

2015 Equine Program Review

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Summary

The Department of Animal Science equine program provides the highest quality active learning environment that promotes life-long learning in both career and life skills for students. Courses accommodate the range of experiences by incorporating the science with the “hands-on” activity. In addition the equine community is served through extension and outreach activities.

Equine Teaching

The goals of teaching are to allow students to understand basic concepts associated with equine production and management; to develop concepts and skills for problem-solving and appropriate management integration in areas of safe and efficient horse handling, nutrition and reproduction; to understand basic physiology as applied to equine animal systems; to apply scientific knowledge for problem-solving in the equine industry; to acquire scientific and technical knowledge and understanding as well as practical, managerial and business skills necessary to work within the equine industry, and to demonstrate an understanding of the anatomy, physiology, nutrition and psychology of the horse. Equine courses that meet these goals are listed in table 1. To accommodate the growing number of equine interests, ANS 217 is taught both fall and spring, ANS 216 has a summer section, and ANS 415 is taught in the fall and spring. In addition, ANS 306 was changed to the fall only.

Horse Barn News

Horses Sold

In 2014, 14 foals owned by Iowa State University were born during the AnS 332 Equine course. The foals have grown up on campus and interacted with students as the primary model for learning in both AnS 317A (Behavior and Training of the Weanling) and most recently AnS 317B (Behavior and Training of The Yearling). The weekend of October 17-18, 2015, brought about a culmination of effort and learning. Students enrolled in AnS 317B attended one or both of the All American Quarter Horse Congress Sale and/or the Iowa Thoroughbred Breeders and Owners Association Fall Sale.

When students were asked what advice they would give to upcoming students, their responses are below:

- “The most rewarding part is when you sell the yearling that you watched come into the world a year ago, watched it discover its independence out in the pasture and then watch it blossom from a young, clueless weanling into an athletic yearling that could go on to become a successful racehorse or show horse. You helped transform this young horse into something that someone who has never seen it before has a belief in and that is by far the most rewarding part of the sales.” Paige
- “The most surprising thing I learned while at these sales was how much salesman skills is required. I assumed that you went into the ring, people bid on your horse and then you sold it. There is a lot of background negotiation that goes on before the pre-sale even happens.” Maggie
- “Some advice I would give to students looking to go into this industry is to make sure you really have the passion and drive for it because it is a lot of work. Its super rewarding and fun, but we were in this class for months and it took a lot of patience and repetition in order to get these horses sales-prepped and you just really have to have the discipline to stay with it and not give up.” Kellsie
- “As far as advice for other students interested in working in sales or the equine industry, my advice would be to get as much experience as possible, and ask lots of questions. Take the AnS 317 classes with Nikki! You will learn so much about horse training and sales prep, and you cannot beat the hands-on aspect that you get from her classes.” Grace
- “This was my second year attending the ITBOA Des Moines sale and both years I was surprised by how many people would come by and view the horses simply because it was Iowa State University who bred/sales prepped them. It is almost overwhelming the amount of support the University has gained in the Thoroughbred Industry.” Unnamed Student
All in all, during 2015, 13 yearlings were sold for a gross of \$38,650, making the year’s sales average \$2973, which is down slightly from the 2014 average of \$3400.

Equine Extension and Outreach Activities

Extension Master Equine Manager Program marks 10th year. People from 21 states have completed the Iowa Master Equine Manager (MEM) Program during its decade of existence. The online equine training—one of the few in the nation—is offered through Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to provide professional certification and a comprehensive knowledge of horses to those involved in their care.

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Most states conduct annual horse clinics but they tend to cover only one topic in depth, according to Marion County Extension Director Dale Miller, who is the MEM Program equine educator. “We felt that horse people needed to learn about a lot of different things,” he said. “We wanted to help more people become educated about equine care so they could educate others. It’s about sharing and spreading the word. The MEM Program has been successful in that area.”

Miller and another extension county director, Glen Easter (now deceased), developed the computer-based horse care series in 2005 to address the numerous questions that they received from those who love and own horses. The two avid horsemen spent a year creating four online modules on horse behavior, feeding, health care and how to select a sound animal. Miller, who grew up on a southeast Iowa livestock farm, is a past state fair horse superintendent and judged horses for 40 years.

At the time, no online program was available nationally that covered all the essentials related to horse care. Since then, Michigan State University Extension established My Horse University in 2006.

