Wiemers, photos by Zoey Ortega and Sarah Ziese

UK Ag Equine Programs hosted the 4th annual UK Horsey Hustle 5K Run/Walk at Coldstream Park April 13.

The event, which is implemented by the program's equine event planning class, serves as a fundraiser for the program's Student Experience and Applied Education Fund as well as UK equine-focused clubs and teams. This year's event hosted 75 participants and raised more than \$8,000.

Division winners included:

- Overall female: Sydney Shouse
- Overall male: Dominik Dwyer
- Female under 12: Finleigh Ann Robin
- Male under 12: Tyler Morris
- Female 18-24: Grace Dietrich
- Male 18-24: Evan Rink

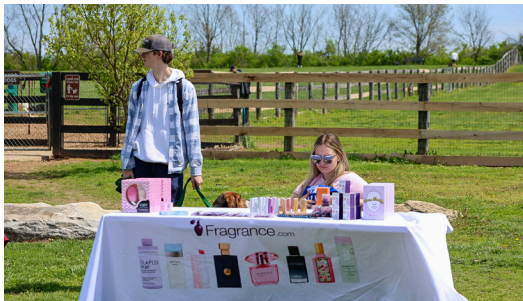
- Female 25-29: Kree Morrison
- Male 25-29: James Ivenmeyer
- Female 30-34: Autry Graham
- Male 30-34: Josh Bryan
- Female 35-39: Emily Roe Brown
- Male 35-39: Reynolds Foster
- Male 40-44: Kevin Morris
- Male 45-49: Stephen Porter
- Female 50-54: Leslie Facemyer
- Female 60-99: Terry Foody
- Male 60-99: Jamie MacLeod

Stable Recovery was the Triple Crown sponsor for this year's event. "Place" sponsors included Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, Hallway Feeds, the KEEP Foundation, Red Mile, Spy Coast Farm, Stone Column and VisitLex. "Show" sponsors included Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital, Tack Shop of Lexington and the TDN, In-kind sponsors included Fennell's Horse Supply, KBC and Stonestreet.

UK's Waggin' N Walkin' club brought adoptable dogs from Lexington Humane Society to participate in the fun.







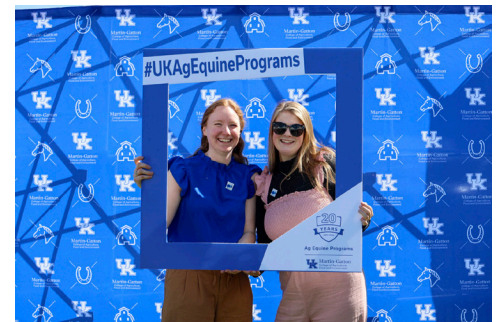




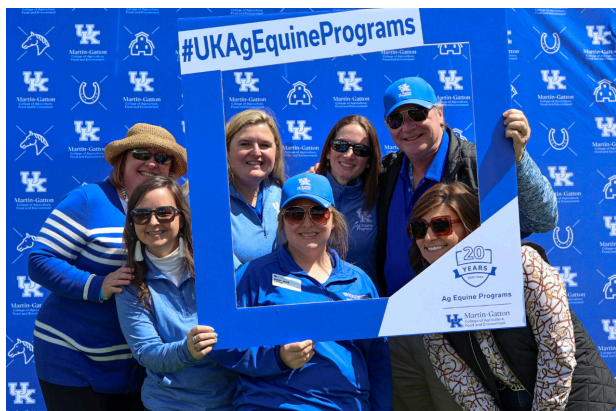
## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE, UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS HOSTED AN ALUMNI REUNION APRIL 12

*photos by Sarah Ziese*

This year marks 20 years since the formation of UK Ag Equine Programs, then called the UK Equine Initiative. During a yearlong celebration, the program will be hosting several events and efforts. One of those was an alumni reunion April 12 on the Hill at Keeneland. Attendees were provided food, drinks and complimentary tickets to the races that day. Additionally, all alums who attended were given their special anniversary edition of an Ag Equine Programs lapel pin.











