2012 Equine Industry Tour-
Helping Students Find a Career in the Equine Industry
By Amy McLean, PhD

Recently members of the Collegiate Horsemen’s Association and students enrolled in a course called Intro to Equine Industries from Laramie County Community College (taught by Mr. Wayne Miller) in Cheyenne joined together and traveled to the heart of horse country to learn more about the industry as a whole. Probably one of the biggest questions proposed by those interested in pursuing careers in the Equine field is where they will find a job. The idea behind this tour was to visit many facets of the industry and enlighten the students with the multiple opportunities currently available despite much suspicion about where graduates will get a job with an equine degree. Students saw first hand many famous horses and successful people associated with or from the state of Wyoming or the University of Wyoming succeeding in the horse world.

The trip started out in Amarillo, Texas visiting the American Quarter Horse Association headquarters and the Hall of Fame Museum. The students learned more about the operations of the largest single breed organization in the world. Over 200 hundred employees work

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at the headquarters. From the mailroom to registration to how the official publication of AQHA is produced, the students saw first hand a variety of possibilities to integrate their love for horses and work in the industry. The next stop was a legendary ranch, the 6666’s in Guthrie, TX. Students had the chance to see one of the oldest and most famous ranches’ breeding and training program. When the manager was asked how many horses were there his response- “too many to count” and for miles all one could see were horses! The ranch was so large they had their own veterinary clinic! Several of the famous cutting bred stallions at this location are Wyoming owned horses (Playboy’s Buck Fever, owned by Miller Land and Livestock of Big Piney, WY, Genuine Masterpiece and WR this Catsmart owned by Wagonhound Land and Livestock, Douglas, WY). Once again the students were exposed to opportunities in the equine world from working on site as a veterinarian or vet technician, a breeding barn manager, foaling out mares, a horse trainer or assistant trainer or managing the office (which included four people). They also saw that most people working on the ranch from assistant trainers to the person foaling out mares had graduated from a four-year program.

Other industry stops including visiting a state of the art Equine Veterinary Medicine clinic that employed 28 veterinarians and managed other smaller offices. ESMS also owned the only hyperbaric treatment chamber in the state of Texas for horses. In addition, the students had the chance to meet a University of Wyoming graduate, Dr. Kory Niswender, DVM, a board certified reproduction specialist that was the head veterinarian at ESMS on the Brazos where famous stallions such as Peptoboonsmal, owned by Jackson Land and Cattle, LLC of Jackson, WY stood at the price of $15,000/breeding.

Also, students visited the Texas Institution of Equine Dentistry and learned first hand more about becoming a dentist. After leaving Weatherford, TX the next stops would include learning about the feed industry, horse sales, and a color breed association for horses. The groups toured Purina Mill’s in Fort Worth, TX and learned about their quality assurance program, how the company tested ingredients for mycotoxins, how NIRS was used to test for nutrient content per ingredient and how horse feed was manufactured. The next stop included visiting the American Paint Horse Association and learning about opportunities to work for an association such as conducting a journalism internship. Later in the day the students got to visit one on one with Mr. Bob Day who was an integral part of establishing the Equine Program years ago in Cheyenne about the premier auction company, Western Bloodstock. Western Bloodstock is a sales or auction company that primarily host auctions for the National Cutting Horse Association.

The next day the students joined up with another group of equine students from North Central Texas College to visit farms in the Gainesville, TX area. The students saw everything from how donkeys are used to halter break colts, how race horses are fitted for sales, how halter horses are prepared for shows, insight from horse trainers on how to make it in the industry, the farm that raised a Kentucky Derby winner-Alysheba, riding demonstration from 3 million dollar earner, Mr. Tim McQuay, veterinarians’ artificially inseminating mares, some of the nation’s leading reining horse sires and a storm shelter built for prized cutting horse stallions.

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The last day of the industry tour included a behind the scene tour of Remington Racetrack in Oklahoma City, Ok. The students were able to visit with a race trainer, a jockey, watch horses gallop and learn more about the ins and outs of the race horse industry on both the quarter horse and thoroughbred side. The day ended with the general manager, Mr. Scott Wells of Remington Park inviting the students to join in on a winning photo with a jockey, G.R. Carter, who had competed in rodeos in Wyoming and was one of the most successful jockeys at that track. The purse for the race was named the University of Wyoming purse and paid out $16,600.

