

Michigan Horse Council



Important Dates:

2012:

January 1—Happy New Year

January 3—MHC Meeting
MSU Pavilion, E. Lansing, 7:30
Trails Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

February 4—4-H Benefit Horse Clinic, MSU Pavilion
East Lansing, MI

February 7—MHC Meeting
MSU Pavilion, E. Lansing, 7:30
Trails Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

February 19-20—MSU Rodeo Spartan Stampede
MSU Pavilion, E. Lansing

March 3-10—ANR Week
MSU, East Lansing

March 6—MHC Meeting
MSU Pavilion, E. Lansing, 7:30
Trails Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

March 9-11—MHC Horse Expo
MSU Pavilion, East Lansing
(www.michiganhorsecouncil.com)

April 4—MHC Annual Meeting
MSU Pavilion, E. Lansing, 7:30
Trails Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

April 13-15—Hoosier Horse Fair
Indiana State Fairgrounds
Indianapolis, IN

MHC News, January, 2012

MHC's Meeting Scheduled for January 3rd.....

The January meeting of the Michigan Horse Council will be held on December 6th at the MSU Livestock Pavilion, East Lansing, Michigan, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Discussion will be held on House Bills HB 4684 (introduced by Rep. MacMaster) and HB 5175 (introduced by Rep. Foster), both of which seek to amend the "Right to Ride" legislation. MHC will have a position paper prepared regarding MHC's stand on these two bills, and will present it to the board for discussion and vote at this meeting.

These bills present many important ramifications to Michigan's equestrian community, therefore this will be a very important and information meeting.

Other issues to be discussed will be Horse Trailer Insurance, Is Your Trailer Covered? There will be an update on the 2012 MHC Horse Expo, as well as other information pertinent to the equine industry.

Also....the Trails Committee will meet at 6:30 p.m., just prior to the regular board meeting, same date, same location.

Deadline is Fast Approaching for MHC Member Scholarships

January 7, 2012, is the final deadline for all applications for the MHC Member Scholarships. The application form and information is on the MHC website: www.michiganhorsecouncil.com.

There are three MHC Member Scholarships (\$1,000 each) awarded each year to members of MHC member organizations and/or MHC individual members. Remember: If your organization is a member of Michigan Horse Council, ALL of your members are eligible to apply for these scholarships. The scholarships are not limited to high school seniors expecting to attend a college in the fall; but also students who are already college students, as well as those "older" folks that might be returning to college, either for an advanced degree, or training in a new field.

The applications on the website are easily accessible, and give a step-by-step procedure to follow in filling them out and sending them in.

Scholarship recipients will be notified in February if they have received one of the Member Scholarships, and these will be presented at the annual MHC Expo in March.

Is Your Horse Trailer Covered by Your Insurance?

Is your horse trailer covered for collision damage by your current insurance. A recent trailer accident has pointed out that most horse trailers are covered by your towing vehicle insurance only for liability, not for collision damage. In checking, we have found that most insurance companies require a separate policy on your horse trailer for it to be covered by collision insurance. Do you know the coverage on your horse trailer? Would you be interested in having an insurance specialist as a guest speaker at a MHC meeting? If so, contact any MHC board member.

Emotions Soar After Congress Lifts Slaughter Ban:

Oakland Press, December 16, 2011, by Sharon Greene

It's a sensitive subject — in recent days there have been many news reports regarding the lifting of the ban by Congress regarding horse slaughter.

Emotions run high. Should the U.S. Department of Agriculture be involved in the regulation and inspection of horse for meat that will be transported to Mexico, Canada and Europe for human consumption?

Typically, horses were rendered unconscious by a captive bolt gun or blow to the center of the forehead. They were then hung with hind legs shackled, and their jugular was

severed before being exsanguinated (bled out). Sadly, not all died instantaneously and many were known to suffer unimaginable, inhumane deaths as they remained conscious during dismemberment. Slaughterhouses were closed by 2007.

About 89 percent of equestrians believe the practice of slaughter is inhumane and barbaric while others see it, if regulated properly and humanely, as an acceptable alternative.

Trail rider, Paula Weaver of Highland has rescued several horses and feels a deep responsibility to their care. She adopted a non-rideable, special needs horse, Derby, at 28 years old to be a pasture companion for her trail horse. Weaver has researched the subject of slaughter in depth.

“The problem was never that horses were slaughtered,” said Weaver. “It was the treatment they endured both on their way to the slaughter house and at the slaughter house. Who monitored this then? This is America. We do not raise horses for meat. Our American horse meat ends up on foreign tables of the wealthy. When slaughterhouses closed down, it forced some of the careless breeders to slow down. Cats and dogs run loose and breed — but horses are planned. We owe them better treatment.”

