

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

EQUINE SCIENCE QUARTERLY



From Our Stable To Yours
Winter 2024

Inside the Issue:



08

Taylor Palmer, Jr.
Honored With The
2024 Spirit Of The
Horse Award



10

Examining Equine
Behavior: Dr.
Sue McDonnell's
Research



12

From The Lab:
Misconceptions In
Equine Behavior



The 2023 Evening Of Science & Celebration: The Rutgers Equine Science Center Showcases Current Research And Honors The Equine Community

The Rutgers Equine Science Center hosted its 2023 “Evening of Science & Celebration” on Thursday, November 9th, 2023.

The Evening of Science and

Celebration is an opportunity to unite equine professionals, horse owners, farm owners and barn managers, educators and students, 4-H members, and all equine enthusiasts for the

From The Clubhouse



We can't wait to see you at all of the fun-filled and educational events that we have planned for this semester!

Dear Friends,

I certainly hope that you all had an enjoyable holiday season that was safe and healthy! I also hope you had time to spend with both two- and four-legged friends before the weather turned cold and icy!

The Equine Science Center ended 2023 on a celebratory note when we met in person on November 9, 2023, for the “Evening of Science and Celebration” sponsored by Mid-Atlantic Equine Medical Center. We began the program, as always, with a presentation by one of our outstanding members of the New Jersey 4-H Horse Program. This year Ms. Sienna Hoban impressed the crowd with her presentation on Kissing Spine Syndrome in Horses.

Our keynote speaker was Dr. Jessica Leatherwood from Tarleton State University who presented “Welfare over Triumphs: Protecting the Juvenile Performance Horse”. Other speakers included our own Ken McKeever, Daniel Gimenez, Alisa Herbst, and Ellen Rankins who each received funding from the Center for fiscal year 2022-23. See the feature story on the Front Page and highlights from the evening with photos on [Pages 4-7](#).

Highlights of the evening included the presentation of the “Spirit of the Horse” award to Taylor Palmer, Jr.; and the Gold Medal Horse Farm award which was presented to Eliza and Stephen Banks’ Trinity Dressage. Their stories can be found on [Page 8](#) and [Page 18](#) respectively.

Lord Nelson was busy with his friends at the Center with the production of his holiday blog posts. We all had fun making horse holiday decorations. Be sure to look at Lord Nelson’s blog at esc.rutgers.edu/winter-holiday-crafts/ and scroll down to watch the video on horse holiday crafting!

Enjoy the story about the wonderful work of Dr. Sue McDonnell who conducts research with Penn Vet’s New Bolton Center feral equine herd. Dr. McDonnell is known internationally

for her work in studying equine behavior. The full story is on [Page 10](#). She also shares some tips about the misconceptions about equine behavior in our From the Lab section on [Page 12](#).

This year we are bringing back the LIVE version of the Horse Management Seminar! The LIVE Horse Management Seminar will take place at the Cook Campus Center on the Rutgers’ Cook Campus in New Brunswick, NJ on February 3rd from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Talks will be a mixture of the most requested topics from the past three years of virtual seminars and will include senior horse nutrition, veterinary care, controlling and dealing with parasites and ticks, emergency management, and hoof and leg care. For the event flyer with links to more information and to register see [Page 17](#).

Also, due to popular demand, this year we will also host a virtual seminar series with different talks than the live version. The Virtual seminars will take place over the course of three Tuesday evenings in February (13th, 20th, and 27th) between 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm. These seminars are broken into topic areas with 2 speakers each evening.

Pasture Management on the 13th with Rutgers’ Weed Specialist, Dr. Matt Elmore speaking on “Managing Weeds in Horse Pastures”, followed by Dr. Robert Coleman, Equine Specialist from the University of Kentucky speaking on “Equipment for Small Horse Farm Pasture Management”.

Senior Horse Care will be the focus of Feb. 20th with talks from nutritionist Dr. Nettie Liburt on “Feeding the Senior Horse” and “Veterinary Care for the Geriatric Horse” presented by Mountain Pointe Equine’s Dr. Jessica Martin.

The final evening of webinars on Feb. 27th will focus on Health and Welfare with a talk on “Parasites and Ticks in your Horse” from Penn State’s Equine Extension Specialist, Dr. Danielle Smarsh, and “Evaluating Pain in your Horse” by Oklahoma State’s Equine Extension Specialist, Dr. Kris Hiney. The Virtual Horse Management Seminar Webinar series is free, but registration is required. For the event flyer with a link to the registration page, and information about all of those presentations and presenters, take a look at [Page 20](#).