## Ag Equine Programs

**UK** Martin-Gatton  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment





## UK EXPERIENCE EQUINE DAY HELD APRIL 25

*photos by Sarah Ziese*

The Spring 2025 Experience Equine Day was held April 25 for prospective students to learn more about UK's Equine Science and Management degree program. This event was held at Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital. A total of 14 prospective students representing eight states (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia and Texas) and one country outside the U.S. (Australia) joined in. Students were predominantly high school seniors with the exception of two juniors.







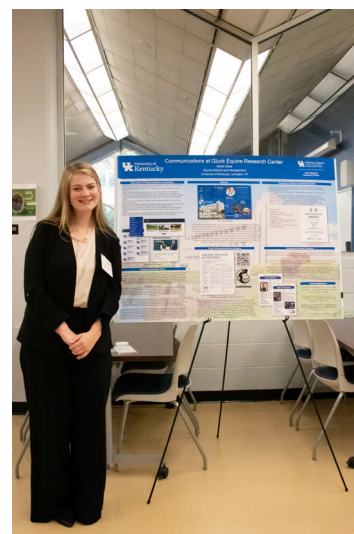
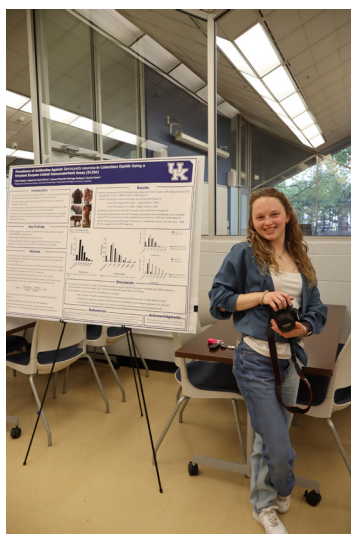




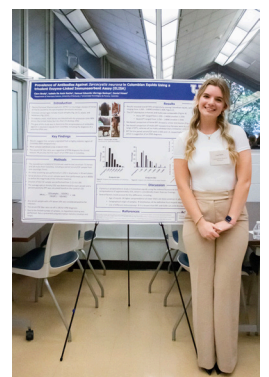
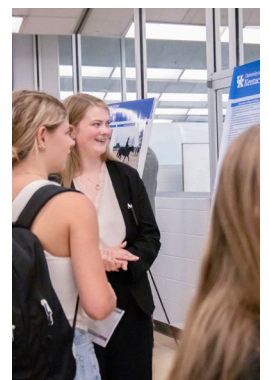
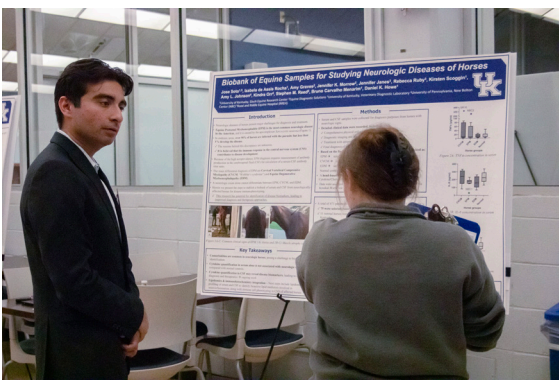
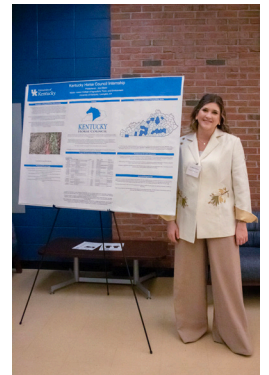
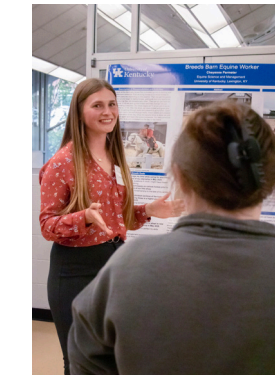
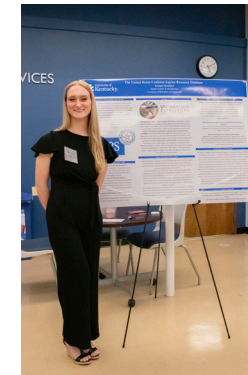
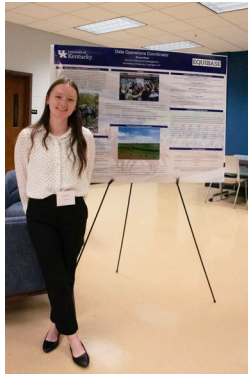
## UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS HOSTS ANNUAL EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING SHOWCASE APRIL 22