Deb Morgan, 4H leader and youth volunteer, is against horse slaughter.

“I understand the president signed the bill into law to fund the U.S. horse slaughter industry because it was perceived the current ban on slaughtering horses in the U.S. was not preventing abuse of animals exported to Mexico and Canada for slaughter. I am aware some cultures consume horse meat,” said Morgan. “

In the U.S., horses are considered livestock and/or a commodity in certain industries. However, horses are bred as companions, performance and service animals, not as feed for human consumption in the U.S. So, how can a culture with laws against neglect and abuse of these same beautiful animals condone horse slaughter in the U.S. or anywhere else?”

Don Ryker, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine who practices in Oakland County, is in favor of slaughter. “We have allowed our hearts to override common sense and the welfare of horses,” said Ryker.

While practicing equine veterinarian, Ryker has seen first-hand the deterioration of care for horses since the law-stopping slaughter was originally passed.

“More horses were starved, abandoned and neglected as people who could not afford their horses any more tried to find solutions. Just because we are fortunate enough to be able to choose what kind of protein we consume doesn’t give us the right to deprive it from those that need protein.”

Ryker is acutely aware of the expense for putting a horse down. “Barn calls are \$50 to \$75, the shot to euthanize is \$75 to \$120, back hoe for burial is \$150 to \$300, or the animal can be hauled for about \$200 to MSU and cremation is \$140,” explained Ryker.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners supports reopening the plants given certain provisions, including strict oversight and humane guidelines as listed on their website at aaep.org.

In an effort to set the record straight, Phil Derfler, Deputy Administrator for Food Safety and Inspection, wants to provide the facts. “While Congress has technically lifted the ban, horse processing will not resume any time in the near term. Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act, horses are an amenable species, which means that horse meat cannot be shipped or sold for human consumption without inspection.”

“To date, there have been no requests that the Department initiate the authorization process for any horse processing operation in the United States.”

According to Derfler, Illinois and Texas have laws in place prohibiting the slaughter of horses. “Even if these laws were changed, any processing facility will still need to satisfy a significant number of requirements, such as obtaining a federal grant of inspection, conducting a hazard analysis and developing a Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan prior to the processing of any animals.”

Ryker also believes that banning slaughter removed the monitoring process from our government’s control. It is his opinion that the economy has played a roll in the increase of neglected or abandoned horses. The “Circle of Life” is a theory that Ryker deals with on a daily basis.

“If we are good stewards of the earth, then we should not waste anything. Sometimes we must do whatever is necessary to leave the smallest footprint possible. The biggest single gorilla in the room, looming over everything, is that we have more people on this earth than we can feed. We have to do something. We need to grow more or larger volumes of food. It would be arrogant on our part to think that 1,000 pounds of digestible protein can be put into the ground.”

He would like to see certain criteria set up, as he sees drug residues such as antibiotics as a problem in all foods today.

“Any time you butcher an animal, cow, pig or horse, (it’s) important to know what that animal has been eating or given,” explained Ryker. “If the animal was sick, it could potentially cause a problem. That would be an issue.”

Jean Ligon, attorney for Michigan Horse Council, agrees with Ryker. “I believe the original legislation that stopped the commercial slaughter of horses for meat, with the resulting closure of almost all U.S. horse slaughter plants, was a well-intended but misguided effort by people who knew very little about horses or their best interests, and therefore caused much more harm than benefit to the very animals they were trying to help. I am hopeful that lifting the ban on the humane slaughter of horses for meat will help the horse industry recover from the damage caused by the ban, both economically and as compassionate custodians of these beautiful animals.”

Gordon Peterson, who has been breeding, training and selling sport horses for over 50 years, is in favor of using horses for meat and other uses. “Our geriatric herd at our farm is separated from our other horses,” said Peterson. “The geriatric herd is for horses we have raised and who have attained an age where their teeth are worn down, they are unable to be ridden and require special care. Not everyone is in a position like we are to care for their horses indefinitely. All of the rescue farms of which I am aware, are filled to capacity and have waiting lists.”

Peterson explained that slaughter offers a reasonable way for some people to dispose of horses. “Too many people think of Flicka,

Silver, Champion, Trigger and Mister Ed when they think of horses,” Peterson continued. “I wonder if anyone who does not own a horse and supports a no slaughter law would be interested in adopting a free horse or even buying one.”

