

FALL 2025 EDITION

WILDCAT CANTER

**WELCOME BACK
WILDCATS!**

[PAGE 8]

**UK'S ANNUAL PRE-
VET EXPERIENCE
DAY RETURNS IN
FEBRUARY**

[PAGE 18]

**EXPERIENCE
EQUINE DAY IS
OCT. 10**

[PAGE 23]

Welcome Back, Wildcats!



EDITORIAL STAFF

Mei Mei Baileys, contributor

Brittany Ray, contributor

Bethany Smith, contributor

Brigid Whipp, contributor

Holly Wiemers, MA, APR, senior editor, contributing writer, layout

EDITORIAL BOARD

Alicia Benben, MEd, academic coordinator

Camie Heleski, PhD, senior lecturer

Krista Lea, MS, coordinator, UK Horse Pasture Evaluation Program

Mary Jane Little, MS, academic coordinator

James MacLeod, VMD, PhD, director

Savannah Robin, EdD, lecturer of career and professional development

Jill Stowe, PhD, director of undergraduate studies

Megan Wulster-Radcliffe, PhD, director of strategy of equine initiatives

CONNECT WITH US

N212 Ag Sciences Building North
Lexington, KY 40546-0091

(859) 257-2226

equine@uky.edu

www.uky.edu/equine



@UKAgEquine



@ukequineprograms

Cover photo by Holly Wiemers

Graphic design by Ag Communications Services, LouRae Stacy

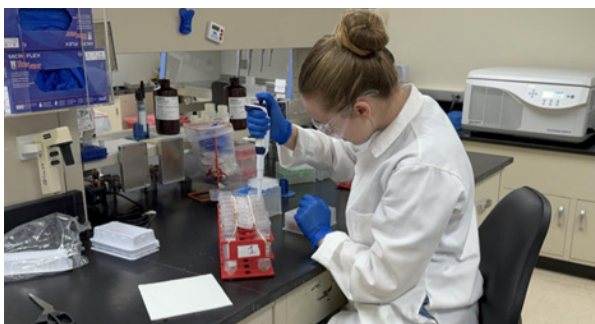
HIGHLIGHTS



WELCOME BACK BBQ HELD TO KICK OFF THE SEMESTER

The annual equine Welcome Back BBQ was held Aug. 28. Joined by program faculty and staff, attendees ate, met representatives of clubs, teams and other organizations, hung out with the Wildcat and spun the wheel for prizes.

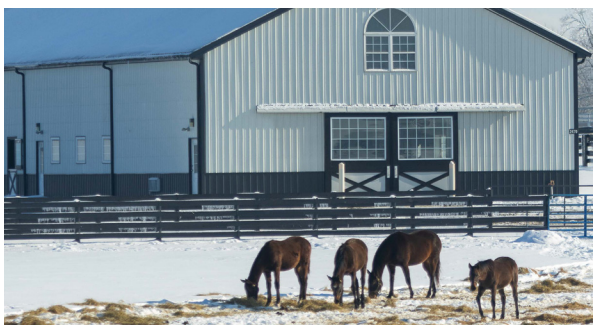
CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



LESS OBVIOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS CAN BE FOUND IN THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH MISSION

UK is a well-known research institution, with many people coming to UK specifically for a research career. For students in the Equine Science and Management major, there are several avenues and opportunities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



KENTUCKY HORSE OWNERS URGED TO PLAN AHEAD AS WEATHER CHALLENGES HAY SUPPLY

Horse owners across Kentucky should start planning now for their winter hay needs as this year's supply is shaping up to be highly variable.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

UPCOMING EVENTS & IMPORTANT DEADLINES

OCTOBER

10/10

Experience Equine Day

NOVEMBER

11/1-2

Weekend of Service

DECEMBER

12/2

ESMA Experiential Learning Showcase

12/18

Graduation Open House

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

WELCOME

SAVANNAH ROBIN
EdD, LECTURER OF CAREER AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Welcome Back, Wildcats!!

