Greetings from the Loveliest Village on the Plains!

We are in our first month of classes for the 2013-2014 academic year. This fall we are welcoming fourteen incoming freshmen into the Animal Sciences – Equine Science Option. Several of these students are using the major as a means to meet veterinary school admissions requirements while others are planning on careers in the equine industry.

During the first week of class all students in the hands-on equine science courses are required to participate in a mandatory Horse Center orientation and safety review. It doesn’t matter if the student is a life-long horse owner, a senior in their third hands-on course, or a long-time horse enthusiast with limited experience, everyone must review basic safe handling procedures and practice their quick-release knots.

Student organizations are in the midst of their organizational meetings and kick-off functions. This issue’s Spotlight article is on Horseman’s Club President Connie Fike. Learn more about fall activities for the Horseman’s and Stock Horse clubs plus the fall schedule for the NCAA Equestrian Team in the Organization Updates.

The popular HORSE U program will be back again this fall for youth ages 9 and up. More details can be found in the Upcoming Events section.

All degree programs go through periodic reviews and updates, and the Animal Sciences – Equine Science Option program is no different. These changes are important in keeping the program relevant and beneficial for our students and the future employers they will work for. Read more about the curriculum changes on the Last Page.

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Animal Sciences – Equine Science Option senior Connie Fike is a native of Shrewsbury, PA. Though she took riding lessons as a kid, much of her hands-on involvement with horses came from a job at Thoroughbred and Standardbred breeding farm about the time she started college. In addition to her course work and student worker position at the AU Horse Center, Connie is the president of the AU Horseman’s Club for 2013-2014.

Why did you choose to major in Animal Sciences – Equine Science Option at Auburn University?

I chose the Equine Science option because of my love of horses. My goal has always been to become a large animal vet and I specifically want to work with the equine athlete. As I was deciding on a major, I thought that specializing in equine science would be the best route to follow. Auburn University allowed me to major in equine science where other programs I considered only offered minors. It felt like a good fit.

Why did you want to become President of the Horseman’s Club?

Being involved in activities outside of class plays a huge role in college life. Last year I was Treasurer of the club and I felt that I had a lot of good ideas to bring to the table as an officer. To make those ideas a reality, it only made sense to take the reins of the club.

What are some of your goals for the Horseman’s Club this year?

My main focus for the club this year is hands-on activities. I feel like students spend too much time in the classroom as it is so no one wants to sit in a room for another hour and a half at night when they could be getting down and dirty actually working with the horses while learning! Some other goals for the year are student involvement in various club activities and getting students involved in horse related volunteer opportunities.

What are some of the activities planned for the Horseman’s Club this year?

Two of the main activities that I am personally excited about are the weanling handling demonstration given by Angela Chandler and the equine massage therapy demonstration given by Maggie Salter. These are both going to be held at the Horse Center and will be using the university’s teaching horses. We will also be holding an item drive for (local equine-assisted activity ministry) Storybook Farm as well as hosting the St. Jude Trail Ride in October and in April.

What advice do you have for an incoming freshman in the Equine Science program?

Get involved within the university. Join clubs, volunteer, ask about research opportunities with professors. The more you’re involved and the more people you meet, the more you learn!
Horseman’s Club

The AU Horseman’s Club started the year with their annual Kick-Off event on Tuesday, September 3 at the AU Horse Center. Activities this semester include volunteer days, educational demonstrations, and guest speakers.

The fall Saddle Up for St. Jude Trail Ride will be Saturday, November 9 at Heart of Dixie in Troy, AL. The ride is open to the public. A $15 minimum donation is required to participate, with money going to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. The club is also selling t-shirts for $15, with profits going to St. Jude. Contact St. Jude ride chair Sarah Hunter, seh0035@auburn.edu, for more information.

Stock Horse Club

The AU Stock Horse Club became an official Auburn University student organization this fall. The club will have monthly business meetings on campus, with the first meeting held Monday, September 16. Weekly practices will be starting soon at a local barn and are open to all club members. Students do need to provide their own horse in order to participate.

