



# The HorseCountry Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB

## Celebrating 95 Years of Charity Horse Shows

*Inside the Winner's Circle*

— PAGES 8-9



PHOTO KENDALL LUEDER / NATALIE SUTO PHOTOGRAPHY

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TR&HC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summertime is Showtime



Summer has always been synonymous with horse shows for TR&HC. We were proud to bring the historic Charity Shows, as well as the Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame induction ceremony, back for another year! Charity 1 turned 95 this year, a testament to our Club's commitment and the popularity of this show. The Charity Show collection of perpetual trophies reads like a literal history book. Engraved are the names of generations of prominent Tryon families who donated trophies, as well as the notable horses and riders who have won them. The Count Cadence Trophy, awarded to the Grand Amateur Owner Hunter Champion, first awarded in 1947, was retired this year! Moody Blues, owned and shown by Kathy Serio, won the trophy three years in a row, the magical and elusive trifecta that it takes to retire a trophy! (See more on page 9.)

Thanks to the Sawbuck family's generosity, we were thrilled to be able to present two new trophies at this summer's Charity Shows — the Grand Performance Hunter Champion and the Grand Short Stirrup Hunter Champion. For those who didn't attend the Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame induction ceremony, it was especially sentimental this year as local Amanda Cone's Diamond Market was inducted. (See more on page 8.) We enjoyed hearing all the heartfelt stories, and the support of friends and family! I hope you came and spent some time with us at TIEC!

Angie Millon  
President, Tryon Riding & Hunt Club

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Did You Know?

A horse has 10 muscles in each ear, allowing them to rotate 180 degrees, independently. Savvy equestrians know that to understand where a horse is focused, they can get a good idea by looking in the direction their ears are turned.



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SAVE THE DATE!

Upcoming TR&HC Dates

Sept. 23-24: XC Schooling Days

Oct. 21-22: 48th Morris the Horse Trials

Nov. 5: 90th Any & All Dog Show

Dec. 8: Year-end/Christmas Party

Visit tryonridingandhuntclub.org for more info.

April's TR&HC Horse & Hound Show: Another Smashing Success



"It feels like a return to what horse shows used to be like." That was the overwhelming sentiment of attendees during the TR&HC Horse & Hound Show in April. Congratulations to all of our participants including Foxhunter Derby winners Karen Benson and You Betcha alongside Cathy Malone and Bourbon City.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As a fun twist, this issue features a spotlight on the Western world. Inside, learn about barrel racing, as I did, and prepare to watch it in person this October when Tryon International Equestrian Center hosts their first rodeo!

We also have breeding tips from Reining champion Misty Yelton — yes, my sister-in-law — who I credit with teaching me what little I do know about Western equestrian sport. As my go-to for all of my Western questions, her knowledge was extremely helpful when I had to quickly understand and market the sport of Reining for the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games (WEG). My favorite memory from working the WEG Reining Test Event at Tryon International was witnessing Hunter and Jumper riders hop on reining horses and try a few turns and slides! It's rare that those disciplines cross paths at a competition and unique that we can see it happen in our area.

So, dust off your cowboy hats and boots this fall and help me cheer on our Western friends as they race barrels, bend poles, rope cattle and bring some "yeehaw" energy to Tryon Horse Country!

Michelle Yelton

Michelle Yelton  
Editorial Director



Morris the Horse Trials Returning this October With New Improvements Following 2022 Success

Eventers competing in the Morris the Horse Trials on October 21-22 at FENCE can look forward to even more improvements following several well-received upgrades in 2022.

"The unused bank on the top of the ridge has been removed to provide more level terrain for jump placement and a ridge on the side of the hill has been smoothed out," explained Donna Younkin, TR&HC board member and Morris the Horse Trials committee chair. Younkin also shared that several new jumps have been made to complement the jumps loaned by TIEC.

Intro (18 inch) through Training Divisions (including P/T) will be offered and a full event committee is in place. Beth Perkins is returning as course designer along with Dylan Barry course builder. Leslie Threlkeld, a familiar face to this event, has joined as the new technical director while Price Storey will serve as secretary/scorer and Muffin Pantaze will be president of the ground jury.