We're so excited to kick off another semester in the Equine Science and Management program here in M-G CAFE at the University of Kentucky! Whether you're returning to campus or joining us for the first time, this is the perfect time to dive into everything our program, UK's community and Kentucky's equine industry have to offer.

This fall is packed with opportunities to learn, connect and grow, both inside and outside the classroom. From the Kentucky Signature Industries Career Fair that was held Thursday, Sept. 25 to Keeneland race meets

throughout October, the Weekend of Service the first weekend of November and tons of other events, there are so many ways to get involved, expand your network and strengthen your skills. These experiences not only enrich your time within the program but also help prepare you for the careers and communities you'll impact on in the future.

As a program, we encourage you to step out and try something new; meet new people – some of your future colleagues and best friends are sitting right next to you in classes and you don't even know it yet; and take full advantage of the opportunities waiting

for you. Your journey here is more than just classes—it's about building lasting connections, discovering your passions and making the most of every moment.

Don't forget we are here to support you along the way. Your academic advisors, career mentors, course instructors and more are ready and waiting to help guide you along the path to success. Here's to an exciting semester ahead! We can't wait to see the impact you'll make and how much you will grow!

With excitement and love,

Dr. Savannah Robin



UK Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

CLUBS & TEAMS DIRECTORY

DRESSAGE TEAM

Advisor: Jill Stowe, jill.stowe@uky.edu
OfficialUKDressageTeam@gmail.com

 [uky.dressage](https://www.facebook.com/uky.dressage)

EQUESTRIAN TEAM, IHSA

Advisor: Meghan Wulster-Radcliffe,
meghan.wulster-radcliffe@uky.edu

HUNT SEAT TEAM

Uk.equestrianteam@gmail.com

 [UKequestrianteam](https://www.facebook.com/UKequestrianteam)

WESTERN TEAM

Ukwesternequestrian@gmail.com

 [University of Kentucky Western Equestrian Team IHSA](https://www.facebook.com/UniversityofKentuckyWesternEquestrianTeamIHSA)

EVENTING TEAM

Advisor: Jill Stowe,
jill.stowe@uky.edu
ukeventing@gmail.com

 [ukeventing](https://www.facebook.com/ukeventing)

HORSE RACING CLUB

Advisor: Laurie Lawrence,
llawrenc@uky.edu

 [UKY Horse Racing Club](https://www.facebook.com/UKYHorseRacingClub)

POLO TEAM

Advisor: Roger Brown,
rogerbrown@uky.edu
wildcatukpolo@gmail.com

 [U of Kentucky Polo](https://www.facebook.com/UofKentuckyPolo)

RANCH HORSE TEAM

Advisor: Mary Jane Little,
maryjane.little@uky.edu
ukranchhorseteam@gmail.com

 [UKranchhorseteam](https://www.facebook.com/UKranchhorseteam)

RODEO TEAM

Advisor: Maggie Maynard,
maggie.maynard@uky.edu
ukrodeoteam@gmail.com

 [UKY Rodeo Team](https://www.facebook.com/UKYRodeoTeam)

SADDLE SEAT TEAM

Advisor: Mary Rossano,
mary.rossano@uky.edu
uksaddleseatteam@gmail.com

 [UKY Saddleseat Team](https://www.facebook.com/UKYSaddleseatTeam)

**EQUINE
SCIENCE
REVIEW**

**THE GRADUATE**
gallop

**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 MEI MEI BAILEYS AND BETHANY SMITH

MEET MEI MEI



PHOTOS COURTESY MEI MEI BAILEYS.

I'm Hello! My name is Mei Mei Baileys, and I am a junior here at UK. I have the pleasure of being one of the fall interns for UK Ag Equine Programs.

I did not come from a family who had any background in the equine industry, so when I went to my mom and said, "I want to ride," her immediate thought, like many others, was, "Aren't horses extremely expensive?"