The club is looking forward to their first competition later this semester. In this region of the country collegiate stock horse competitions are held within regular American Stock Horse Association-sanctioned shows. Collegiate teams consist of six riders representing their school with two riders each in the novice, limited non-pro, and non-pro/open divisions. Riders compete against each other for individual honors. Team awards are given when three or more schools are represented by teams in a collegiate competition.

For more information about the AU Stock Horse Club contact club president Katie Hill, ekh0013@auburn.edu.
Equestrian Team

After winning the NCEA Huntseat and Overall Championships this spring, the Auburn Equestrian Team is setting their sights on another national championship. The team lost only two members of their national championship squad so their roster is loaded with experienced seniors and talented underclassmen.

The Tigers have four home meets this fall. They start the season with two non-conference match-ups against Fresno State University on September 28 and University of Tennessee – Martin on October 19, both beginning at 10 a.m. South Carolina and Georgia round out the fall season home schedule with meets at 10 a.m. on November 9 and 3 p.m. on November 15, respectively. More information on the AU Equestrian Team can be found through the Auburn Athletics web site, http://www.auburntigers.com/sports/w-equest/aus-w-equest-body.html
The Department of Animal Sciences will host a Horse Ownership Resources, Skills and Education for Youth (HORSE U) workshop on Saturday, November 2, 2013. The program begins at 8:30 a.m. the Stanley Wilson Beef Teaching Unit on the Auburn University campus. The $15 registration fee includes lunch and a t-shirt.

The HORSE U program will focus on information and skills important for youth ages 9 and up who work with horses. Participants will attend sessions on parasite control and resistance, trailer safety, and a trivia session about basic horse knowledge. Hands-on components include warm-up/cool-down clinic, aging by teeth, and emergency care. The sessions are designed to be educational for everyone whether they are involved in showing, speed events, or recreational riding.

Part of the day will be spent at the Horse Center, and transportation will be provided for the participants between the facilities. Participants will be required to be dressed appropriately for working around horses.

High school-aged participants and their parents also are invited to attend a program for prospective students on Friday, November 1 presented by the College of Agriculture. Participants can request more information on this session when they register for HORSE U.

HORSE U is made possible through sponsorships from several businesses and organizations. The Alabama Horse Council, Alabama Cattlemen’s Association, and the Alabama Farmers Cooperative are among those who will be participating in the sponsors’ fair at the event.

The deadline for HORSE U registration is October 18. Space is limited to 150 participants. Parents and chaperones are encouraged to register and participate. Online registration is available at http://www.ag.auburn.edu/ansc/news/HORSEU2013.php. For additional information contact Dr. Betsy Wagner at elw0001@auburn.edu or 334-844-7503.
Faculty and staff in the equine science program initiated a review of courses and curriculum requirements over the past year. This was the first self-assessment since the major was introduced in 2006. The assessment included an evaluation of course content, analysis of student course evaluations, and input from members of our industry liaison group.

Seven equine science courses are part of the “directed electives” menu for the option, where students must take a minimum of four of these courses as part of their program requirements. Beginning this year, all seven of these classes are now worth three credit hours each (six were previously two hour each). This change reflects the amount of work expected of the students and the depth of information and knowledge covered in the course. It also brings our classes closer in line with the credit value of comparable courses at other institutions.

The other major change affects new students beginning with this fall’s freshmen class. After reviewing the graduation records from the first six years of the Equine Science curriculum we found the majority of our students are going into a business-based aspect of animal agriculture. To better prepare our students for the challenges they will face, new students will be required to take a Principles of Agribusiness Management course. Current students also have the option of taking this class. We are excited about this change and know it will make our students more prepared for careers in the equine industry.

To learn more about the undergraduate major in Animal Sciences – Equine Science Option and other undergraduate offerings in the Department of Animal Sciences, go to http://www.ag.auburn.edu/ansc/students/.

The Equine Program Newsletter is published quarterly by the Department of Animal Sciences at Auburn University. Your comments and alumni updates are welcomed. Please forward future requests and additions to the mailing list to Candace Vann at cpv0002@auburn.edu