Dr. Carey Williams has put together some great programming, both live and virtual, so we hope to see you all throughout the month of February!

Finally, remember to mark your calendars for some great upcoming events. During Rutgers Giving Days, this year held from March 20th to 21st, we will raise funds for our Equine Research Excellence fund. The Junior Animal Science Symposium will be held on March 23, and we have some fun activities planned for all attendees. Ag Field Day at Rutgers Day will be held on the last Saturday in April, this year on April 24th, where we will have our ever-popular high-speed horses demo, activities for kids, and tours of the research lab. Come out and say “hi” in support of our programs, you will have fun and learn a great deal.

Looking forward to seeing all of you soon!

Best,
Karyn

PARTNERS



New Jersey Farm Bureau's primary purpose is to represent the overall interests and improve the financial well-being of farmers and our \$800 million industry. NJFB activities are supported through voluntary membership and annual dues. Members have access to:

- Staff assistance on farming issues and regulatory problems.
- Educational workshops on topical issues such as farm labor, wildlife damage, and zoning.
- Weekly updates on legislation news and regulations affecting all aspects of farming.

It pays to be a NJ Farm Bureau member! For a full list of membership levels and benefits, or to sign up, visit: www.njfb.org.



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In addition, owning over 810 acres of land for the development of new sites. It is our mission as a company to provide the best quality affordable home for the hard working residents of Pennsylvania.

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The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) is an agency which oversees programs that serve virtually all New Jersey citizens. One of the Department's major priorities is to promote, protect and serve the Garden State's diverse agriculture and agribusiness industries.

In addition to the programs we offer to support production agriculture, NJDA also manages programs that feed schoolchildren, distribute surplus federal foods to soup kitchens and pantries that serve our needy citizens, conserve precious soil and water resources, protect farmland from development and preserve it for future agricultural use, expand export markets for fresh and processed agricultural products, and promote our commercial fishing industry, and administer the complete program of agriculture, food and natural resource education, which includes the State FFA Association.

For more information about NJDA, please visit: www.nj.gov/agriculture



Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health is the second largest animal health business in the world, with presence in more than 150 countries, and a significant presence in the United States, with more than 3,100 employees in places that include Georgia, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey and Puerto Rico.

The lives of animals and humans are interconnected in deep and complex ways. We know that when animals are healthy, humans are healthier too. Across the globe, our 9,700 employees are dedicated to delivering value through innovation, thus enhancing the well-being of both. Respect for animals, humans and the environment guides us every day. We develop solutions and provide services to protect animals from disease and pain. We support our customers in taking care of the health of their animals and protect our communities against life- and society-threatening diseases.

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UPCOMING 2024 EVENTS

Horse Management Seminar Live!

Saturday, February 3, 2024

Cook Student Center
Rutgers, The State University of NJ
New Brunswick, NJ

go.rutgers.edu/2024HMSReg

Horse Management Seminar: Webinar Series

Tuesday, February 13, 20, 27, 2024

Topics Include:
Pasture Management on Feb. 13th
Senior Horse Care on Feb. 20th
Horse Health and Welfare on Feb. 27th

go.rutgers.edu/2024VirtualHMSReg

Junior Animal Science Symposium

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Cook Student Center
Rutgers, The State University of NJ
New Brunswick, NJ

amelia.valente@njaes.rutgers.edu

Rutgers Day 2024: Ag Field Day

Saturday, April 27, 2024

Red Barn - Cook Farm,
College Farm Road
New Brunswick, NJ

kylehart@njaes.rutgers.edu

For more events, visit our website @ esc.rutgers.edu

The 2023 Evening Of Science & Celebration:

The Rutgers Equine Science Center Showcases Current Research And Honors The Equine Community



purpose of learning about current projects and ongoing research initiatives being conducted at the Equine Science Center.

The Center aims to address horse industry issues and challenges through sound science and research.

The night opened with Dr. Karyn Malinowski, Founding Director of the Equine Science Center, who gave her yearly update on the state of the Center and gave an overview of the accomplishments that have occurred over the last year.

Sienna Hoban, a Gloucester County 4-H member, was this year's 4-H Horse Project presenter.