*photos by Kiersten Larsson and Loralye Page*

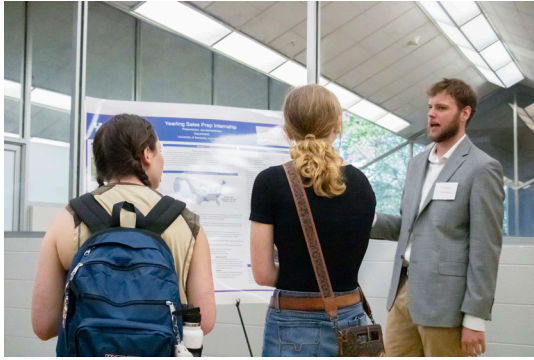
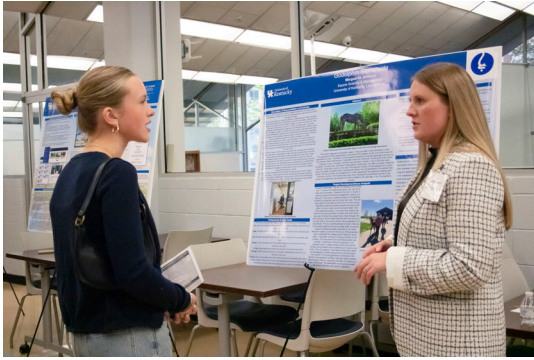
Equine Science and Management students who participated in an internship, study abroad trip or undergraduate research presented posters about their experiences at the event April 22. The event featured 15 spring interns, two independent study students and three undergraduate researchers. The spring Intern Award winner was Haley Ropel, who interned with Stable Recovery. The Internship People's Choice Award was Delaney Loy, who interned with Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital. The Experiential Learning People's Choice Award was Alexa Crament.



















## UK AG EQUINE PROGRAMS AT DEFENDER KENTUCKY THREE DAY EVENT

*photos by Sarah Ziese*

UK Ag Equine Programs hosted both a booth at the annual trade fair and a tailgate on the cross-country course during the Defender Kentucky Three Day Event at the Kentucky Horse Park. Over the three days, program staff made meaningful connections with prospective students, current students, alumni and equine industry representatives.





# 2025 HIPPOLOGY CLINIC

by Anna Draeger, photos top to bottom: Equine Task Force, Hardin County Trailblazers and Kenton County Blazing Bridles

On March 8, 2025, a collaborative effort between the Kentucky 4-H Horse Program and the Kentucky Horse Park resulted in an inaugural hippology clinic open to the general public. The sold-out event, conceived by Fernanda Camargo, UK equine extension professor in UK's Department of Animal and Food Sciences, was very well received, and participants enjoyed a fun day of learning and networking. Speakers came from a variety of backgrounds, sharing valuable insight and content.

"We are so fortunate to have the Kentucky Horse Park in our backyard. I am so pleased to have partnered with them to create this fun and interactive educational event, where kids and adults were able to spend a day in this beautiful park, while learning from the best in the industry," said Camargo.

The program offered youth tracks as well as an adult track, with specialized lectures for each group, resulting in an engaging and fast paced learning experience. Adult track speakers included Hannah Tiffin, assistant professor in UK's Department of Entomology, and Stephanie Meredith, Hardin County extension assistant for 4-H youth development. Tiffin talked about ticks and shared key steps for horse owners to protect horses from ticks and other pests. Meredith, who has more than 30 years of industry experience and impressive success in coaching hippology teams of her own, talked about starting and coaching a hippology team. As intended, audience members were able to take home actionable steps from both speakers. If you missed the in-person event, Meredith's talk is available on the 4-H Horse Program YouTube channel.