Longtime equestrian Allene Holman of Highland also supports the commercial slaughter of horses. “As long as legislation is in place for the humane shipment of these unfortunate horses and also the euthanization process is humane,” said Holman.

But, Annette Armstrong, a Realtor and trail rider from Waterford, strongly disagrees. “Considering horses as livestock is old-school thinking. Less than 100 years ago horses were our means of transportation, working in the fields and building industry. Nowadays horses are our pets, just like dogs and cats.” Armstrong also acknowledges that there is no way to know what a horse has been fed, what medications or wormers it has been given or how it has been raised. In addition, she thinks horse theft would be on the rise. “It would make it so much easier for someone to steal a horse and run it down to the local auction or slaughter house and sell it for a couple hundred bucks before the owner would even know it was gone.”

Doreen Rudnick, an IT System Analyst from Metamora, has rescued horses. She is against this practice and feels it is a disgrace. “This is like killing the family dog. There should be shame attached to sending horses to slaughter,” said Rudnick. If the policy is changed, she thinks that a list of companies or people who send their horses to slaughter should be published for the public to see.

Beth Jansen, retired school teacher and retired Oakland County Mounted officer, weighed in. “As a child growing up on a farm, we had horses to work and plant the fields. Before that, our ancestors drove them and rode them to populate the west. They have been used in wars and as cavalry mounts. Horses are still used in police departments everywhere. They are companions just as our dogs and cats are. They should be considered family.” “I have been a horse owner for over five years,” said Ellen Zehnder, a horse advocate from Clarkston. “I am definitely against horse slaughter. We do not eat horse meat in this country. This practice is done for human consumption overseas. The horse is an icon of American history. He has carried us into battle, plowed our fields, carried us across lands to new destinations, entertained us and today provides the ultimate physical and mental therapy to adults and children with physical and mental handicaps; to include soldiers returning from war. This is the ultimate betrayal of an animal that we’ve asked to trust us.”

Zehnder continued, “They are transported with broken legs, body injuries, beaten into submission with little to no food or water.” Their death by captive bolt guns most times does not kill them and is intended only to stun them before they are slaughtered, which means they are still alive. This inhumane practice applies to cows, pigs, chickens and others intended for slaughter. There are many that think this is only an animal; it has no feelings. Zehnder plans to contact legislators in Washington.

Katherine Bair of Holly has owned horses for 30 years and is conflicted on this subject. “I’m truly not sure how I feel about horse slaughter,” said Bair. “I watched the debate years ago, and it seemed that each side had good points. But, I could never understand killing Trigger. I am a horse lover, and I was appalled with the callousness in the many of the slaughter houses. I truly believe the horses feel panic, because I think they knew the fate that awaited them as they maneuvered the chutes and ramps to their uncaring demise. But, I also believe the value of horses plummet with the closing of these slaughter houses, and the culling of the poorer quality horses that went through the auction barn. Some horses are sickly and may need to be euthanized. I can understand feeding the meat to zoo animals — but human consumption? No.”

Send horse or farm information, events or comments to sharonlgreene@hotmail.com.

Ex-racehorse stars in *War Horse*

As a racehorse, Finders Key was a failure. In his second career, he is a phenomenon as one of the stars of Steven Spielberg’s highly anticipated screen adaptation of the hit play *War Horse*, set to open on December 25.



by Arthur Curly Ortiz. By the Roberto stallion Lindsey’s Roberto, he is out of the winning Key to the Mint mare, Thru the Keyhole. Finders Key was bred in California by James J. Lindsey.

Hollywood horse master Bobby Lovgren recognized Finders Key as an exceptional talent during filming for *Seabiscuit* and purchased him when the project was completed. He was so confident in the 12-year-old California-bred’s exceptional ability that he had him flown to England for the taping of *War Horse*.

“He is the best horse I’ve ever had,” Lovgren told *Cowboys & Indians*. “He’s truly amazing. The wilder looking things he’s so very good at—the fast things that make you believe the horse is scared or panicked. Those kinds of situations are very hard to train—the emotions—and he’s very good and believable at portraying them. He has so much animation and personality. It just brings much more to the table. He’s very confident.”

War Horse is set in Europe during World War I and centers on the bond between a farmer’s young son and his horse, Joey. The two are separated when Joey is sold as a cavalry mount, but the boy vows they will reunite.

Before being recruited for *Seabiscuit*, Finders Key was unplaced in three starts for a \$2,500 claiming price at Los Alamitos as a juvenile in 2002. He campaigned for Vincent Timphony—best known as the trainer of inaugural Breeders’ Cup Classic (G1) winner Wild Again—and his wife, Scarlett and was trained

MHC Horse Expo 2012 to be Another Great Event!