Faculty and staff from the School of Environmental & Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station joined the Equine Science Center Staff to celebrate the 2023 Evening of Science & Celebration. (Pictured from left to right: Dr. Kenneth McKeever, Mazen Shehat, Kyle Hartmann, Dr. Nicholas Bello, Dr. Michael Westendorf, Stella Campbell, Dr. Taylor Ross, Dr. Karyn Malinowski, Dr. Brian Schilling, Brian McGonigle, Dr. Wendy Cohick, and Dr. Alisa Herbst.)

She is active in the horse and equine science project areas; a sophomore at Paul IV High School; and in her spare time, she enjoys riding her horse, Zeus, in the English disciplines.

Ms. Hoban recently represented the New Jersey 4-H Communications Team at the 4-H Eastern National Round Up in Louisville, Kentucky where she gave her presentation “Just Under the Surface: A Case Study About Kissing Spine Syndrome in Horses”; the same presentation which she gave an encore performance of during the Evening of Science & Celebration.

This year’s keynote, Dr. Jessica Leatherwood from Tarleton State University, joined the Center to present “Welfare over Triumphs: Protecting the

Juvenile Performance Horse.”

Her talk focused on her years of research into the health and safety of the young performance horse, irrespective of breed or discipline.

Covering some of the most up-to-date guidelines and recommendations for the upkeep and management of young growing performance horses, her talk was a huge success including pictures and videos to bring home the salient points of her presentation.

Dr. Leatherwood joined Tarleton State University earlier last year as a faculty member in the Department of Animal Sciences, serving as an Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator.

She received her Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Ph.D.

Ms. Sienna Hoban, a member of the New Jersey 4-H Horse Program, presenting “Just Under the Surface: A Case Study About Kissing Spine Syndrome in Horses”.



from Texas A&M University in Animal Sciences; with her graduate programming focusing on equine nutrition and physiology.

During her time at Texas A&M, Dr. Leatherwood co-developed an international horsemanship program providing opportunities for high-impact learning experiences and obtained funding for students to participate in international experiences by conducting four-day horsemanship clinics in Europe, Oceania, and South America. She hopes to develop a similar program for students at Tarleton State University.

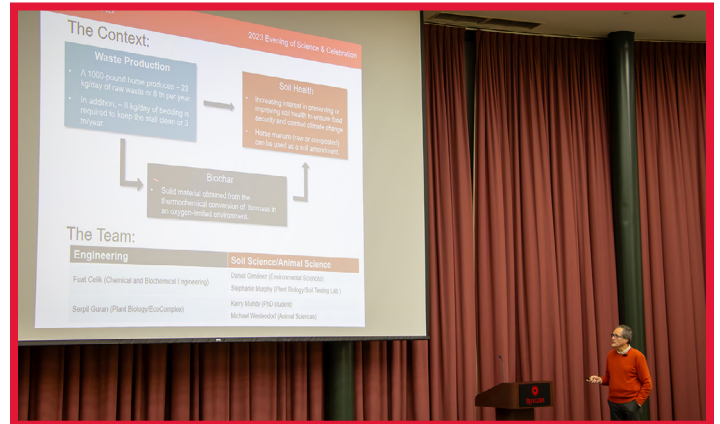
Research updates were provided by Dr. Ellen Rankins, who graduated this past summer from the Rutgers Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences Program, who presented some of the results from her research into “Co-regulation Between Horse