The Morris the Horse Trials, a USEF Endorsed/USEA Recognized Event, is also a participant in the Thoroughbred Incentive Program. Intercollegiate and interscholastic teams are encouraged and welcome to participate.

The weekend begins on Friday evening with a low country boil to be held adjacent to the stabling area.

"And remember that a cross country schooling event will be held a month before on September 23-24 at the venue. Water complex included!" concluded Younkin.

Course improvements make for a more competitive and safer event.



TRAIN BEFORE YOU COMPETE

Tryon Riding & Hunt Club  
XC Schooling at FENCE, September 23-24

Save the date for Tryon Riding & Hunt Club's Cross Country Schooling this September 23-24 at FENCE where riders can experience the course, as well as the water complex, in a non-competitive environment.



The schooling is suitable for green horses, riders who wish to enjoy the venue and take a few jumps, or competitors who would like an opportunity to school. Riders thinking of competing at the Morris the Horse Trials on October 21-22 are encouraged to attend to train on the course and prepare for the competition.

Details will be posted online at tryonridingandhuntclub.org in August. Please send any questions to office@trhc1925.org.

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**BARREL RACING: SATISFYING THE NEED FOR SPEED**

by Michelle Yelton

# Amateur Riders Provide Inside Look at Western Sport

High speeds on horseback, flying footing, and tight turns tend to conjure visions of show jumping in Tryon Horse Country, but not for our local Western community. For many of these folks, it's the thrill of barrel racing that comes to mind, especially for young riders Lexi Sewell and Mackenzie Greene.

Mooreboro, N.C., has been barrel racing for 13 years, competes at least every other weekend, and was just named the 2022 Barrel Racing Year End Champion and the Barrel Racing Average Champion.

"I love the feeling of putting all my trust into my horse and not thinking about anything else in the moment, but interestingly, trusting my horse is also probably the most difficult thing about this sport," Sewell shared. "You have to have the ability to trust your equine partner even though they don't speak your language!"

Greene, who also just graduated from Thomas Jefferson, began riding English horses at age seven, but later caught the barrel racing bug from a friend.

"A friend started letting me go to local jackpots [divisional barrel races with more added money] with her and use one of her horses. I instantly fell in love with barrel racing and the adrenaline rush that came with it," said Greene, who is currently seventh in the N.C. High School Rodeo Association.

Like many barrel races, it's the thrill of the sport that is attractive.



Greene (left) and Sewell (above) speeding through the barrel racing cloverleaf pattern.

"Barrel racing is such a fun sport in general and my love for horses made it super easy to fall in love with, and of course my need for speed. I guess you could say I have become an adrenaline junky!" said Greene.

For any local speed seekers interested in giving it a try, Sewell and her mom both teach barrel racing. But, Sewell also gives a word of caution: "For anyone wanting to get into this sport, they need to know it's not for the faint of heart; you have to be brave."

(Learn more about young riders Sewell and Greene on page 5.)



Like show jumping, speed and accuracy are the name of the game; however, barrel racing has only three obstacles to maneuver, with horse and rider pairs going as fast as they can around each barrel in a cloverleaf pattern without knocking any down. If the rider starts left, the next two turns must be to the right and vice versa. The score is calculated by time, and riders receive a five-second penalty for every barrel knocked down. But unlike show jumping's set course map, barrel racers can choose whether they start to the left or right first.

Born to two rodeo parents, who just graduated from Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy in

**Barrel Racing 101: A Rodeo Event**

Barrel racing started as a "Figure 8" pattern in the early 1930s, but was eventually changed to the cloverleaf pattern in 1935. The sport wasn't considered a serious event until almost 1950.

- American Quarter Horses are the most common horse breed used in this sport.
- It typically takes a competitor anywhere from 12-30 seconds to complete a barrel racing course depending on the size of the arena.
- Because barrel racing requires short bursts of energy from the horse, the training program usually begins with long and slow distance work, then moves into strength work, and concludes with fast work.
- Normally, horses are started on the barrel pattern at three years old; it can typically take three to five years for them to be competitive at a high level.

**YOUNG RIDERS: LEXI SEWELL & MACKENZIE GREENE**

by Michelle Yelton

# Barreling Into the Future!

When your dad is a rodeo announcer and your mom is a barrel racer, it's pretty much a guarantee that you will be thrust into the horse world, and that's exactly what happened for Rutherford County native Lexi Sewell.

