Legends of Ranching is Almost Here!
by Morgan Offutt

Many of the Equine Science students have been preparing for the Legends of Ranching Performance Horse Sale all year, and the big day is almost here. The horse training students have been working with their young horses since the fall semester, and are continuing to work tirelessly to make sure their horses are ready for the Wagonhound Student Competition and the big sale. The Sales Class has been working hard to ensure all the details fall in place for all of the Legends of Ranching Events. In addition to the Wagonhound Student Competition and Legends of Ranching Performance Horse Sale, there is also a Futurity and Maturity Horse Show the day before the sale, in which only horses previously sold in Legends of Ranching Sales can compete. Come out and watch these events in order to support the hard working students in our program! Here are the important dates to keep in mind so you don’t miss any of these events:

**Wagonhound Student Competition:** Saturday, April 14th in the B.W. Pickett Arena at 10 a.m.

**3rd Annual Futurity and Maturity Horse Show:** Friday, April 20th in the B.W. Pickett Arena starting at 8 a.m.

**13th Annual Legends of Ranching Performance Horse Sale:** Saturday, April 21st in the B.W. Pickett Arena. Preview begins at 9 a.m., sale begins at 1 p.m. Free lunch is provided!
Career Spotlight: Equine Veterinarian
Dr. Luke Bass, DVM, MS, DABVP (Equine)

By Dana E. Pugh

Dr. Bass is one of Colorado State University's Veterinary Teaching Hospital's very own Equine Field Service Veterinarians. Dr. Bass grew up in a small town in Louisiana consisting of about 2000 people. He was part of the rodeo team and a graduation class of 24 students. Dr. Bass grew up with horses and knew that he always wanted a career within the equine industry. Dr. Bass had what he says is a pretty typical path to veterinary school.

After high school, Dr. Bass went on to LSU where he found himself in a population of 33,000 students alone. Dr. Bass says it was quite the transition, but with time he was able to become accustomed to a large university in a large town. However, the struggle was real. He learned that there were tons of other people in his major with the same background, and this was a good thing for his social and academic situation.

“Learning how to manage yourself in school came hard for me,” says Dr. Bass. He also says that he struggled for the first couple of years in college. He knew that a 2.7 GPA was not good enough for veterinary school. So, Dr. Bass committed himself to his education and made the social scene take a back seat.

While attending LSU he was on the livestock judging team. This experience brought him to Fort Collins and the Equine Center for a practice round prior to the judging team going to the National Western Competition. It was at this point Dr. Bass knew CSU and Fort Collins was the place he wanted to continue his education. He also knew that with his academic standing, he was going to have to work hard to make that happen.

After completing his degree in Animal Science at LSU, he knew he was not mentally ready to apply to veterinary school. So, he moved to Fort Collins to complete his Master’s degree in Equine Reproduction at the Equine Reproduction Laboratory. During Dr. Bass's graduate school program with CSU at the ERL, veterinary medicine became attractive to him, appearing to be that career in the equine industry he was always looking for. The ERL was the place that actually solidified his love for veterinary medicine. He enjoyed the science of it all, he enjoyed being around the horses, and he liked that it would give him the ability to teach horse owners, veterinarians and students.
“I was lucky enough to get accepted into veterinary school at CSU and I have loved it ever since,” says Dr. Bass. Although veterinary school was his first career choice, at that point in his life he really did not have a back-up plan. “Now I think a job managing the greens at Pebble Beach Golf Resort sounds like it would be a great alternative,” says Dr. Bass.

“I have found the equine industry is built on hard work, perseverance, and knowing the right people to help you highlight your strengths,” Dr. Bass says as a word of wisdom for Equine Science students. “You will have to be patient, keep your head down, and never burn a bridge with anyone. There are so many career paths within this small industry that allow you to continue to develop as a person.”