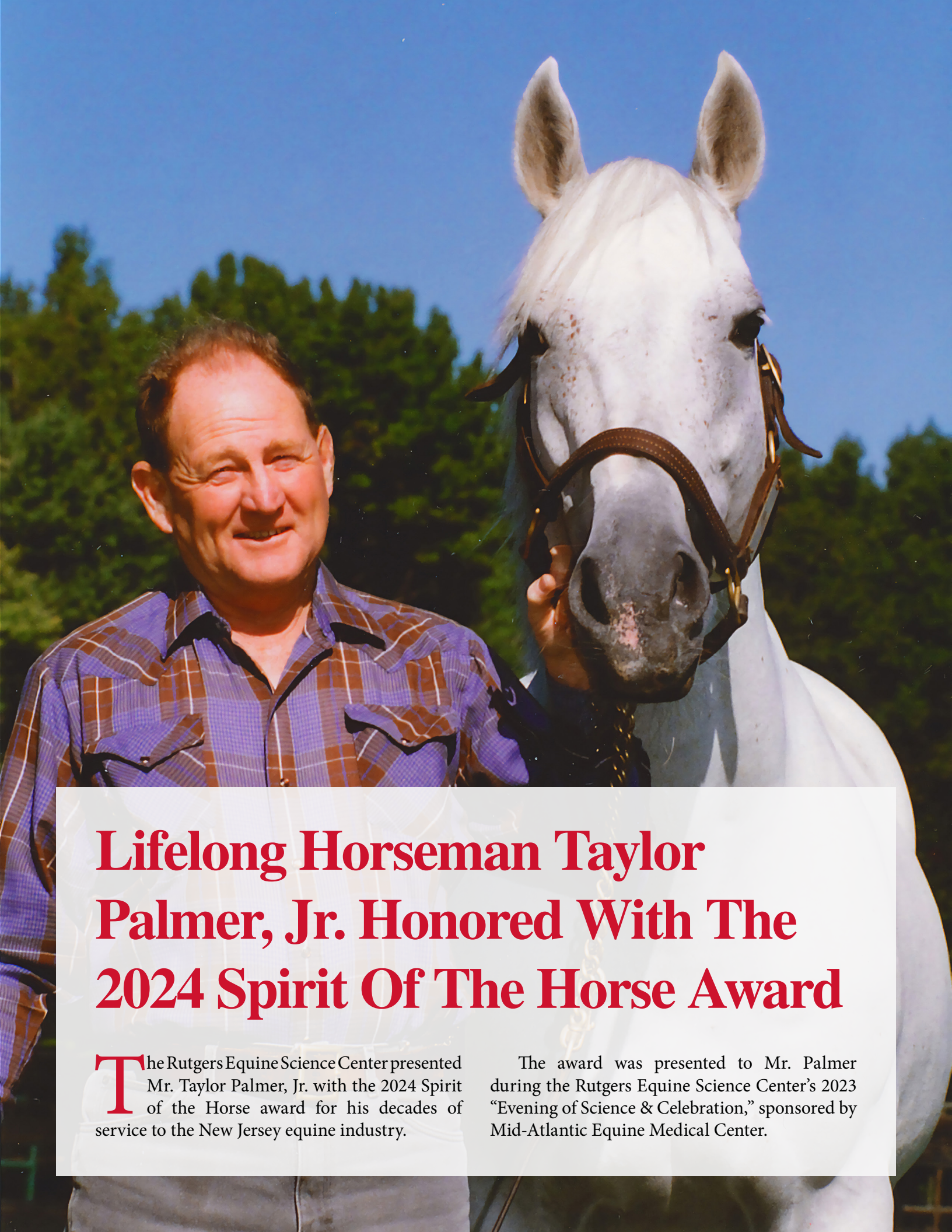
and Human in Equine Assisted Activities (EAA) and its Effects on Symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Veterans”.

Dr. Kenneth H. McKeever; Associate Director of Research, at the Rutgers Equine Science Center, and Professor in the Department of Animal Sciences; discussed his upcoming research investigating three drugs and medications currently being used in the horse industry that may affect performance.

Dr. Daniel Gimenez, Professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences, presented his research into “Effects of Horse Manure-Sourced Biochar on Soil Nutrients, Carbon Sequestration and Hydraulic Properties of Agricultural Soils”.

The evening also included the presentations of the “Spirit of the Horse” award, and the “Gold Medal Horse Farm” award.





Lifelong Horseman Taylor Palmer, Jr. Honored With The 2024 Spirit Of The Horse Award

The Rutgers Equine Science Center presented Mr. Taylor Palmer, Jr. with the 2024 Spirit of the Horse award for his decades of service to the New Jersey equine industry.

The award was presented to Mr. Palmer during the Rutgers Equine Science Center's 2023 "Evening of Science & Celebration," sponsored by Mid-Atlantic Equine Medical Center.

“When one thinks of the history of Standardbred harness racehorse breeding in the State of New Jersey, the name Taylor Palmer is always top of the mind for his vast contribution not only to the racehorse breeding industry but to the equine industry as a whole,” said Dr. Amy Butewicz as she read parts of her nomination letter to the crowd.

Mr. Palmer gained recognition through the ownership and operation of “his grand, meticulously maintained” Boxwood Farm located in historic Englishtown in the heart of Monmouth County horse country.