During the youth track, Anna Draeger, equine extension associate in UK's Department of Animal and Food Science, taught kids about horse breeds, colors and markings in interactive sessions. Youth participants were engaged, asking questions, answering prompts from her and taking notes. Thanks to

magazine donations from Stephanie Church, editor of The Horse Magazine, youth participants were able to practice what they learned by creating their very own collage of horses, labeling the relevant colors and markings present.

The keynote speaker, Ferrin Peterson, a professional jockey and practicing veterinarian, shared her fascinating life story and expertise in a joint session with youth and adults just before lunch. Peterson's talk inspired youth and adults alike, as she told her story of being both a practicing veterinarian and competitive jockey. This was an encouraging reminder to pursue goals with steady determination and a mind wide open.

Not a minute of the day was wasted, as participants had the chance to view and study a labeled horse skeleton provided by Camargo during lunch. This study time was important, as skeletal anatomy of the limbs would later be part of the "test your knowledge" tests, a friendly competition to see how much information was retained by the group.

The Kentucky 4-H Horse Program Equine Task Force was among those that volunteered at the event, helping it run smoothly. Youth from this 4-H leadership group also presented on Careers of the Horse Industry, including a survey that allowed the audience to find the equine career that is the best fit for them.

The afternoon sessions, led by Kentucky Horse Park personnel, included a trip to the International Museum of the Horse and the Breeds Barn. At the museum, participants visited the skeleton of the famous racehorse, Lexington, and learned about his incredible story, along with how the Kentucky Horse Park acquired the skeleton. At the Breeds Barn, attendees were able to meet and greet some unique breeds that call the Kentucky Horse Park home.

The day concluded with a fun but competitive knowledge test, complete with youth and adult

divisions. The stakes were high, as the prize included gift cards to the Kentucky Horse Park Gift Shop for first, second and third place winners in each division. The contest proved to be competitive, requiring a tie breaker round of questions at the end.

This event was a clear example of what can happen thanks to teamwork and collaboration. We are grateful for the partnership between the Kentucky 4-H Horse Program and the Kentucky Horse Park and the 2026 event is already being planned.





# STUDENT PLANNED AGRI TOURISM AND MEDIA IN EQUINE INDUSTRY PANEL A SUCCESS

by Loralye Page

Students from the University of Kentucky Equine Science and Management Equine Events Planning class hosted a panel discussion with professionals in equine industry who are focused on media, journalism and tourism. Close to 75 attendees attended the event March 11.

Attendees heard from program alum, including Gabby DiLemme, who works for Stonestreet Farm as their industry relations specialist, and Hallie Hardy, executive director of Visit Horse Country. DiLemme, a graduate of the class of 2024, offered good insight on what to expect starting in the industry right out of college. She shared how she got into her current position through an internship with Visit Horse Country.

Hardy and DiLemme both touched on the importance of collaboration in the industry. The refrain of, "You can't get very far if you don't know anyone," was a common theme from panel members.

DiLemme shared that when posting on social media for Stonestreet Farm, she tags jockeys, trainers, owners, racetracks and many more. It reminds her how many people and organizations are involved in the life of just one horse.

Scott Carling, general manager of Blood-Horse answered many questions on how the change from print to digital has impacted the publication side of the industry. Carling put a heavy emphasis on our duty to portray the industry in a positive manner when posting on social media and writing articles. No matter the topic of an article, Blood-Horse writes it in a positive tone.

Emily Duncan, the social media specialist at Coolmore America, agreed with Carling. They both focused on the importance of our "Social License to Operate" and how easily it can be taken away. Duncan said it is her job to bridge the gap between Coolmore and the public, and that when she posts it might be all some people know about the equine industry.

Frank Taylor, owner and manager of Taylor Made Farms was also present. He is a part of Stable Recovery, a non-profit focused on helping men redirect their lives and achieve lasting sobriety. His passion was evident in the way he talked about the journey.

He shared, "People can make an impact on horses, but horses can also make an impact on people."

According to Taylor, horses are a unique tool that people can connect with on an emotional level. This a part of our industry that is so positive, and something that social media can shed a light on.