In addition to offering words of wisdom for equine science students, Dr. Bass also gave advice for graduating students who are preparing to transition from school to the industry. “Lots of students want success to happen overnight,” he says. “This industry takes time and you definitely have to show your skills before the success comes your way. Don’t expect anyone to give you anything. You have to work for what you get. As hard as it can be at times, enjoy the journey along your destination and be willing to help others along your ride.”

Dr. Bass also discussed his particular career choice as an equine veterinarian and what it is about being a veterinarian that he likes most. He says that he cherishes the days where he can help a client with a tough problem with their horse and gets to see that horse back in action doing what they love. He also says that providing peace to situations where there was uncertainty can be very rewarding and fulfilling.

Being a veterinarian comes with a lot of challenges. Dr. Bass discussed some of those challenges and how he deals with them. “It can be really hard when you have done all you can for a horse and the situation still looks dire,” he says. “Those days you feel terrible for the horse and client, knowing that nothing can be done to save the animal. Those are hard, but also can be the most comforting for the client, [knowing] they have nothing else that can be done.”

“The hard part may be turning yourself around to see the next client, which does not have any idea of what you just left behind,” Dr. Bass says. “It’s more about mental perseverance than physical some days.”

In conclusion, Dr. Bass offers a final word of advice. “There are lots of ups and downs but keeping a constant professional approach allows clients and patients to trust your skills and know you are there to help,” Dr. Bass says.

A special thank you to Dr. Bass for taking the time out of his busy schedule to provide us all with some insight to a career in veterinary medicine. Thank you to the CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital for providing photos.
First-hand Look at the Horse Training Class
Interview with Kelsey Dawson

by Katie Feighner

ANEO 340 and 341, commonly referred to as the horse training class, may be one of the most well-known and sought-after classes within the Equine Sciences program. The class encompasses each student being assigned a young colt or filly at the beginning of the Fall semester and training that horse throughout the Fall and Spring semesters to be sold in April at the Legends of Ranching Performance Horse Sale. This year, the sale is taking place at the B.W. Pickett Equine Center on Saturday, April 21st. I was able to sit down and chat with current student Kelsey Dawson in order to understand her perspective of what the class is like.

Why did you want to get involved with the LOR program?

I thought that the class sounded really interesting, and I didn't think I would ever have an opportunity like it again. I decided to take the class because it is so unique and hands-on.

What ranch is your horse from? What do you like most about your horse?

My horse is from Spur Cross Ranch. He is really athletic and is quite smart.

What do you enjoy about the class? What is a normal class day like?

I love how hands-on the class is. Every day is different. We get to work with the horses almost every class, either on the ground or in the saddle. We learn more about the colts as well as our own riding each day.

What was your first ride on your colt like?

Putting the first ride on my colt was an incredible experience. Everything went relatively smoothly and it was a lot of fun. All of the work that we had done on the ground helped us to have a successful and quiet first ride.

What are some challenges you have faced in the LOR program?

Working with a young horse comes with a lot of challenges. They develop new habits every day, and correcting their bad habits can seem like a never ending process. However, seeing them improve is very fulfilling.

What advice would you give students who would like to take the class? How can they get the most out of their experience?

My advice would be not to forget that you are in the class to learn. Not everything is going to be perfect every time, and that is okay. Don't get too focused on what everyone else is doing; focus on yourself and your colt and make as many improvements as you can.
Apply to be an Equine Science Steward!
by Annie Beckham

The CSU Equine Science Stewards are undergraduate student leaders in the Department of Animal Sciences that are selected to act as ambassadors for the Equine Science program as a whole. In my four years of being a Steward I have enhanced and developed leadership skills, been exposed to multiple opportunities within the industry and the Colorado State University community, attended various shows and events to promote the Equine Science program, and developed long lasting relationships with my fellow Stewards, faculty and staff. I believe my college experience would have been very different if I had not been involved with Equine Science Stewards, and it is something that I will look back on and cherish. I most thoroughly enjoyed sharing my passion for the Equine Sciences program through giving tours to prospective students and in working to build a stronger community among all students, faculty and staff within the College of Agricultural Sciences. It is such an honor to be given the opportunity to represent the department as an Equine Science Steward. I would certainly highly encourage anyone interested in becoming a Steward to apply!