My older sister and I are both adopted from China. Of course I wanted to follow in her footsteps, which meant that I was already playing softball and the violin, so weekly lessons and summer camps were all I did for years. I started those lessons when I was 6 years old and fell in love with Quarter Horses and the Western side of the industry. The lady who I took those lessons from was a key factor in developing the passion I had for horses. She taught me not only how to ride, but the care that is involved with horses as well.

When I was in 8th grade, I suffered a back and shoulder injury that ended my softball career. With a big life transition, the impossible happened. My parents told me that we were able to lease a horse. I started leasing a Draft Mustang mix named Mr. B and taking weekly lessons with his owner. She specialized in myofascial release with both horse and rider. I was able to be her apprentice for about three years until life took another turn. She decided to move, so again what I thought was impossible happened. We bought a horse, a 5-year-old unbroken Fjord because my original career choice was to own a therapeutic riding center. We sent him to a colt

starter who I was fortunate enough to work closely with during this process and learn about working with young horses.

When I turned 16, I got my first paid job at a breeding and training barn with about 70 horses. I was working under another colt starter who was also a competitive barrel racer. This is when my love for rodeo really evolved. I started off just doing barn chores and maintaining the farm but then was given the opportunity to exercise and help tune the barrel horses, put first rides on colts and attend shows. That opportunity enabled me to form relationships and work with some of the top futurity and rodeo trainers.

The friendship that I created with my boss proved to be beneficial once again as later on she started her own business making flex roller curb straps with silicone and steel beads. This is when I was introduced to the business side of the industry. I did things such as social media marketing, contacting clientele and representing her company at large trade shows. Learning all the ins and outs of how to start a business from the ground up is what drove me to move away from the hands-on, science side and pursue the business side of the equine industry. After college, I aim to have an equine job in communications and marketing, event planning, product sales or maybe even HR management with the option of teaching after gaining more experience.

I am so excited to have the chance to learn from everyone in the UK Ag Equine office and expand my skills in communication and



PHOTOS COURTESY BETHANY SMITH.

student relations. I hope that I will be able to share my passion for horses and help others as they have helped me.

MEET BETHANY

Hi, my name is Bethany Smith! I'm so excited to be starting my internship with Ag Equine Programs and cannot wait to connect with students and faculty along the way.

I'm originally from Clay County, Kentucky, but I spent five years living in Florida before moving back right before my freshman year of high school.

No matter where I've lived, animals have always been a big part of my life. I grew up surrounded by pets and critters of all kinds, which helped shape my passion for animal care and the equine industry.

I'm currently a senior at the University of Kentucky, and I've worked hard to gain hands-on experience in the equine and animal care world. I've held roles as a foaling attendant, barn hand, vet tech, tour guide and I've also spent time volunteering with a few

different farms in the Lexington area. During my sophomore year, I was a member of the Wildcat Wranglers, and I'm currently involved in Waggin' N Walkin', a student organization focused on improving the lives of shelter dogs through enrichment, socialization and community support. My best friend co-founded the club, and I'm proud to be part of such a meaningful mission.

Outside of school and work, I love playing polo and hanging out with my friends in my free time. I'm also a proud dog mom to a Red Heeler and Border Collie, Iris and Daisy, who definitely keep life exciting. On top of that, I'm an ambassador for both Monster Energy and a fragrance brand, two opportunities that have pushed me creatively and helped me grow outside of the classroom.

I'm incredibly thankful for this internship opportunity and excited for senior year! Looking forward to learning, growing and meeting some amazing people along the way. Go Cats!



Ag Equine Programs





WELCOME BACK, WILDCATS!

UK's Equine Science and Management program welcomed 92 incoming freshmen and transfer students at the College Welcome Aug. 21, bringing the total program count this fall to 346 students.

Top photo, UK's newest ESMA students; bottom photo, current ESMA students help lead informational sessions. Photos by Holly Wiemers.