When the students from the University of Wyoming Collegiate Horsemen’s Association were asked what was their favorite part of the trip- each had their own ideas on what they enjoyed the most. In the end, the farm, ranch, or place that was chosen by each student turned out to most closely relate to that student’s interest in regards to a career paths and opportunities. Each place visited also offered internships and the students were able to interact with one intern at McQuay’s Stables from the University of Wyoming, Lindsey Hankins and witness first hand what she did on a day-to-day basis. The students also witnessed how each part of the industry from the vet clinic, to the feed mill to the stallion station to the race track to the sales company relied on another part of the industry in order to succeed. In general, it’s conceivable to assume the connection and overlap was overlooked prior to the trip. Another fact that the students found encouraging to know was that most of the professionals were not born into the equine industry yet had found a way to succeed. All in all, the students returned excited and motivated to know more about the industry and that there are multiple ways to work within the equine industry if you are not afraid to work hard and be creative.
Drought, Age and Source Marketing & Bull Turnout
Ivan Rush, Tri State Livestock News

Cattle are starting to move to grass. In a few areas sufficient moisture has allowed the grass to get a start; still much more rainfall is needed to produce good summer pasture. Rainfall is unpredictable, but unless rain comes fairly soon, grass will be short.

See full article at: http://www.tsln.com/article/20120514/TSLN01/120519962/1031&ParentProfile=1001

Managing Young Bulls
Geni Wren, Bovine Veterinarian Magazine

It’s difficult to manage nutrition of the young bull after turnout with the cows in its first breeding season, but there are some things that can be done to maximize the season. Bulls should be transitioned slowly to a roughage diet and introduced to pasture at least 10 days before being turned in with the cows.


Make Estrus Sync Count
Sara Brown, Farm Journal Livestock and Production Editor

Cattle producers can’t count on the luck of the draw when it comes to reproductive technology—with more investments in estrus synchronization technology and breeding of high-value animals, it is too costly to make a mistake. To get the most out of timed breeding and controlled internal drug release (CIDR) breeding technology, proper administration of the Eazi-Breed CIDR in the cow is essential, says John Rodgers, a Pfizer Animal Health veterinarian.

See full article at: http://www.agweb.com/livestock/beef/article/make_estrus_sync_count/
Several events in the last month have had an impact on the beef industry, especially the finely textured beef discussion, as well as the most recent BSE detected animal in California. To me, this is further evidence that we need to be paying attention to our own production practices, which includes Beef Quality Assurance. Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) has been an important program in the Western and Midwestern states since the early 1980’s. As beef producers we have all seen the information on how BQA programs were successful in reducing the incidence of injection site blemishes. Although not all ranchers are BQA-Certified, nearly all are aware of the importance of correct administration of shots, recognizing and following proper withdrawal times, giving shots in front of the shoulder, and using the subcutaneous (Sub-Q) route of administration when possible.

I believe an even more important benefit of Beef Quality Assurance is that the national program most likely helped all beef producers by minimizing the amount of federal and state regulations on our industry. By implementing a voluntary program in response to a problem, and by documenting the dramatic improvements, beef producers provided evidence that they can recognize a problem and take voluntary steps to fix it. This was, and is, an important accomplishment that shows that beef producers are competent stewards that want to improve the quality of our product, taking additional steps to improve quality without any direct, immediate rewards.

So, as beef producers, we have a good example of a “success story” for the industry, for consumers, and for federal and state agencies to consider. But what have we done lately? I’m concerned that although we have adopted many of the BQA practices discussed in the 80’s and 90’s, we haven’t moved on to the next important issue in the beef industry and applied our combined efforts to improve the situation. So what ARE the next important topics to tackle? To spark some discussion, I’ll name a few.

**Animal Welfare and Animal Handling:** As proud beef producers, we tend to be easily offended when someone, or some group, questions our production practices. However, continued press coverage serves as a reminder that animal welfare and animal handling is an important topic for the industry. The BQA infrastructure already established in approximately 40 states is a good mechanism to try and develop educational tools focused on animal handling. Already several states have worked together, along with the BQA division of NCBA, in developing a cattle facilities checklist, animal transportation guidelines, and educational tools for auction barns discussing proper cattle handling. Many of these programs and publications are listed within the BQA section of NCBA’s website [www.beefusa.org](http://www.beefusa.org).