To apply, submit a completed application, current resume, and letter of recommendation to Sarah Matlock at sarah.matlock@colostate.edu. The link to the application can be found on our Facebook Page (CSU Equine Science Stewards) or on csuequine.com (the link is posted on the home page).

Applications are due no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 4th!
Equine Science Steward Pursues Undergraduate Research
By Valerie Lindstrom

My name is Valerie Lindstrom and I am a junior here at Colorado State. My career goals include working in animal research to better and advance this growing industry. Ideally, equine research would be my first option, with livestock and wildlife research being my second. As I started my junior year, I was still unsure of what career path I wanted to go down, but knew I was motivated to be a part of the sciences. I decided to give research a chance to see how I like it. So, I began working in Dr. Coleman’s Equine Breeding and Genetics lab and soon realized how much I like working in a lab setting.

This semester, I took a research lab assistant position in the Meat Safety and Microbiology Lab working with Dr. Belk and PhD student, Hailey Davis. This research includes a two-step process where Hailey and I process ten different types of beef samples which then go on to be analyzed using mass-spectrometry techniques to isolate levels of ractopamine in each of the samples. These levels of ractopamine, a feed additive used for growth promotion, must be below a certain threshold in order for the U.S. to export the beef products. The purpose of this project is to promote proper beef production techniques to further improve meat safety in the industry. Working on this project has further ascertained that I want to pursue research in my career. I feel that research is an integral part of any industry, as new advances are necessary for improvement. I am excited to be a part of an ever-changing industry.

Applied Course Corner: Techniques in Therapeutic Riding
by Lillian Esterl-Byrne

The Techniques in Therapeutic Riding applied equine science class is a general introduction to the world of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies. This class allows students to have in-class learning about some of the disabilities that equine therapy can be used for as a form of therapy. In addition to this classroom time, students are also able to have hands-on experience in therapeutic riding sessions. This class partners with the Front Range Exceptional Equestrians program and allows students to get actively involved with their members’ lessons as side walkers and horse leaders.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in this class. It has been such a unique experience to be able to see the power that interacting with horses can have on a person. Each week I look forward to getting to work with my rider and be able to see how she comes alive when she is on a horse during her lessons. It is incredible to see the impact that horseback riding can have on an individual and how it can work to improve various areas of their lives.

This class is a very rewarding experience because you are able to actively work with members and be a part of the progress they make while gaining valuable hands on learning experience. I would recommend this applied class to anyone who has even the slightest interest in equine therapeutic riding because it is a wonderful opportunity to witness the powerful effect that horses can have.
Club of the Issue: Mountain Riders Debut New Horse Leasing Program
by Morgan Offutt

The CSU Mountain Riders Horse Club continues to grow in members and involvement in the Equine Sciences program thanks to the tireless efforts of the officer team. The club introduced a horse leasing opportunity for its members this year, and this big step has helped grow the club’s members, educate members on horse care and management, and allow students hands-on experience caring for their own horse.

Mountain Riders are focusing on a new direction for the club that emphasizes education and hands on horse experience, according to the club’s President, Zachary Sprague. The club used to be centered around trail riding, packing and outfitting. However, when Sprague first became a member his freshman year at CSU, he saw the club losing members and momentum. Following the officer team quitting a few weeks into the semester, Sprague was asked to be the club’s President.

“This club is not going well. What can I do to turn this around?” Sprague says he thought to himself at the time. According to Sprague, he had to put in a lot of hard work on his own in the beginning. Finally, he found an officer team that was willing to help him. “They are really what keeps the club going now,” says Sprague.