WELCOME BACK BBQ HELD TO KICK OFF THE SEMESTER

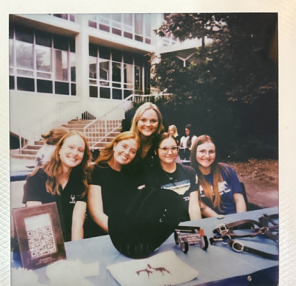
Photos by Mei Mei Baileys and Bethany Smith

UK Ag Equine Programs hosted its annual Welcome Back BBQ Aug. 28 on the UK campus. Joined by program faculty and staff, attendees chowed down on food, met representatives of clubs, teams and other organizations, hung out with the Wildcat and spun the wheel for prizes.









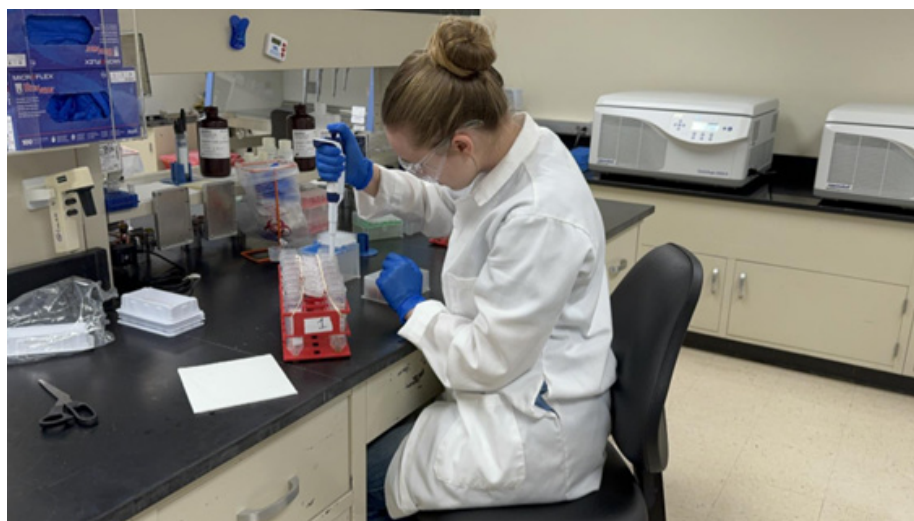
LESS OBVIOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS CAN BE FOUND IN THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH MISSION

*By Brigid Whipp, Summer 2025
UK Equine Communications and
Student Relations Intern*

The University of Kentucky is a well-known research institution, with many people coming to UK specifically for a research career. For students in the Equine Science and Management major, research opportunities may not be as clear as they might be in other majors. However, the program has several avenues and opportunities for students, even some that could be considered less traditional.

UK has several different equine research projects underway. The Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center, the only scientific institute in the United States with nearly all faculty doing full-time research into equine health and diseases, is a big part of the university's equine research efforts. Other research focus areas include efforts within the departments of Plant and Soil Sciences, Agricultural Economics, Animal and Food Sciences, Entomology and Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering. There are quite a few fields of study for anyone interested in undergraduate equine research within the program.

Students in the ESMA major have to complete an experiential learning opportunity in order to graduate. While an internship is the traditional route to fulfill that requirement, students may also choose to participate in a research position instead.



ANNA TURLINGTON, AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, IS SHOWING WORKING IN DR. ALLEN PAGE'S LAB. PHOTO COURTESY DR. ALLEN PAGE.

Savannah Robin, lecturer of career and professional development within UK Ag Equine Programs, manages the internship program for ESMA students. She also helps students who are interested in finding research opportunities.

"There are a lot of misconceptions to address when it comes to what research truly is and how students can be important parts of innovative research to help solve problems within Kentucky and across the world," Robin said.

Allen Page, assistant professor studying inflammation and equine health at the Gluck Center, also mentors undergraduate researchers in his lab.