"I got into barrel racing because both my parents were involved in rodeo; in fact, they met at a rodeo!" said Sewell.

For 13 years, this recent graduate of Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy (TJCA) in Mooreville, N.C., has attended barrel racing competitions every other weekend, and sometimes more often, year round. Accumulating a collection of accolades, Sewell was named the 2019 North Carolina High School Rodeo Association Barrel Racing Reserve Champion and the 2022 Barrel Racing Year End Champion and Barrel Racing Average Champion.

Mackenzie Greene, also a recent TJCA graduate, has been barrel racing for five years. As a member of the North Carolina High School Rodeo Association and the Junior Southern Rodeo Association, she is "on the road quite often" competing at rodeos in both North and South Carolina, and the hard work is paying off.

"I have multiple first place finishes in both associations. I am currently sitting seventh in the N.C. High School Rodeo Association in hopes of getting to the top four to qualify for nationals in Gillette, W.Y. at the end of July," she shared.

Both girls compete in other Western disciplines, too.

"I also compete in pole bending where you and your horse weave through six poles set up in a straight line down the center of the arena,"

explained Sewell. In 2019, she was the North Carolina High School Rodeo Association Pole Bending Champion and went on to compete at the national level that year in South Dakota.

Greene also competes in breakaway roping for both associations, and the American Ranch Horse Association at ranch shows up and down the east coast.

Lexi Sewell (below) got off to a very early start. More recently, Mackenzie Greene (right) demonstrates her roping skills.



a surgeon or a veterinarian. I plan to continue competing in rodeo the rest of my life."

Greene, who started her equine business degree in high school through a dual-enrollment program with Isothermal Community College, also plans to pursue a career in the equestrian industry.

"After I finish [my equine business] degree, I plan to get a degree in animal science specializing in equine science. My dream is to open up my own equine performance facility that will include a fully-functioning equine veterinary hospital, including reproduction and a performance therapy rehabilitation facility as well."

"Some of the classes include ranch reining, boxing, ranch roping, halter, and ranch cutting. I recently entered and won a filly through the ARHA Youth Colt Challenge," said Greene.

For Sewell, the rodeo is a lifelong pursuit.

"I plan to complete my undergraduate education at the University of Virginia with a major in Biology and then I hope to go on to become either

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LOCAL LEGEND: NOREEN FEAGIN

by Leigh Borreson

# Retail Icon Shares the Secret to Success



Since 1979 The Farm House in Landrum, S.C. has been the region's go-to source for equestrian merchandise, evolving from a feed and seed store to offering tack and competition wear, lifestyle apparel, gifts, and more. Holding the reins to this 40-year-

old family business is Noreen Feagin, a community leader and horse enthusiast whose passion for excellent customer service has made her shop wildly successful.

Originally from Spartanburg, Feagin's father moved his textiles plant to Lyman, S.C. where she developed a well-balanced riding background through pony club and fox hunting under the tutelage of Russ Walther.

When talking to Feagin about her life, her love for her parents and their influence on her journey is clear, instilling in her an "unparalleled work ethic." Feagin fell in love with horses when her parents sent her to camp when she was eight years old. "Mom finally let me take riding lessons so I could 'learn the proper way to fall.' She always insisted I wear the chin strap on my hard hat – I felt like such a dork!"

Her parents eventually moved to Tryon, where her mom was active with the Tryon Hounds and Blue Ridge Hunter Jumper Association. Her parents bought The Farm House building (on Highway 176 between Landrum and Tryon), initially running it as a feed and seed store. Feagin joined them in the late '80s, slowly turning it into a tack shop.

Feagin's unstoppable energy keeps her driven and focused. "I have two speeds: go as fast as I can and stop!" But it is also her solution-oriented mindset — a "never say no" mantra — that she truly credits for her success.

"You have to find a solution for customers... that's what we strive for. We will never say 'we don't have that item,' or 'we can't help you,'" Feagin explained. "We take their number and figure out why the item isn't available and see what we can find to replace it." She discovered that taking the time to work with people was earning her repeat business. Her desire to always have items in stock for customers has led her to be the largest stocked tack shop in the U.S.