He says his goal was to keep the club alive and figure out what needs to be changed. The club began focusing on skill-based activities that allowed students to get hands-on experience, rather than focusing on packing and outfitting every single week. Sprague brought in his truck and trailer and taught members how to safely operate a trailer. He also brought in guest speakers to educate members on various topics, from cleaning tack, basic farrier skills, and first aid, in addition to going on field trips to places like KeSa Quarter Horses and Colorado Equestrian Academy.

The club has built up a number of industry partners that allow for discounted trips, lessons, or opportunities for members. While the club has taken a new focus, it still goes on packing and outfitting trips, thanks to a partnership with Jim Brink from Sweetwater Ranch, as well as camping trips and trail rides. However, the shift has focused to more weekly opportunities to learn and develop horsemanship skills.

However, the most exciting venture the club has taken on is their horse leasing program. The club has partnered with Old Sage Riding Stables, a guest ranch near Colorado Springs. The ranch only uses its horses during the summer months when guests are at the ranch, so they generously offered to lease their horses to Mountain Riders members during the school year. This benefits Old Sage because they have people to care for their horses during the off season. In addition, this benefits Mountain Riders because it allows members hands-on experience caring for their own horse.
Leasing these horses provides opportunities for members to learn in a hands-on setting. The club helps teach them horsemanship skills and how to take care of their horses. Sprague referred to the program as a “learning-lease.” Students learn as they go, and the club provides them with education and the right people to contact.

The students who lease the horses are responsible for feeding, riding, and maintaining the horses under their care. The current cost to lease a horse is $200 per month, or $100 per person if two members share a horse. Members are responsible for farrier costs and minor vet costs, but Old Sage will take care of any major issues. The club plays a role in making sure leasers aware of safety measures and ensuring none of the leasers are negligent towards their horses.

The horses are kept in a 100-acre pasture off Overland Trail, backing up to the CSU Foothills property. There is access to the Equine Center from this property, and many members choose to ride over on open ride nights, which are Mondays 7-9 in the Adams-Atkinson Arena, and Wednesdays at 5 before regular meetings.

This lease program is perfect for students who may not have as much horse experience as other students within the program. The club provides an avenue for hands-on learning without having to own a horse or having grown up in the industry. Many of the club’s members are not Equine Science majors, either. The club has members majoring in biology, communications, business, or various Ag-related majors. Students interested in leasing a horse are evaluated by the officers and matched up with a horse that suits their experience level and riding skills. This allows for beginners to have a safe, enjoyable first experience caring for a horse.

According to Sprague, the current goal is to continue this lease program every year, which helps as an incentive for people to join the club. The club is currently leasing 14 horses, but there are many more horses available through Old Sage, that someday they could potentially create a lease program big enough for the Equine Science program as a whole. Ultimately, says Sprague, it is up to the new officer team to determine how to move forward.

If you are interested in becoming a part of Mountain Riders, meetings are every Wednesday 6-8 p.m. in the Legends of Ranching Barn. Dues are $20 per semester, and only members are able to take advantage of the leasing opportunity. Make sure to visit their Facebook page: CSU Mountain Riders Horse Club.
Upcoming Event Schedule

March:

March 19th - 23rd: Veterinary Medicine Junior Practicums

March 23rd - 24th: CSU Polo Match

March 30th - 31st: Bucking Bull Futurity

April:

April 4th: Equine Science Stewards Applications are due!

April 5th - 8th: Skyline Stampede Rodeo

April 9th - 13th: CSU JV Polo Tournament

April 14th: Wagonhound Student Competition

April 20th: Legends of Ranching Futurity and Maturity Horse Show

April 21st: Legends of Ranching Performance Horse Sale

April 27th - 29th: CSU Polo Alumni

April 30th: FFA Career Development Event

May:

May 11th: Equine & Animal Science Graduation Reception hosted by Equine Science Stewards

May 12th: College of Agricultural Sciences Graduation Reception

May 11 - 13th: CLA Jackpot
Acknowledgments

Thank you to all of those who participated in creating this edition of the Equine Connection Newsletter.

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