Over decades, Mr. Palmer focused on the fine details of harness racehorse breeding which embraced quality over quantity with what has been described as “some of the finest of yearlings” sold at the Lexington Selected Sale in Kentucky, and Harrisburg Black Book Sale in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Palmer has held a variety of leadership roles and continues to remain active in the Standardbred Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey (SBOANJ).

A strong supporter of connecting the equine industry with educational and research initiatives, Mr. Palmer was the founding Chair of the Rutgers University Board for Equine Advancement (RUBEA) and continues to hold Chair Emeritus status on RUBEA. This board of elected members assists the Rutgers Equine Science Center in its decisions regarding its equine teaching, research, and outreach; and promotes and supports these activities through fund-raising and advocacy efforts.

Mr. Palmer has also held positions on the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture (MCBOA), and in 2022 he was honored with the MCBOA Lifetime Achievement Award. He has also embraced the state



Mr. Taylor Palmer, Jr. poses with his family (including many of his children and their families), as well as Equine Science Center Founding Director Dr. Karyn Malinowski, for photos of the debut of his award.

initiative of Farmland Preservation, which included placing his very own Boxwood Farm into preservation status to ensure the land would remain free of future development.

“The ‘Spirit of the Horse’ award recognizes individuals whose lives have been profoundly changed because of their involvement with horses and who have acknowledged the impact by giving back to the horse industry,” said Dr. Karyn Malinowski, Founding Director of the Rutgers Equine Science Center.

“There is no other person that I can think of that has steadfastly spent decades fighting for, building, and preserving the equine industry in New Jersey. Taylor raised some of the finest mares and yearlings, dedicated his time to the agricultural community, and even allowed us to conduct groundbreaking research into weaning stress on his farm. Horses and the equine industry have certainly changed his life, but more importantly, he has profoundly changed the course of the New Jersey equine industry for the betterment of us all.”



The United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management estimates the nationwide population at 82,883 wild horses and burros, as of March 1, 2023. Due to the difficulties of studying these types of equine populations in the field, Dr. Sue McDonnell and her team maintain a semi-feral herd of ponies to explore equine behavior, and examine equine social behavior in a more “natural” setting than traditional equine research herds.

Examining Equine Behavior: Dr. Sue McDonnell’s Research Into What Equine Behavior Can Tell Us & Practical Uses For Equine Owners

Leading equine behaviorist, Dr. Sue McDonnell, is the founding head of the Equine Behavior Program at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. She is one of the leaders in the fields of equine

physiology, behavior, and welfare. Dr. McDonnell is also an adjunct professor of reproductive behavior at New Bolton Center and a clinical associate in the Widener Hospital at Penn Vet.

Dr. McDonnell and her team have undertaken

a variety of laboratory and field studies in addition to maintaining a semi-feral herd of ponies to explore equine behavior in a more natural setting. This allows students the opportunity to take part in long-term observation of equine social behavior.

Methods for Studying Horse Behavior

The semi-feral pony herd provides insight into herd dynamics in a semi-natural setting. The herd was started in 1994 to understand how social herd behavior influences male sexual function. Made up of both harem stallions and bachelor stallions, this herd mix has allowed for the alteration of the bachelor stallions' physiology.

"Their whole endocrinology was down-regulated, and it was a plastic system, so that you could move animals around and put them in different social contexts," said Dr. Sue McDonnell. "You could drive them into greater fertility."

She also describes how these ponies have become "poster children" for equine health. They are credited with having minimal injuries, no colic, and they don't founder. Their diet is minimally supplemented with hay during the winter, and it is spread out to ensure the herd moves around while they eat. This ensures that they are as close to a feral or "wild" pony as possible in terms of nutrition and natural access to food.

The ponies are also minimally handled to ensure that their behavior is as close to that of a free-roaming population as possible. However, some handling is needed in order to collect data, but this has also been designed to be as minimally invasive as possible.

"We have a handling system built within their enclosure. They pass through this laneway almost daily, and they go family by family. We can strategically close the ends of the alleyway and



The semi-feral pony herd, which started as a way to examine social herd behavior and its influence on male sexual function, was interestingly created thanks to a question of a high school student who was working in Dr. Sue McDonnell's lab. Her question was "who gets to be a bachelor stallion and who get sot be a harem stallion?" After they realized that there was a lack of research into the topic, the herd was created to answer this question, as well as to provide a herd for other research.

have one family at a time; then we have a series of little padded sub-enclosures," said Dr. McDonnell. "This is kind of interesting, they're pretty much wild, but it's a great demonstration of very simple behavior modification. You can very quickly train stallions to stand and let you measure their testicles and take a blood sample for a little bit of grain."