The Farm House staff also makes sure that no one leaves without the appropriate merchandise. "Each discipline has specific clothes and equipment unique to it, and we take pride in the fact that we take care to assure our customers have what they need." That's the attitude behind The Farm Store tagline, "We ride. We show. We know."



Feagin with The Farm House staff, including Sara Roth, store manager, and Angela Justus — and the iconic red and black Farm House sign, readily recognized by riders throughout our area.



In addition to the Landrum store, she also has outlets in Ocala and at Tryon International Equestrian Center. The retailing scale is impressive, but it's Feagin's huge heart that truly sets her apart. Vickie Wood has worked with Feagin at The Farm House for 33 years and knows her well! "Noreen is just like her mother," she said. "She is always trying to help the kids so they can have the opportunity to show." One of Feagin's goals is to support Harmon Field so that children and riders with young horses have a place to get started in the show ring. "She would do the fundraising, promote it, handle set up and run it," Wood stated. "There were many times we would leave work and go set up

courses!" Wood added that Feagin has always helped the community and supported local businesses.

"Living here is a dream come true! The people are so warm and loving," Feagin said. "I enjoy giving back to the community, but they have given me far more!" Re-emphasizing how much she benefited from her parents' influence, Feagin concluded, "They were honorable people who worked hard and were highly respected. I hope I'll be remembered that way, too!"



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# Deep Dive on *Diamond Market*

by Angie Millon

## Meet this Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame 2023 Equine Inductee

Diamond Market, owned and ridden by Amanda Cone of Windbrook Farm in Landrum, S.C., was a champion Amateur Owner Hunter back in the 1980s. His story, which Cone describes as “magical,” began in 1978 when the Cone’s blacksmith told them about a skinny, lop-eared, grey, and 15-hand thoroughbred gelding at a farm just 15 minutes down the road.



Amanda Cone and Diamond Market at Madison Square Garden

The California-bred son of Diamond Emperor had a bit of a bad reputation — he had bucked his rider off 18 times as they tried to break him. Despite this, Cone and her husband, Lee, thought he was one of those rare

“diamonds in the rough” and took him home that day for \$500.

Fast forward several years, and the tough-to-break three-year-old turned out to be one of the kindest and quietest thoroughbreds ever. As a developing show horse, he suffered a debilitating pasture accident in 1982. He was diagnosed with Sweeney, a severed nerve in the shoulder that was, at the time, considered to be career ending. But Cone refused to give up on her horse. Using an experimental electro-stimulation instrument, she treated his shoulder four to five hours a day at home for nine months. Miraculously, he recovered and never looked back, developing into one of the most winning Amateur Owner Hunters in the country.

During the period of time from 1983-1988, Diamond Market competed in the Amateur Owner Hunter Division all over the southeast, collecting over 60 tricolor championship ribbons. He was the AHSA Zone IV Champion four years in a row, and fourth in the nation twice. He competed and earned ribbons at the year-end indoor finals at Washington, Harrisburg, and Madison Square Garden several years in a row, winning an over fences class at “the Garden” in 1987. Diamond Market lived out his years at Windbrook Farm, remaining the kindest, most gentle, and most talented horse the Cone has ever owned.

“To have Diamond Market inducted into the [CSHHF] is humbling, and such an honor,” remarked Cone.



Amanda and Lee Cone

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# Count Cadence Trophy Retired & Other Charity Show Highlights

As tradition dictates, if a horse and rider win a trophy three years in a row, then that trophy is retired to the duo. And that’s just what Kathy Serio and Moody Blues did at this year’s Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) Charity 1 Horse Show. For the third year in a row, the horse and rider team won the Count Cadence Trophy, officially retiring it to their possession.

Serio was surprised by the honor and hesitant to take ownership of the prestigious trophy, which has been awarded annually since 1947.

“I’ve always loved this show,” said Serio. Her husband, Tommy, added, “This is where good horses and good shows come together!”

Charity I was also a big week for teen rider Gigi Phillips and Thunderbird who won the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby and the \$10,000 USHJA Junior/Amateur National Hunter Derby, both presented by The Farm House.