“Animal Welfare” may not be the correct terminology to use – picking a more accurate, positive term may help consumers better identify with the time and effort ranchers invest in producing healthy, wholesome beef. Other terms have been suggested, such as “Animal Stewardship” or the more traditional “Animal Husbandry”. The goal is to illustrate a more positive industry where conscientious producers are raising healthy animals.

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Many of the large companies that are buy large quantities of beef have already developed and implemented their own guidelines for animal handling. These large companies already conduct packing plant audits and cooler audits to better guarantee their consumers of getting a wholesome product. Additionally, many of the smaller companies marketing branded products already focus their marketing on convincing the consumer that their product was produced in a wholesome manner. It would be a positive step for beef producers to voluntarily work with all segments of the industry to develop our own set of guidelines.

Many states have implemented a youth quality assurance program, working with 4-H and FFA members to discuss proper health programs, nutrition, handling and stewardship of livestock projects that are destined for the County Fair. As many 4-H Educators will attest, many parents actively participate in these workshops along with their children.

**Focusing on materials specific for market cows:** Addressing market cow issues will mean working with both the beef and dairy segments, but guidelines need to address topics such as: a) earlier culling, b) recognizing, sorting and managing based on body condition scores, c) cost-effective back grounding periods for market cows, and d) altering cow management to better meet the consumer’s needs. As the nation’s beef herd continues to slowly shrink, culling will remain an important topic for beef producers.

Beef Quality Assurance remains a viable, healthy program predominantly because it was founded on voluntary participation. As grain prices continue to rise, resulting in higher food prices (including beef), we need to continue to actively work at stabilizing and growing the demand for beef. We all know that the typical urban consumer no longer has a connection to actual agriculture: very few consumers have visited an actual farm or ranch, and there even fewer understand what normal production practices are. Continuing to develop Beef Quality Assurance guidelines in newer areas such as animal stewardship, animal handling, animal transportation and market cow management will help consumers feel comfortable with the idea of having beef in the center of their plate.

**Talking Points Continued...**

**Identify, Cull Temperamental Heifers Early**  
**Burt Rutherford**

While watching temperamental housewives on reality television may be entertaining for some folks, working temperamental cows is anything but. Not only are temperamental cattle a safety danger to humans, but research has shown they’re less productive as well, according to Ron Randel, Texas A&M University animal science professor.

Educational Workshops and Practice Key to Livestock Project Success

By Lance Miller

Now that most all members have their livestock projects for this summer’s show season, we need to provide educational opportunities to best develop our youth and their projects. The easiest way for youth to become better showmen is by practicing with their animal at home. Livestock learn the best by repeating the same task multiple times. A daily routine that includes practice showing the animal will pay off in the end. It also takes time and practice for livestock to become comfortable with different tasks and different environments. So, while it is important to do similar activities with the animal so they learn, it is equally important to change the routine slightly, so the animal is challenged with new surroundings, people, and noises.

Another great way for members to learn correct showmanship techniques is by attending workshops or clinics. The Department of Animal Science hosts an annual event called the Cowboy Youth Classic (CYC). This year’s CYC will be held June 22-23, 2012. During the event, we teach fitting and showing workshops, along with nutrition, management, and production workshops. The event is designed to help exhibitors gain experience and confidence with their livestock projects. We are also pleased to have “Stock Show University” as part of this year’s CYC.

Members from the University of Wyoming are also willing to teach educational workshops in your counties. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you would like to schedule a workshop or clinic.

There is also a lot of information available via the web. Exhibitors can access this information and use those resources to add to their information base. I’ve included a few links to some quality resources.

Here is the link with more information about the Cowboy Youth Classic

http://www.uwyo.edu/anisci/events-and-web-series/cowboy-youth-classic.html

http://sullivansupply.com/ssu_home_page.html

Here are a few resources for show livestock exhibitors

http://www.asi.ksu.edu/doc5696.ashx

http://www.asi.ksu.edu/doc6078.ashx

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCylomKCiUU