

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

From paddock to pasture

New and potential horse owners learn comprehensive horse care from CSU veterinary and animal sciences experts during new equine field day.

Situation

Many new horse owners lack the knowledge they need to properly pasture, shelter, feed and care for their animals. Horse owners frequently call or visit their local Colorado State University Extension office for information on poisonous plants, proper nutrition and pasture improvements. In Arapahoe County, these inquiries became a regular occurrence.

Extension's Response

Dale Edwards, agriculture and natural resource agent and director of CSU Extension in Arapahoe County, realized he needed an efficient and effective way to provide owners with comprehensive horse care information. In the fall of 2010, Edwards began developing 'Your Horse and You – An Equine Field Day' with Ragan Adams, Colorado State University Veterinary Extension coordinator. The program's purpose was to educate potential and new horse owners in Arapahoe County and surrounding areas about a broad range of important equine care issues.

Adams recruited Extension specialists, equine researchers, and veterinarians from the CSU departments of clinical sciences and animal science, as well as a veterinarian from the Colorado Department of Agriculture, to present these issues at the one-day workshop. Presenters and topics included:

- Tiare Santistevan, MS
 - o Estimating the annual cost of your new horse
 - o Fencing, structures and water tanks
- Tony Knight, DVM
 - o Pastures and poisonous plants
- Brett Kirch, DVM
 - o Basic equine nutrition: range, dry lot or intermittent pasture
- Ann Davidson Sellers, DVM
 - o Dental care, hoof care, vaccinations and parasite control
 - o Assessing horse health
- Carl Heckendorf, DVM, from the Colorado Department of Agriculture
 - o Equine chip identification

'Your Horse and You – An Equine Field Day' occurred on March 19, 2011, at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds. In addition to seven breakout sessions, the field day included hands-on demonstrations on assessing horse health, assembling and using an equine emergency kit and performing basic health care techniques, such as administering oral paste and wrapping legs.

A total of 79 Arapahoe and adjacent Front Range county residents participated in the field day. Of these, 25 were 4-H and Pony Club youth.



The Bottom Line

- Arapahoe County Extension and CSU Veterinary Extension partnered to bring research-based horse care information to owners who lacked necessary knowledge and awareness.
- 'Your Horse and You' field day helped new and potential horse owners learn to make important changes to their horse care practices.

Results

To assess the effectiveness of the inaugural 'Your Horse and You' field day, Edwards asked participants to fill out retrospective pre/post evaluations.

Results from 49 completed surveys show that 'Your Horse and You' successfully increased participant knowledge about all seven horse care topics presented, and generated significant interest in making changes to current horse care practices. In fact, as a result of classroom presentations and hands-on demonstrations, 100 percent of participants say they plan to use the information they learned.

Participants reported planning to make the following improvements and changes based on what they learned during the field day:

- better pasture management
- checking property for poisonous plants
- vaccinating and microchipping horses
- updating deworming program
- weed mitigation on property
- taking vitals on a regular basis
- improving 4-H record book financial summaries
- checking property for dangerous fencing
- moving water tanks to a better location

The following chart shows the percentage of respondents, by age category, who increased their knowledge in the subject area indicated.

Age Group:	8-18	19-49	50+	All
I know how to estimate the annual cost of my horse(s).	68%	75%	50%	67%
I know what I need for fencing, structures and water tanks.	76%	81%	50%	73%
I know what a high risk pasture looks like.	72%	81%	88%	78%
I know how to identify poisonous plants in my pasture.	88%	94%	88%	90%
I know what the basic equine nutritional requirements are for horses on the range, in a dry lot and intermittent pasture.	64%	75%	88%	71%
I know how to deal with dental care, hoof care and vaccination and parasite control.	84%	75%	88%	82%
I know the importance of equine identification.	56%	81%	75%	67%
I know how to go about assessing my horse's health.	60%	69%	100%	69%

"I don't have horses yet, but plan to make sure pasture is in good shape first and do a lot more general research."

– Equine Field Day participant

"The number of individuals who own horses is substantial within the urban corridor."

– Dale Edwards
Arapahoe County Extension director and agent

Contact Information

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