“I’ve never been in the lead in an international derby. It was a weird feeling, but it was fun!” said Phillips.

This year, four new perpetual trophies were added to the collection: a Grand Short Stirrup Hunter and Grand Performance Hunter Championship trophy for both Charity I and II thanks to the generosity of the Shawback Family.

Celebrating 95 years, TR&HC’s Charity I Horse Show is one of the country’s oldest, continuously-running shows, sharing the company of other prestigious shows like Devon, Blowing Rock, and the National Horse Show — “this is something our community can be very proud of!” said TR&HC President Angie Millon. The list of winners from past years of the Charity I and II shows reads as a “Who’s Who” of the horse show world.

For the past nine years, TR&HC has partnered with Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC) to run both horse shows, which differ from TIEC’s regular roster of shows. Not only are the ribbons different, but a small army of TR&HC Board members and volunteers descend on the showgrounds each day to deliver a warm welcome to guests, provide daily hospitality to competitors and their teams, and award the historic collection of perpetual trophies at the week’s end to division grand champions.

And as the show titles indicate, giving back is the mission and TR&HC has awarded an average of \$45,000 to nonprofits who are serving the community.

“We are grateful for our continued partnership with TIEC for helping us deliver another great year of Charity I and II Horse Shows with the wonderful, small town warmth, support, and hospitality TR&HC is known for,” added Millon.



Gigi Phillips and Thunderbird in their presentation ceremony at the Charity 1 show  
PHOTO KARLI DANNEWITZ/NATALIE SUTO PHOTOGRAPHY



Kathy Serio and Moody Blues in their presentation ceremony at the Charity 1 show  
PHOTO ALEXIS MALIN/NATALIE SUTO PHOTOGRAPHY



Kathy Serio on Moody Blues  
PHOTO ALEXIS MALIN/NATALIE SUTO PHOTOGRAPHY



# Thousands Enjoy the 75th Tryon Block House Steeplechase on a Perfect Spring Day

by Sybil Jones

It was a perfect spring day at the idyllic Green Creek Race Course for the 75th annual steeplechase. More than 25 horses, nine jockeys and dozens of owners and trainers took to the well-manicured 1.16-mile turf track. As exciting as the five races were, the real fun happened inside and outside the track where the revelry, camaraderie and good food abounded.

The day had something for everyone. Family and friends came together to enjoy the races as well as each other's company. In the infield, a magician awed the children. Bluegrass music performed by PacJam, a talent-packed local student music group, entertained adoring

audiences. A genuine gold rush had kids searching for hundreds of gold-painted rocks that were redeemed for prizes. And, the face painter turned ordinary faces into princesses, pirates and butterflies.

As tradition dictates, tailgaters came stocked with food, beverages, chairs and tents, some showcasing elaborate décor to compete in the "Best Tailgate Contest." Ladies donned fancy hats and the more audacious men looked stunning in seersucker suits, bow ties, and summer hats, while other fellows sported wild pants to test their luck in the "Go To Heck" pants contest. "It was an awesome day," said Asheville visitor Leslie Carey. "I can't wait for next year!"



Above: The Roger & Jennifer Smith Trophy presented to Jamie Bargary, winner of The Block House race aboard Gordon's Jet, shown (right) clearing a mid-race jump.

PHOTOS TOD MARKS



From fancy hats and wild pants to wonderful live music, shopping fun and youngsters "searching for gold," steeplechase fans of all ages had a great day!



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## Congratulations! 2023 Block House Steeplechase Winners

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Whiskey Warrior — Northwoods Stable

The Tryon Riding and Hunt Club Maiden Hurdle  
Beat Le Bon — Merriebelle Stable, LLC

The Carter P. Brown Conditioned Claiming Hurdle  
Seizing the Dream — Riverdee Stable

The Block House Ratings Handicap Hurdle  
Gordon's Jet — Riverdee Stable

The Dr. John Bradshaw Training Flat Race  
Dante's Fire — Path Finder Racing



## REUNION GROVE FARM EQUINE SANCTUARY

### Providing Forever Homes for Horses in Need

by Margie Askins

Abusing, neglecting, and abandoning an equine or any other animal is against the law. Unfortunately, equine cruelty occurs nationally and our area is not an exception. Horses are too often left in situations where they are literally fighting on their own to survive conditions of neglect such as starvation, infections, and emotional neglect. Horses are loving and sensitive animals, and seeing them in horrific conditions due to mistreatment and neglect is heartbreaking. The cruelty they have endured can only be changed when they are rescued and put in the hands of an equine rescue organization like Anita Williamson's new non-profit ReUnion Grove Farm Equine Sanctuary.