Undergraduate students in Page's lab work with graduate students and Page himself on occasion. Depending on whether a student

is completing an internship for credit, they may help with ongoing projects or may start their "own" project for their internship. Page also hosts regular lab meetings and journal club discussions to ensure everyone is informed about what's happening in the lab. Students also critically evaluate published papers so they can stay informed about what other researchers are doing.

Krista Lea heads up UK's Horse Pasture Evaluation Program within the Plant and Soil Sciences Department and mentors students looking to get into pasture management and forage production.

For Lea, most undergraduates focus on horse pastures, with some going into forage production as well. Timelines for students may look different, with some

staying for just a few months to answer specific questions and generate specific data, and some staying for years at a time to contribute to bigger data sets.

Undergraduates interested in research do not necessarily need prior relevant knowledge to apply.

"I rarely expect my undergraduates to come in with any relevant knowledge or skills, so on-the-job training is a given. I just need people that are eager and willing to learn," Lea said.

Lily Tynan, an ESMA senior with a pre-vet focus, has spent her summer in the laboratory of Hannah Tiffin, an assistant professor and veterinary entomologist who studies flies and wasps in the Department of Entomology. Parasitoids, which are tiny wasps that prey on fly larvae and pupae, help reduce the fly population and decrease the need for chemical pesticide control. She also conducts research involving ticks on horses and cattle and shares that information through her extension efforts.

Tynan is currently on track to go to vet school. She wanted to add some research to her resume that was not directly involved with horses but was not sure where she wanted to go until Korie Burgess, UK's equine academic advisor, put her in touch with Tiffin.

Tynan's job during the summer was to go to various horse farms around Lexington and put fly larvae and pupae into traps. She would then come back later to check under a microscope for any instances of parasitoids. The goal of their research is to help people spend less on fly repellants and systems, as well as helping equines stay more comfortable during fly season.

Initially Tynan did not have much experience with entomology when she reached out to Tiffin, but she says that Tiffin was a key part of



LILY TYNAN SHOWN COLLECTING SAMPLES. PHOTO COURTESY LILY TYNAN.

furthering her education. She also says that the other students in the lab have made the experience even more enjoyable.

"This project has been an incredible experience for me to work on. With future aspirations of attending vet school, I wanted to diversify myself in a different part of the animal world while still incorporating topics I am interested in, like disease control," Tynan said.

Tynan said she still plans to go to veterinary school, but since she started her research, she has found she has become more interested in disease control and microbiology. She's even considering working with the government on disease control for equines.

Her advice for any other undergraduates interested in research?

"Put yourself out there and be willing to work on a project you might not be interested in, because any opportunity is a good opportunity," she said. "Don't be

afraid to go outside your comfort zone since so many things relate back to horses."

Both Lea and Page agree that working in research as an undergraduate will benefit a student for the rest of their life, even if they don't end up working in research later.

"I believe a big benefit to undergraduates working in research is to simply understand the process and be able to apply the scientific method later in life. Even if they don't end up working in research or agriculture, they will have a better [appreciation] for both and a more educated and critical eye for the rest of their lives," Lea said.



Ag Equine Programs





HORSE OWNERS NEED TO BE READY FOR THIS WINTER AS THE STATE'S HAY SUPPLY IS OFF FROM PREVIOUS YEARS. PHOTO BY MATT BARTON.

KENTUCKY HORSE OWNERS URGED TO PLAN AHEAD AS WEATHER CHALLENGES HAY SUPPLY

by Jordan Strickler

Horse owners across Kentucky should start planning now for their winter hay needs as this year's supply is shaping up to be highly variable.

Bob Coleman, equine extension associate professor with the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment said that weather has been the driving force behind uneven conditions.

"Some areas have gotten plenty of rain, while others have been extremely dry," Coleman said. "That means the hay crop is going to look different depending on where

you're buying it. To expect it to be the same as last year or years ago is not a good assumption. Where inventories are smaller, some people are keeping hay back to sell later, or they just don't have as much to begin with."