Dr. McDonnell's team collects most data through observation from a distance though. The best method is not recording the ponies to watch at a later date, but instead watching in real-time and filling out well-designed surveys in real-time. This has resulted in the best inter-observer reliability for their studies.

Video recordings are certainly still of some use for Dr. McDonnell's work. For example, a service offered to clients in the veterinary hospital is video recording of their horses.

"We're working on a study funded by the Morris Animal Foundation on the effectiveness and adverse side effects of morphine pain control



Dr. Sue McDonnell's semi-feral pony herd.

Lab Notes - Dr. McDonnell

From The Lab: Misconceptions In Equine Behavior



THE TOP 5
TAKE-A-WAYS

#1

Believing that horses "need what we need" can sometimes be to their own detriment instead of allowing them to "just be horses."

#2

Blanketing after a horse grows a thick coat in the winter can have a negative effect on their thermoregulation.

During the interview with Dr. Sue McDonnell, she discussed some misconceptions about equine behavior. Many of these she has seen firsthand through to her work with Penn Vet's New Bolton Center and individual client consultations.

Anthropomorphism

Dr. McDonnell mentioned that a common issue in welfare is the anthropomorphizing of horses or ponies. She states, "we've gone way too far with anthropomorphism and thinking horses need what we think we need." Specifically, she gave the example of blanketing.

During the winter, horses and ponies grow a thick coat that is made up of two layers: a waterproof outer layer and a downy undercoat. The outer layer protects them from the elements, and the undercoat traps body heat close to the skin. This is due to the ability of the hairs to "loft" above the skin and trap the warm air. However, when a blanket is placed on a horse that has this coat already grown, they cannot loft the hairs and can no longer stay warm.

Social Interactions

Another misconception is that horses should be able to be regrouped without any issues. However, Dr. McDonnell noted that a lot of injuries that cause horses to be hospitalized are due to incompatibilities with other horses. An underlying behavior issue can be difficult to identify and address, but it may be worthwhile to prevent injuries in the future.

Much of Dr. McDonnell's work is related to studying a semi-feral pony herd. The public might expect the mix of mares and stallions "to be like the coffee table books with all the rearing and lunging and chasing." However, this herd shows that there can be good social order when a stable group has been living together.

Lastly, temperament can also impact a horse's ability to be housed with other horses. Horse owners largely insist that horses must be grouped with other individuals, but this may not always be the ideal scenario. Some horses experience more stress and have a more difficult time sharing a pasture, but may be content on their own while still in sight of other horses.

#3

Herds of horses or ponies have a complex social structure that allows for peaceful interactions.

#4

Consider the horses' temperament and allow for an introduction period before grouping and regrouping horses.

#5

Not every horse needs to be housed with other horses, and they may function the best on their own.

The abdominal stretch that Dr. Sue McDonnell often attributes to the possibility of gastric ulcers can be seen below, with the horse stretching its forelimbs forward and lowering the upper half of its body.



for painful orthopedic horses in the hospital,” said Dr. McDonnell. “We’re doing the blind behavior observations. We do a lot of work for the hospital that involves taking a 24-hour video of a horse in a stall, business as usual, but most of the time the horse is just in the stall by itself. We evaluate that for any sign of discomfort.”

The protocol has been used since 1983 to examine the recording for a variety of behaviors, but this study focuses specifically on discomfort. The observation started as standard lab practice, and it eventually spread to a service offered to veterinary clients. It can help rule out possible issues and help identify the underlying cause of discomfort.

From this work, Dr. McDonnell was able to develop an ethogram. The basic model of an ethogram is a definition of a specific behavior coupled with a drawing, and sometimes video, of the behavior. It has proven to be a useful training tool for people working to identify behaviors, and Dr. McDonnell has encouraged large veterinary practices to have an assistant dedicated to this

purpose. She mentioned that it works so well that “our clinicians here sometimes don’t want to even see the horse until we’ve done this so that they can be very efficient at knowing where to look first for a problem.”

She went on to describe one of the behaviors observed in the hospital, which her ethogram has then been used to predict a specific ailment. “One thing that’s really interesting is that sort of deep abdominal stretch where they put their forelimbs forward and they just kind of lower themselves. Horses do that maybe once in 24 hours at most,” said Dr. McDonnell.