hay—costs are rising—and the financial need is great. With her 501c3 status in hand, Williamson is currently applying for grants and is graciously accepting monetary donations. With these funds, she will be adding necessary shelters for handling and quarantining newcomers. She also wants to clear more acreage to allow for natural roaming, allowing the



Rescued horses now thriving in the care of ReUnion Grove Farm Equine Sanctuary.

horses access to shady woods and a creek area. Williamson plans to build a website and Facebook page this summer, and they are currently mailing out pamphlets about their organization to inform the community about their passion for equine welfare and advocacy.

If you would like more information or to donate to help support the lifesaving and healing transformation for these horses, please contact Anita Williamson at ReUnion Grove Farm Equine Sanctuary at [anita.reuniongrovefarm@gmail.com](mailto:anita.reuniongrovefarm@gmail.com) or call 828-817-5723.

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## So You Want to Breed a Mare?

by Misty Yelton

Raising a foal can be one of the most rewarding experiences a horseman can have. It can also be one of the most frustrating. As a 20-plus year breeder of American Quarter Horses, I have experienced the highest of highs, as well as the lowest of lows. Many times I have questioned my sanity as the frustrations begin to pile up.

A few of the frustrations breeders can face include:

- FedEx shipments that get lost
- Anovulatory follicles
- Mares that will not settle
- Uterine infections
- Getting bumped off the shipping list
- Embryos that do not survive
- Stillborn foals
- Late-term abortions
- Dummy foals

Despite all the risks, there is, in the words of Dan Fogelberg, "something unknown" that keeps breeders chasing the dream. Maybe it is the thrill of seeing that beautiful black dot on the ultrasound machine. Or maybe it is seeing a set of twin embryos from your World and Congress Champion mare under the microscope and later being the first person to touch those same twins. It could be seeing a foal that you have bred from your champion mare become the fourth horse in history to become a Super Ranch Horse. And the



Yelton with her foal that became only the 6th horse in ARHA history to win the title of Super Ranch Horse.



ultimate thrill, riding your home bred and raised mare to a world championship.

If you dream of raising your own homebred champion, here are a few helpful hints as you start your journey to the winner's circle or leading the victory gallop.

1. Find a veterinarian who loves reproduction work. Breeding mares often goes above and beyond the normal (if there is such a thing for veterinarians) working hours. I am blessed to have a vet who is as passionate about breeding as I am. She has even slept in my living quarters trailer during breeding season to ensure a successful outcome of a breeding!
2. Make sure your mare is ready. Do your homework in the fall with a complete breeding soundness exam including a uterine culture and cytology. Getting ahead of any potential problems could help save you money and frustration down the road.

3. Establish a good relationship with the stallion owner or station. Many of today's popular stallions are often booked to capacity. Having a great working relationship with the stallion manager could work in your favor when there is limited semen available on a given collection day.

And while it may seem that the frustrations outweigh the rewards, I can assure you that seeing your name listed as the breeder of a horse that runs through Oklahoma City's Gate of Champions on NRHA Derby Finals day makes all of the frustrations disappear!

*Misty Yelton is a 3x World Champion Rider, 5x World Champion Breeder, 8x World Champion Owner, a science teacher at Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy, including equine science, and adjunct faculty at Isothermal Community College in equine business.*

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## A Day in the Judge’s Box

by Leigh Borreson

For many of us, judging hunter classes sounds like fun – you just sit in the nice, comfortable judge’s box and pick out your favorite horse! Right? Not exactly! According to Claudia Roland, “judging is a lot more difficult now that we’ve moved to the scoring system – there can be a lot of nice horses in a big class and scoring can get complicated. It can get rushed, so you have to stay really focused on each round.” Jeanne Smith concurred, “There is a lot to it! You have to be prepared before the first horse enters the ring – know the course, have your cards coordinated. At a big show, you only have a second to score a round – it can be stressful!”