Tourism and social media have had a huge impact on the Thoroughbred and racing industry in the past few years. Showing the behind the scenes on farms and racetracks, making it less mysterious and debunking myths of our industry is an educational tool that we are only just beginning to understand.





# BLUEBOYS GHOST - FROM THE BEGINNING

*Join us this year as we celebrate 20 years of excellence and share the stories of a few of the horses who have impacted decades of UK equine students.*

by Loralye Page



**GHOST WITH CHRIS LUBA AT THE 2005 CONGRESS.**

"Ghost," by Blueboy Dreamer out of BNE Blue Ghost Reva, is a 2001 American Quarter Horse. The gelding was originally owned by the Luba Family of Louisville, Kentucky. (Incidentally, Norm Luba was a longtime UK Equine Advisory Board member.)

Ghost was bred in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada, by Dennis Stiles. This was just five miles from where Bob Coleman, a faculty member in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences and one of the founders of UK's equine undergraduate program, used to live.

Ghost was trained by Tommy Sheets and shown primarily by Christopher Luba. In his show career, Ghost earned three halter points and two and a half open performance points. In Youth, Ghost earned three halter points and 25.5 showmanship points. While Luba was the primary person to show him, Ghost was also shown by his older brother, Colin, and their father, Norm.

Here Ghost is pictured with a young Luba and Norm at the 2005 All American Quarter Horse Congress.

In 2005, Ghost received a Youth Performance Register of Merit.

After a successful show career with the Luba family, Ghost was donated in December 2005 to the UK Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) Western Equestrian Team. The team is coached by Bennie Sargent in Paris, Kentucky.

Ghost was beloved by the team and a member for almost 15 years. One of those team members was Audrey Jarrett, an alumna of UK's Animal and Food

jog division by Sargent's daughter, Sydney.

According to Coleman, who was the UK Equestrian Team's advisor for more than 20 years, Ghost was requested many times to be used in IHSA regional and national shows, a true honor for any IHSA horse.

After several years of retirement on Sargent's property, Coleman and Sargent made the decision recognizing that due to his condition, he would likely have a better quality of life as part of UK's Aged Horse Unit. Ghost has PPID, which makes managing him more challenging than a typical aging horse.

Ghost was moved to UK's C. Oren Little Research Farm in Midway, Kentucky, in September 2023 and became part of the research and instruction herd in the Linda Mars Aged Horse Care and Education Facility. The opening of the Linda Mars Aged Horse Care and Education Facility allows for more educational opportunities that give students hands-on time with horses.

Ghost is now living the good life of retirement in a pasture with several other senior horses. This program is run by Amanda Adams, an associate professor in the Gluck Equine Research Center who specializes in aged horse research. The herd of research horses consists of senior horses with conditions like Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID, also known as Cushing's disease) obesity, equine metabolic syndrome and insulin dysregulation. Her team also looks at the effects of endocrine diseases and metabolic conditions on laminitis.

Since joining UK's Aged Horse Program, Ghost has assisted in a variety of studies looking at



**FORMER UKET MEMBER AUDREY JARRETT. PHOTO BY SAVANNAH ROBIN.**

Science program, with an equine emphasis, in the early years as UK's Equine Science and Management standalone undergraduate degree program was being formed. Here, she's pictured with Ghost at Sargent's farm.

During his time at Sargent's farm and with the UK Equestrian Team, Ghost was also shown in the walk/



endocrinology and immunology changes in the older horse.

Maggie McClendon, a researcher in Adams' lab, shared that Ghost is one of her top five favorite horses in the herd and that she tries to incorporate him in every study she can. Whether it is standing for body condition evaluations, medication or blood draws, Ghost is just happy to be part of the team.

"He is one of the sweetest personalities of any horse in our program," she said, reinforcing the stereotype of the typical levelheaded, go-with-the-flow American Quarter Horse.

Ghost also made a guest appearance in the newly formed Care and Management of the Senior Horse class in Fall 2024.

"He is one of the best and most patient horses to use when teaching undergrad students and employees," McClendon said.