“And if they do it more than that, they have gastric ulcers. It’s only once we’ve been able to so easily scope and treat the ulcers, that the behavior goes away. That behavior can happen with other types of abdominal issues, like lesions and different things, but that behavior is very characteristic of gastric ulcers.”

The team has identified a wide range of behaviors that can indicate discomfort or pain in the horse. They can include stretching, such

as what Dr. McDonnell mentioned, but other behaviors like nuzzling or pawing can also be indicators. The frequency and duration of the actions are integral to the use of the ethogram as well, not just the presence of the action itself.

Published in 2021, the ethogram is separated into various categories of behaviors; including but not limited to “posture and weight-bearing,” “limb and body movements,” “head, neck, mouth, and lip movements,” and “attention to an area.”

The ability of a clinician to identify these behaviors by using an ethogram would enable them to better target a region of the horse that may be the issue.



A picture from Dr. McDonnell’s semi-feral pony herd exemplifying the behavior of the entire herd eating at the same time.

Applications to Horse Owners

Dr. McDonnell credits the horses’ learning ability to their nature as a prey species. They are forced to be constantly aware of the situation around them and notice subtle changes in their environment. Humans in the same situation may not even notice a change that the horse does.

“They learn very quickly. In fact, quicker than pre-verbal children, or dogs, and sometimes even quicker than adult humans who aren’t verbally told what they’re supposed to be doing,” said Dr. McDonnell, “both for positive and negative association.”

Throughout her life, even as a kid in 4H programs and as an undergraduate student, Dr. McDonnell noticed that horses often respond better to positive reinforcement and enticement. The “traditional” way is the “pressure and release” method, a method that trainers often think of horses responding very well to.

But she believes that this can still be improved upon. In a veterinary context, horses may have aversions to certain procedures. Clinicians can take advantage of the learning abilities of the horse to help reverse these aversions. Positive reinforcement

can even be used to prevent these aversions, and it has been shown that this paradigm is faster than using a pressure and release technique.

Many behaviors of a horse are also highly connected to their nature as a herd animal. Activities like eating and resting are “socially facilitated,” meaning that they are done as a group, often with a leader.

“But in the case of our herd, for example, they rarely stand in one place resting and not eating for more than 30 to 40 minutes,” Dr. McDonnell described in the context of the semi-feral pony herd. “Then they seem urgent to get back to eating. In the social order, it’s usually one of the older mature mares who’s kind of the leader for that activity.”

A key takeaway from this is that a herd should be fed all at the same time. It’s “natural” for the entire herd to eat together, so the physiology involved in digestion is stimulated for all individuals in the group when just one is fed.

Dr. McDonnell predicted that this is when gastric ulcers can form. The herd also demonstrates that the digestive system of grazing animals functions optimally when they are walking while



Dr. Sue McDonnell's research, along with others at the University of Pennsylvania, have led to the creation of multiple equine behavior short courses open to the public. Information on these courses can be found on the PenVet Equine Behavior Clinic website: <https://www.vet.upenn.edu/veterinary-hospitals/NBC-hospital/services/reproduction/equine-behavior-clinic>

eating. Throughout the entire year, the herd moves with the same rhythm and in unison.

“Everybody has their head on the ground all the time,” said Dr. McDonnell. “That’s why they don’t get dental problems; because they’re chewing and swallowing with their chewing mechanism and swallowing mechanism in the natural position.”

This position also provides a crucial defense mechanism. They have the best peripheral view to watch for potential threats, and the entire herd can work together to survey the environment. As a result, the herd is relaxed while eating which promotes a better digestive function.

In contrast, horses in stalls are in a very different eating environment. They can still be relaxed while alone in a stall, but Dr. McDonnell noted that horses will take a bite from the hay on the ground and then pick their head up to see over the top of the wall. This takes away two elements of the behavior observed in the pony herd: grazing with the head down and a peripheral view when eating.

They are also unable to have the sentinel effect that eating with a herd provides. Even if there are other horses in the barn, they cannot depend on each other to survey their environment if they are unable to see and communicate with their neighbors.

“So they’re nervous while they’re eating, and many horses settle into a stable, but certainly if you move them to a new place they’ll be anxious while they’re eating because they don’t have their head in the right position for chewing and swallowing, and they can’t see unless they lift their head up,” said McDonnell. “It’s little things like that.”