(L to R) Judges Jeanne Smith, Claudia Roland and Page Tredennick.

All judges have certain things they like to see as the horse enters the ring. Smith said first impressions are important. She and Page Tredennick stressed that they like to see quality, well turned-out horses and riders with the proper equipment. Tredennick said, “I also personally prefer that they get right to work – not waste time walking around.”

Inclement weather can wreak havoc. “This is not a glamorous job!” Roland added. Smith remembered one show that was delayed because a storm was blowing in. “The wind blew the door shut in the judge’s box and they couldn’t get me out! I had to climb out the front opening!” Another time a monsoon hit during the pony confirmation class and the entire ring except for an island in the center was under water. “I took

off my shoes and waded through the water to the center and started judging the under saddle. The rain started pelting down and every single pony just cantered out of the ring!” said Smith.

Of course, there are also some entertaining moments, too. Roland recalled the time the late Joey Darby was showing in her ring. “He came around the turn and the horse tripped and went down. Joey jumped up and just ran out of the ring and left the horse standing there!” She has seen many things while judging ponies. “I can’t tell you how many times I’ve seen ponies hold their heads up to keep the child on their neck from falling off!”

Even with all the challenges, there are rewards. “I love watching a really nice horse go around – it’s such a thrill. It’s also rewarding to watch good

riders compete,” Roland shared. She continued, “I love when I know I’ve pinned the horses in the right order! That is more important than the scores.” Roland agreed, “When the order is correct, scores don’t matter. I strive to get the order right!”

Roland, Smith and Tredennick offered similar advice for potential judges: Spend as much time as possible sitting with judges and learning – don’t move forward until you are comfortable with it. Bookkeeping is also very important; it can be challenging, so really learn that and have a system that works for you. Roland advised, “Just because you’ve shown, doesn’t mean you can judge.”

“We want you to win!” Smith stressed. “Every judge wants to do a good job every day,” Roland added. “We’re human – so we might miss something – but we want to get it right!”

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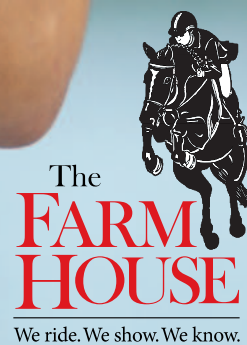
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**Controlling Fire Ants in Pastures**



By Polk County Equine, Livestock & Forage Agent, Cassie LeMaster

You can control fire ants in pastures and hayfields by using granular fire ant baits, but realize baits work slowly and need to be applied preventively. The cost ranges from \$8 to \$45 per acre depending on the application rate and how many times you treat each season. If your goal is to reduce the number of fire ant mounds in a permanent pasture, one treatment may be enough, but if you want to eliminate and prevent fire ant mounds around a horse barn and paddocks, you will need to treat more than once per year.

To treat a pasture or hayfield for fire ants, you need two things: a bait that is labeled for use around grazing animals and a spreader that will apply the bait properly. Not all fire ant baits are labeled for pastures and hayfields; some baits contain active ingredients that are not approved for use around grazing animals. Check the label—before you buy—to be sure the product is labeled for your intended use. Three active ingredients are currently labeled for use as fire ant baits in pastures or hayfields: methoprene, pyriproxyfen, and hydramethylnon (Table 1). These products are sold through farm supply stores in small quantities (one to five pounds) and in 25-pound bags, but you may have to special order the larger quantities. Although these baits can be applied in pastures with grazing animals present, there may be a short waiting period before you can cut hay.

Fire ant baits are designed to be slow acting. The worker ants find the bait granules when they are out foraging, take them back to the colony, and feed them to their young. If fast-acting insecticides were used in the baits, they would kill the foraging workers before they could carry the bait back to the mound. With hydramethylnon, you will begin to see results in two to four weeks, but it can take two to three months to see the full effects of a growth regulator product, such as methoprene or pyriproxyfen.

The growth regulators work by interfering with the development of immature fire ants, but they do not kill adults. Mounds eventually die out because there are no new workers to replace the ones that die. This does not mean the slower-acting baits are not a good option, because these do provide long-term control, usually longer than

the hydramethylnon treatments. But it does mean you have to plan ahead, know what results to expect, and be patient.