The MEM Program still continues to attract far-flung participants from coast-to-coast. In the last decade, 194 people have successfully finished all MEM modules to become certified as master equine managers. Some have used the certification as a marketing tool in their businesses, but Miller believes in the potential for others in and outside the state to add it to their resumes.

The clientele range from amateur horse enthusiasts to professionals involved in the horse industry. One pharmaceutical company that keeps a herd of draft horses to produce horse vaccines enrolled its employees in the course. Evaluations indicate that graduates found the modules easy to use and high school teachers appreciated the opportunity to earn continuing education credits.

The majority who enroll are women. “As a rule, women are more passionate about horses than men. If you look at the kids involved in 4-H, more girls stay with horses than the boys do. Women like to show horses and be around them either as a hobby or a lifestyle choice,” Miller said.

Even certified horse judges or stable managers may find the MEM program to be relevant. “They might not have the breadth that we cover,” Miller said. “We can help them become even more well-rounded.”

Of course, the greatest draw for the online course is its ease of participation with 24-hour online access and availability at home. However, the MEM program does offer an optional one-day hands-on course conducted by equine veterinarians at Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine and at three other locations in New York, Connecticut and Nebraska. The attendees check horse respiration, temperature and heart rate along with using an ultrasound machine, examining an eye and wrapping a leg.

“People love hands-on sessions, but time and travel costs limit their opportunities,” Miller said, adding that this

component performs an important function despite the inconvenience. “It’s about education and becoming more knowledgeable, but it’s also about expanding your network of resources.”

At the beginning, the online course was a big shift in how ISU Extension and Outreach delivered training—and one of the first that was fee-based. The MEM Program is priced per module; adults pay \$90 for each module or \$310 for all four. Junior and senior high school students are charged \$50 per module or \$150 for the entire series.

Recently, the MEM Program added a section on hoof care with assistance from the Iowa Professional Farriers Association and is in the process of tailoring other online modules for the professional horse industry. “Our purpose is teaching people how to best care for their horses and that hasn’t changed over the years, but how we deliver it has,” Miller said. More information is available on the Master Equine Manager website. To register for the MEM Program, go to <https://goo.gl/9ryxHq>

The horse judging clinic is designed as an educational opportunity for horse show judges. Participants judge 8 to 10 classes plus take a written examination. From the results, an annual directory is developed that is distributed to county extension offices and open horse show organizations. Over 70 judges participate in the program.

New for 2015 was holding the 4-H Horse Judging Contest and Jamboree in one weekend which was renamed the Extravaganza. Ellsworth Community College worked with Iowa State University to hold the 3-day event. Over 250 youth participated. Table 3 lists the horse programs for 4-Her’s and youth. Winning senior teams from hippology, quiz bowl and horse judging represent Iowa at the Western Nationals in Denver, CO in January 2016.

Equine Science has a new webpage at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/equine>

Table 1. Equine Courses at Iowa State University

Course	Semester Taught
AnS 116 – Practicum in Safe Horse Handling and Welfare	Fall, Summer
AnS 216 – Equine Science	Fall, Spring, Summer
AnS 217 – Equine Farm Practicum	Fall, Spring
AnS 306 - Equine Selection	Fall
AnS 313 – Exercise Physiology of Animals	Fall
ANS 317A – Behavior & Training of the Weanling	Fall
AnS 332 – Animal Reproduction Laboratory Methods - Equine	Spring
AnS 317 – Fundamentals of Equine Behavior and Training – Working with Weanlings	Fall
AnS 415 – Equine Systems Management	Fall, Spring

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Table 2. Adult Equine Extension and Outreach Programs

- Iowa Horse Judges Certification Clinic
- Master Equine Manager (Year-round)

Table 3. 4-H and Youth Equine Extravaganza

• Iowa 4-H Horse Judging Contest	
• Iowa 4-H and Youth Jamboree	
Hippology	Quiz Bowl
Public Speaking	Team Demonstrations
Poster	Photography
Painting	Essay
Poetry	Clothes Horse
Woodworking	Model Horse
Digital Storytelling	Creative Writing
Scrapbooking	
• 4-H Roundup	



Figure 3. 4-H and Youth Horse Judging Contest



Figure 4. Nikki Sterling and No More Exceptions



Figure 1. ANS317A Behavior & Training of the Weanling



Figure 5. Maggie Grieter and Hes Plenty Sweet



Figure 2. Hippology Tack ID at the Extravaganza



Figure 6. Lizzi McMahon and Always a Good Asset