The result is a hay supply that varies not only in availability but also in quality. In some fields, hay was cut later than usual because of wet conditions. While it may be free of dust and mold, the crop is more mature and less nutrient-rich than horse owners might expect. Coleman noted that this does not make the hay unusable, it simply means horse owners need to be

realistic about what they are buying.

"People may find that their hay isn't as green as they're used to, or that the nutrient profile doesn't quite match past years," Coleman said. "That doesn't mean it isn't safe to feed. It just means you need to know what you're dealing with."

To avoid guesswork, it is strongly encouraged horse owners get their hay tested. Local Cooperative Extension Service offices can provide the tools and advice for collecting a sample and will help interpret the results from the horse perspective. This allows owners to balance their animals' diets properly

and make the most of the hay's nutrients.

In addition to nutrition concerns, weeds are another issue. Coleman said that foxtail has been showing up in more hay fields. This plant can cause irritation and mouth sores in horses, making it a problem in the hay. He urged horse owners to closely inspect hay before purchase.

Knowing the weight of the bales one is buying is just as important as knowing the type of hay.

"If you're purchasing 100 bales, there's a big difference between 50-pound bales and 40-pound bales," Coleman said. "That's 5,000 pounds of hay versus 4,000 pounds. If your horses require 4,500 pounds

of hay, using the heavier bales would result in a slight surplus, while the lighter bales would leave you short. You really need to know what you're getting, both in quality and in weight."

Coleman also recommends more controlled feeding practices.

"Rather than offering free-choice hay, measure out what your horses need each day," he said. "That helps reduce waste and makes your supply last longer. Also remember that hay from a second or third cutting could be different than the first. This makes it important for horse owners to make gradual changes to give horses time to adapt the same as if you were switching them from hay to grain."

Due to all of these factors, Coleman advises horse owners to act early.

"If you know you're going to need hay, don't wait," he said. "Line up your supply now and be prepared to work with more than one seller if necessary."

For those who cannot secure enough hay, alternatives are available. Processed forage products such as alfalfa cubes, alfalfa-grass cubes or commercial hay pellets can help fill the gap.

For more information about hay testing and feeding strategies, contact your local county extension office.

A GLIMPSE INTO AN EQUINE CLASS AT UK

Here, students in EQM 101, Introduction to the Horse and Horse Industry, had the chance to apply their equine tools and tack identification to an assortment of equipment across several disciplines. Tack used for in-class activities is often donated or on loan from industry supporters, allowing students to have their very own "tack shop" in the classroom.



**FOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS**

PRE-VETERINARY EXPERIENCE DAY

SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 14

**SEAY AUDITORIUM,
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES CENTER**

**REGISTRATION OPENS
OCTOBER 1, VISIT: uky.edu/pre-vet**



UK'S ANNUAL PRE-VET EXPERIENCE DAY RETURNS IN FEBRUARY



by Holly Wiemers

The annual University of Kentucky Pre-Veterinary Experience Day returns Feb. 14, 2026 on UK's campus. The daylong event is designed for high school students interested in a career in veterinary medicine.

The UK Pre-Veterinary Mentoring Program within the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment in collaboration with the Kentucky Horse Council organizes the event. It's supported by a three-year, \$250,000 grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The event will feature informative sessions designed for both participating students and their accompanying parents. In addition, this year's breakout activities will be designed specifically for students along with concurrent, parent-only educational sessions.

"Many students develop a passion for animals and veterinary medicine long before college. However, navigating a successful academic pathway from high school to a veterinary application

can be confusing and intimidating," said Colette Tebeau, senior pre-vet academic coordinator within UK's Pre-Veterinary Mentoring Program. "At this event, we hope to help educate and empower high school students as they follow their dream of becoming a veterinarian."

In the morning, student and parent participants will jointly attend seminars discussing pre-veterinary preparation and veterinary-related topics. Students will engage in hands-on veterinary related activities in the afternoon while parents are introduced to pre-vet student support strategies.