The effects of a single bait application can persist for the whole season, meaning you will see fewer mounds than if you had not treated. You will not get rid of every mound, but if you apply the bait properly and do not get rain for a



couple of days, you should get around 80 percent control. The area will be reinfested as newly mated queens fly in and establish new colonies, but you can improve control by treating again

later in the season. You can apply fire ant baits anytime during the growing season, but spring is probably the best time. Wait until soil temperatures warm in the spring and fire ants are actively foraging. You can use potato chips — the greasy kind — to check for foraging activity. Scatter a few chips in the area and come back to check on them in 20–30 minutes. If fire ants find the chips in this time, they will find the bait.



A single bait treatment applied in the spring will substantially reduce fire ant numbers. If you want even better control—and you're willing to spend the time and money to get it—make a second and even a third treatment later in the season, in midsummer and fall, for example. Fall treatments help reduce the number of mounds present the following spring.

BRAND NAME	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	RATE/ACRE	PRE-HARVEST INTERVAL FOR HAY
Amdro Pro	hydramethylnon (0.73%)	1–1.5 lb	7 days
Esteem	pyriproxyfen (0.5%)	1.5–2 lb	1 day
Extinguish	methoprene (0.5%)	1–1.5 lb	N/A
Extinguish Plus	methoprene (0.25%) + hydramethylnon (0.365%)	1.5 lb	7 days

TABLE 1: Adapted from: *Control Fire Ants in Pastures, Hayfields, and Barnyards* by Blake Layton, PhD, Extension Professor, Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology, and Plant Pathology. Mississippi State University Extension Service.



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# Legal Opinion: Hospitality for Horses

by Jim Ritchie



Jim Ritchie of Ritchie & Associates

Equestrian competitions and events are hitting stride this summer and that means more travel for riders and horses. Due to challenges of show and event stalls, equestrians are increasingly turning to private farms and boarding barns for short-term stall rentals. This option provides extra income for hosts and enables traveling owners to board their horses in a safe and secure environment.

Although a recent development in our region, short-term boarding is used widely and now supports online services based on the Airbnb® model. Sites, such as staller.com, match hosts and renters for boarding services, amenities, and payment.

However, the terms and conditions of the stall rental are left to the parties to work out. Therefore, whether using an online service or communicating directly, the parties need a written agreement that addresses key terms. Here are some basic issues to consider.

## FROM THE HOST'S PERSPECTIVE

**Land Use.** Make sure your local land use ordinance or HOA allows short-term rentals.

**Insurance.** A Comprehensive General Liability (CGL) policy covers you for claims by the public; however, it may not cover claims involving horses boarded on your property. To insure against those risks, you need a "Care, Custody or Control" endorsement.

**Liability Protection.** Include a Waiver, Indemnity and Release, and your state's Equine Activity Liability Act protective language in the agreement.

**Healthy Horses.** Require health disclosures and proof of a Negative Coggins test.

**Services and Amenities.** Clearly describe the boarding services, stall, and any access to arenas or trails.

**Practical Considerations.** Examples include emergency vet and farrier policies, barn hours, safety requirements, enforcement for violations, and liability for damages caused by the renter or their horse.



**Getting Paid.** Establish a payment system and reservation policy. It is best to get paid at the time of the reservation.

## FROM THE RENTER'S PERSPECTIVE

**Do Your Research.** Check websites and Facebook for boarding barns. If using a private farm, get photos and a detailed description of the facilities. Make inquiries with local equestrians you trust.

**List Your Requirements.** Include all services, use of facilities, and the size and location of the rented stall.

**Enforcement.** Include practical and effective remedies if the host fails to perform.

**Refunds.** Request a refund provision if the event is canceled or if you or your horse is injured and cannot travel.

By using a well-crafted agreement, all parties can enjoy a successful short-term boarding experience.

Jim Ritchie is head of Ritchie & Associates, LLC. He represents business and equine law clients across the Carolinas. Look for Ritchie to share more advice in future issues of *Horse Country Quarterly*. For more information visit [tryonequinelaw.com](http://tryonequinelaw.com).



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