"Having taken this class this past fall semester, I was able to see firsthand how well these horses are cared for and the impact they are having on our understanding of senior

horses," said Loralie Page, a recent graduate of the Equine Science and Management undergraduate program. "Through this class, I was able to meet Ghost. As a member of the UK Western Equestrian Team, I had heard many stories of the infamous Ghost but never had the opportunity to meet him, until now.

"He was used as an example when we were learning to take body condition scores and diagnose metabolic conditions based on visible signs and symptoms," she said. "He stood very still, not even needing a halter. He just came right up to us. You could tell he enjoyed the attention."

Ghost is one of the many horses that make equine programs at UK so special. Horses like Ghost have been around and involved with students since the beginning of UK Ag Equine Programs and have impacted the educational journey of hundreds of students. Ghost is one of a few that have been with us for the past 20 years and we couldn't have asked for any better.

Stay tuned for more stories on the original horses of our program and the journeys they have had teaching UK students.



GHOST AT 24.

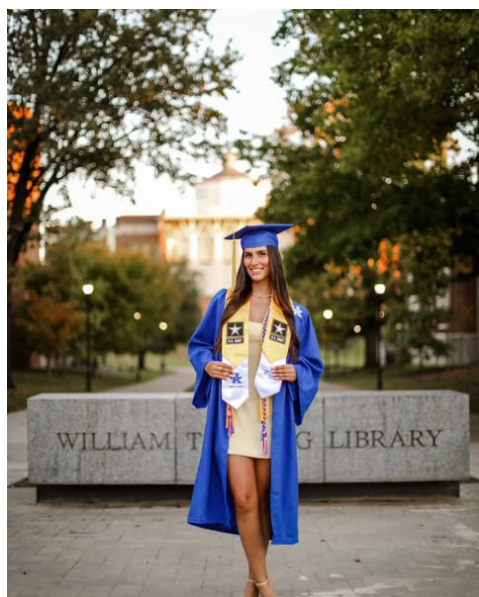


## Ag Equine Programs

**UK** Martin-Gatton  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment



# SHOUTOUTS!



*Photo credit: Park Equine Hospital and Isabella Davis*

**Congratulations go out to Isabelle Davis**, an Equine Science and Management student for being accepted into five veterinary schools (Auburn University, Cornell University, University of Florida, University of Georgia and Louisiana State University). She is currently a veterinary hospital technician with Park Equine Hospital, who shared her good news on social media.

Shared from Park Equine: "Isabelle joined our Park Equine family while she was pursuing her degree in Equine Science and Business Management from the University of Kentucky. While her lifetime of experience with horses gave her a solid foundation, Isabelle came to us new to the technician role. Her dedication and passion for equine medicine quickly shone through in everything she did. We've had the privilege of mentoring Isabelle throughout her journey, and we are excited about her decision to continue her veterinary education at the University of Georgia. The entire Park Equine Hospital team wishes you the best as you take this exciting next step toward becoming a veterinarian. We know you'll make us proud!"

## UK Men's Polo wins a national championship

*Source: April 16 Polo News story*



In a thrilling finale at the John T. Oxley Equestrian Center, the University of Kentucky made history by capturing their first Division II Men's National Intercollegiate Championship title. Facing off against defending champions Cornell University on their home turf, UK held strong to seal a hard-fought 17-13 victory.

The Wildcats team—Alaric Renshaw, Rehan Kumble, and Alejandro Puyana—came out strong from the opening throw-in. Despite Cornell's best efforts and second-half surge, UK's early dominance was enough to bring the national trophy back to Kentucky for the first time.

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

## GOOO CATS! University of Kentucky Win USEA Intercollegiate Eventing Championships for Second Time

*By Annan Hepner - USEA | Edited Press Release, May 4*



The University of Kentucky has claimed top honors at the 2025 USEA Intercollegiate Eventing Championship, held May 3-4 at Stable View in Aiken, South Carolina. With 10 teams and 36 entries, they not only secured the title of "School with the Largest Presence" once again, but also rode away with their second national championship title, adding to their 2021 victory.

Their winning team, the Kentucky Wildcats (made up of Callia Englund, Sarah Ertl, Macy Hale and Emerson Padgett) dominated the championship, finishing 11 points ahead of second place with a total score of 77.76.

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







## Ag Equine Programs

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