Joint student and parent topics include misconceptions of veterinary medicine, a veterinary careers overview, pathways to veterinary medicine, the importance of starting STEM academic preparation during high school and veterinary student journeys.

Parent presentations include veterinary medicine challenges and resources, healthy support for the aspiring pre-vet student and a "What I wish my family knew" Q&A session with current college students on a pre-vet pathway.

At the end of the day, an optional recruitment session will be held for any students interested in attending UK.

"We are thrilled to extend the resources, networking and enthusiasm to our high school students," said Amber McNamara, director of the UK Pre-Vet Mentoring Program. "This interactive event offers a great opportunity for students interested in veterinary medicine to explore the pathway through interactive lectures, Q&A sessions with pre-vet and veterinary students and engaging hands-on activities, designed to give students a glimpse into this potential future career."

Registration opens Oct. 1 and is expected to fill quickly. Each student should register with a parent or guardian who will also attend the event. The registration fee of \$50 will cover a light breakfast, lunch and snacks, along with entry into morning and afternoon sessions for one student and one parent. Interested students should be in high school or of high school age. This event is not designed for elementary, middle school or college aged students.

UK's Pre-Vet Experience Day is held annually on the Saturday before Presidents' Day and will rotate years between a program designed for college and high school aged students. The 2027 event on Feb. 13 will be designed for college aged students.

Event partners and collaborators include the UK Department of Animal and Food Sciences, UK Ag Equine Programs and the Kentucky Horse Council.

More information about the event, speakers and topics can be found [here](#).

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY NAMES JENNIFER HUNTER ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR EXTENSION AND DIRECTOR



By Derrick Meads

The University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment has named Jennifer Hunter as associate dean for Extension and director of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. Hunter began her new role Sept. 1.

Hunter brings more than two decades of service to Martin-Gatton CAFE and communities across the Commonwealth. A native Kentuckian and UK alum, she has served as a county agent, specialist, professor and administrator—including director of the School of Human Environmental Sciences and assistant extension director for Family and Consumer Sciences.

She has built a strong record of community-focused solutions, engaged scholarship and translational research, with a record that includes more than 850 Extension educational programs, over 160 publications and more than \$75 million in external grants and contracts.

"Dr. Hunter's deep commitment to Kentucky communities, her track record of innovative Extension programming, and her leadership experience make her uniquely suited to guide Cooperative Extension into its next chapter," said Laura Stephenson, dean of the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and vice president for land-grant engagement.

Hunter succeeds Stephenson, who previously held the associate dean and director position before being named dean. Craig Wood, professor of Animal and Food Sciences and assistant director of Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension, has served as acting associate dean and director of extension since Jan. 1, 2025.

"I want to thank Dr. Craig Wood for his leadership during this transition," Stephenson said. "His steady leadership helped ensure continuity for our agents, specialists and staff statewide."

The UK Cooperative Extension Service is a trusted, local resource for all Kentuckians. Through hyper

local, grassroots programming, it brings the university's research, resources, and innovative solutions into every Kentucky county.

Extension's efforts focus on strengthening Kentucky's farms, food systems and natural resources; building the health, well being and economic outcomes for individuals, families and producers; and engaging communities to build vibrant economies by connecting businesses and people.

To learn more about the UK Cooperative Extension Service in all 120 counties in Kentucky, visit <https://extension.ca.uky.edu>.

UK AG EQUINE PROGRAM INTERNS VISIT AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Photos by Mary Jane Little

UK Ag Equine Programs' interns were busy taking UK Equine information into area high schools in September. Pictured are Brittany Ray, in front of the program booth at a career fair Sept. 23 at Dunbar High School in Lexington, and Bethany Smith, leading a class discussion at Scott County High School Sept. 18.



STUDENT AND ALUMNI SHOUTOUTS



Congratulations to ESMA student **Emily Pope**, who was chosen to be a part of the Kimes Ranch Jeans Student Athlete Team, one of only 25 chosen students across the nation.

