

Conference Will Help Horse Owners Understand Forages

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Media; Contact Michael Sutphin by phone at (540) 231-6975 or by e-mail at msutphin@vt.edu

BLACKSBURG, VA, December 11, 2006 -- Each year, Virginia's horses consume more than 500,000 tons of hay valued at approximately \$100 million. In light of this, Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council will explore how producers can maintain a healthy animal, pasture, and environment at this year's equine forage conference, February 8-10.

The conference will be repeated on Wednesday, February 8, at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, VA; Thursday, February 9, at the fairgrounds in Warrenton, VA; and Friday, February 10, at New Kent High School in New Kent, VA. Registration for each session will begin at 8 a.m., and events will end at 3:30 p.m.

As one of the fastest growing segments of Virginia agriculture, the equine industry and its impact will be the focus of this year's conference. "This conference will help producers gain important knowledge of the horse industry and how to tailor their products and services to meet the needs of the consumer," said Gordon Groover, Extension farm management specialist at Virginia Tech, who will be discussing the feasibility and cost of hay at the conference. "This conference will provide horse owners with skills that will improve the well being of their horses and the environment in which they live."

Speakers will address establishing forages, fertility and forage cutting management, and the legality of selling hay:

- David Pugh, of Fort Dodge Animal Health, will be speaking about equine nutrition and pastures.
- Andrea Heid, an equine marketing specialist for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, will discuss the impact of horses on Virginia.
- Les Vough, a retired crop Extension specialist from the University of Maryland, will address hay quality and its value for horses.
- Leon Geyer, Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Tech, will explore business and legal issues of selling hay.
- Chris Teutsch, an Associate Professor of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences at Virginia Tech's Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center, will cover plant growth for successful pasture management.
- Ann Swinker, an Extension horse specialist at Penn State, will use her research expertise on management and environmental issues to discuss balanced equine management.
- Lewis Sapp, of Salem, NC, who worked for Gallagher Power Fence for 25 years, will give a presentation on cost-effective fencing for horses.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation supports the conference. The early registration fee is \$25 for Virginia Forage and Grassland Council members and \$35 for non-members. After the January 25 deadline for early registration, the fee is \$35 for Virginia Forage and Grassland Council members and \$45 for non-members.

For more information or to register for the conference, contact Margaret Kenny at <mailto:makenny@vt.edu> or (434) 292-5331.

PLEASE PRINT

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Email

Check box of meeting you are attending

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Virginia Horse Center – Lexington February 8, 2007

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Fair Grounds – Warrenton February 9, 2007

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High School - New Kent February 10, 2007

\$25.00 early signup VFGC member (**2 WEEKS PRIOR TO MEETINGS**)

\$35.00 early signup Non-member (**2 WEEKS PRIOR TO MEETINGS**)

\$35.00 late signup VFGC member

\$45.00 late signup Non-member

*Please make check payable to **VFGC***

Mail check and registration form to

VFGC

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Crewe, VA 23930

Virginia Cooperative Extension brings the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth. Through a system of on-campus specialists and locally-based agents, it delivers education in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, community viability, and 4-H youth development. With a network of faculty at two universities, 107 county and city offices, 13 agricultural research and extension centers, and six 4-H educational centers, Virginia Cooperative Extension provides solutions to the problems facing Virginians today.

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This news release was written by Casey Marstaller, student intern for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.