Dr. McDonnell & Her Projects

Dr. McDonnell’s expertise has been credited as incredibly valuable in the field of equine behavior. The Havemeyer Equine Behavior Research Lab at the University of Pennsylvania continues to produce groundbreaking research and furthers our understanding of the complexities of herd dynamics.

The Equine Behavior Clinic in the New Bolton Center allows horse owners to access this knowledge and use it to benefit their own horses and farms.

For more information about the Havemeyer Equine Behavior Research Lab, and to learn more about Dr. Sue McDonnell and the multiple years of research and publications that are available, please visit:

<https://www.vet.upenn.edu/research/centers-laboratories/research-laboratory/havemeyer-equine-behavior-research-lab>

We are BACK LIVE!!

Rutgers

Horse Management Seminar



2024 - You asked for it!

We chose topics that were most commonly asked for over the last few years!

Saturday, February 3rd, 8:30 - 3:30

- Senior Horse Nutrition**
- Geriatric Veterinary Care**
- Hoof Care**
- Parasites and Ticks**
- Orthopedic Leg Care**
- Emergency Management**

Speakers from:

Rutgers

Penn State

Mid-Atlantic Equine Medical Center

Mountain Pointe Equine

Nutrition Consultant



**For a full program and registration details:
<https://go.rutgers.edu/2024HMSReg>**

**Equine Science Center
Better Horsecare through
Research and Education**



Dr. Michael Westendorf presents the Banks family with the 2023 Gold Medal Horse Farm award for their farm, Trinity Dressage. (From left to right - Stephen Banks, Paige Banks, Eliza Banks, and Dr. Michael Westendorf.)

The Banks Family & Trinity Dressage Receive The 2023 Gold Medal Horse Farm Award

The 2023 winner of the Gold Medal Horse Farm award is the Trinity Dressage, located in Cream Ridge, NJ.

Part of the New Jersey Equine Environmental Stewardship Program, the award recognizes outstanding equine farms for their dedication to environmental sustainability and management.

The award was presented during the Rutgers Equine Science Center’s annual “Evening of

Science & Celebration” on Thursday, November 9 in New Brunswick, NJ, which was sponsored by Mid-Atlantic Equine Medical Center.

Trinity Dressage is a 20-acre equine facility in the heart of Cream Ridge, NJ. The farm is home to approximately 9 horses, an indoor arena, an outdoor training arena, and multiple well-vegetated paddocks for maintaining horses on the farm.

Since most horses are kept on pasture, manure is



managed by proper grass and forage management. Manure collected from dry lots or from stalled horses is collected and removed regularly, stored on the farm, and removed to a compost facility.

The farm follows a waste management plan (AWMP) developed with the assistance of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

Regular soil samples are taken, and pastures are fertilized to maximize fertility and optimal pasture growth and performance. Pastures are clipped regularly when required to maximize forage growth.

The farm is very proactive with the goal of environmental stewardship. The number of paddocks allows the farm to rotate animals and maintain quality pastures.

French drains surrounding the stables and arena allow the capture and proper distribution of all water. Excellent vegetation, pasture, barnyard, and manure management ensure the farm has a low impact on the land despite being in an

environmentally sensitive area.

The farm specializes in the training and management of dressage and other performance horses. It is a showcase for equine environmental management and maintaining top-quality care for clients and their horses.

“As a midwestern native with a family whose roots run deeply in the ideas of farmland conservation and preservation, I take the task of stewardship of God’s creatures, livestock, land, and natural resources very seriously,” said Eliza Banks, Owner/Trainer, Trinity Dressage, LLC.

“We are proud to continue that legacy with Trinity Dressage in NJ. We hope to build our facility with each stage of development keeping correct and current ideas of environmental, energy, soil, and livestock management practices at the forefront. We are honored to be receiving the Gold Medal Horse Farm award for equine environmental stewardship.”

Previous awardees include: Stoneleigh Stables (2022), Topline Farm (2021), The Centenary University Equestrian Center (2020), Fair Winds Farm (2019), Mortonhouse Farm (2018), Dorsett Arabians (2017), Hidden Hills Farms (2016), Lord Stirling Stables (2015), Woodhollow Farm (2014), D’Arrigo Racing Stable LLC (2013), and Showplace Farms (2012) as the state’s only Gold Medal Horse Farms.

Farm owners interested in applying for next year’s award may access the application at:
<https://go.rutgers.edu/ESC-GMHF>



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