The student team will be having meet ups and meetings in person throughout the year. Two of the meet ups will be at the Million Dollar Breakaway over Thanksgiving in Arizona, as well as the National Finals Rodeo in the beginning of December in Las Vegas.

On the Rise: **Ben Gowans**, UK ESMA Alum

In this BloodHorse monthly interview, Karen M. Johnson profiles young racing personalities.

Networking and making the right contacts gave Ben Gowans, who had no familial ties in the business, a jumpstart and now a firm foothold in the world of Thoroughbred racing and breeding.

Gowans, 28, works for one of the world's most prolific and respected breeding and racing entities, Gainesway, located near Lexington. While he oversees bloodstock and racing at Gainesway, Gowans also has his own outside clients.

BloodHorse: How were you introduced to racing?

Ben Gowans: Didn't come from a horse racing background but came from a horse background. Growing up, my parents trained Morgan show horses. I was born in Seattle and a move brought us to western Massachusetts when I was 4 or 5.

My first experience with horse racing was coming to Saratoga as a fan. I was on the rail, getting autographs from jockeys. From a very young age, I became transfixed by the sport.

I was on the school bus at 7 or 8 years old, reading Keeneland catalogs. I've been a big horse racing nerd for as long as I can remember.

BH: How did that interest morph into something more?

BG: I worked as an intern for The Saratoga Special when I was a (freshman in) college. I then transferred to the University of Kentucky's equine program my sophomore year.

Through (UK) and my Saratoga Special connections, I was set up with the great folks at Mill Ridge Farm and worked there through college. I did a little bit of everything. I mainly worked under (managing partner) Headley Bell. Basically, whatever Headley was doing, I was working on as well. I learned a lot during that process and got a bit of a taste for everything racing and bloodstock related.

After graduating (in 2021), a great opportunity came about to work for Gainesway. I've worked there for a little more than four years now.

I originally started under Alex Solis (II) at the time he was director of racing and bloodstock. He was very kind to

bring me on board to be his assistant at Gainesway. When he stepped away in January 2023, I took on more of his role.

BH: What are your duties?

BG: My main focus is looking after our racing interests, and that also comes along with always looking for people who might want to sell with us at the sales.

We're a very small, tight-knit group at Gainesway, especially in the office, and we always help out and pitch in when anything is needed. Gainesway is involved in all aspects of the industry. There is always something to do and help out with, but my main (responsibility) would be our racing interests.

To read the story in its entirety, visit: <https://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/286925/on-the-rise-ben-gowans>

ESMA alums shine at the Saddlebred World Championship Show

While attending the World Championship Show in Louisville, Kentucky, in August, Bob Coleman, faculty member within UK's Department of Animal and Food Sciences and longtime instructor within the ESMA program, shares his experience spotting program alums.

"It was a great show. While watching I noted that during the conformation inspection and line ups there were four ESMA graduates in the arena," he said.

Shout out to alums Caitlin Cooper, Desmar Stables; Ethan Roetman, an assistant trainer at Grey Ridge Stables; Foster Roberts, there to help Autumn Hills Farms; and Cydni- Simmons Meintjes, owner and founder of High Veld Farms.

"It's exciting to see our graduates involved in such a significant way," he said.



Ag Equine Programs





Calling Future Wildcats!

Don't miss your chance to learn more about UK's Equine Science & Management Program, meet our faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and tour our facilities and local industry. This opportunity includes a panel presentation from current students and a trip to UK Maine Chance Farm and more!

The event will take place Oct. 10 at the UK Student Center Senate Chamber.

Register by October 3 here: <https://equine.mgcafe.uky.edu/events/experience-equine-day-3>.



Ag Equine Programs



N212 Ag Sciences Building North
Lexington, KY 40546-0091
Office: (859) 257-2226
equine@uky.edu
www.uky.edu/equine