The 29th annual MHC Horse Expo, slated for March 9, 10 and 11, 2012, at the MSU Livestock Pavilion will be another memorable event. An exciting, weekend-long program has been planned, feature clinicians, speakers and demonstrations confirmed, and the excitement is growing! Mark your calendars for the dates now!

The complete schedule will be on the MHC website in about two weeks, after receiving final approval at the Expo meeting in January. All clinicians, exhibitions, demonstrations and more have been confirmed, contracts issued and confirmed.

The Friday morning Elementary Field Trip program is again to be an integral part of the 2012 MHC Horse Expo. Schools are now being confirmed, and pre-Expo presentations are being planned at those schools that will be participating. If you know of a school that might be interested (grades 2-5 are being included this year), please contact either Marilyn Graff (m.marilyngraft@frontier.com) or Tammy Howe (tammy.lynn@yahoo.com). Keep in mind that the schools must furnish their own transportation to and from the Expo, as this has been a problem in the past with tight school budgets. The program takes place Friday morning, with schools scheduled to arrive between 8 and 8:30 a.m., and continuing through noon. Tammy (Tyler) Howe and Lee Ann Hull (Sierra Rose Farm) are heading up the field trip program.

We have confirmed a Priefert Round Pen and two saddles as door prizes again this year. Watch for details on these and the sponsors, along with detailed information about clinicians on the MHC website.

Advance tickets and group tickets are now on sale through the website. There is a \$2.00 saving on adult advanced tickets, over the price of tickets at the door, however \$1.00 off coupons may not be used on advance tickets. Group tickets at a reduced price are available for groups of 10 (all purchased at the same time in advance), with details on the website. All advance ticket purchases must be postmarked by February 28.

Don't miss the exciting action.....March 9, 10 and 11, 2012!

AHC Washington Update:

EPA Proposes New Reporting Requirements for CAFOs

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has published a proposed rule concerning reporting requirements for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). Some large horse facilities, such as racetracks, training facilities, stables, shows, exhibitions, and fairgrounds are considered CAFOs and could be subject to the proposed reporting requirements. Most horse farms, ranches, stables and shows are not considered CAFOs. The proposed rule does not change current EPA regulations concerning what constitutes a CAFO or permitting requirements, it only involves new information submission requirements.

EPA regulations concerning the Clean Water Act are very complex. No horse operation that maybe be considered a CAFO should rely on this Washington Update to understand what is being proposed and what their obligations under current law and regulations maybe. Owners and operators of any horse facility, be it a breeding farm, ranch, training facility, stable, race track, sale, horse show, fair or exhibition, should seek competent advice to ensure their facilities are in compliance with current EPA regulations and how any proposed regulatory changes could impact their operation.

Proposed Options

The EPA's stated purpose for the proposed rule is that it lacks basic information about most CAFOs. The EPA is proposing two options for collecting information.

Option one would require all large and medium CAFOs to submit the following information to the EPA;

- The name and contact information of the owner or authorized representative of the CAFO.
- The location of the CAFO.
- Whether or not the CAFO currently has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and the permit number if the CAFO does
- The type and number of animals confined at the CAFO for the previous 12 months.
- Where the CAFO applies manure, litter and process wastewater and the total number of acres under the control of the CAFO available for land application.

CAFOs would submit this information through a survey form provided by the EPA. This option would exempt CAFO located in states that already collect this information through an approved NPDES program and chooses to provide the EPA with that information.

Option two would only require CAFOs to complete a survey form if they are located in focus watersheds that the EPA has determined to have water quality concerns associated with CAFOs.

Equine CAFOs

A horse operation could be considered a CAFO if it keeps or raises horses in "confinement" for at least 45 days in a 12-month period and there is no grass or other vegetation in the confinement area during the normal growing season. The areas associated with confinement at horse facilities include the stables and "production area," which is the area where the horses are housed and manure is stored. Such area includes stables, stalls, walkers and walkways; it does not include pastures, paddocks or similar unconfined areas. Additionally, current regulations have a threshold number of horses for determining if a horse operation is a CAFO.

- A facility is considered a large CAFO if it confines 500 or more horses for 45 days in a 12 month period.
- A facility is a medium CAFO if it confines 150 to 499 horses and (1) the facility discharges pollutants into U.S. waters through a man-made ditch, flushing system or other similar device; or (2) the horses come into direct contact with surface waters running through the area where they are confined.

Operations with less than 150 horses are generally not considered CAFO unless specifically designated as such on a case by case basis.

Please contact the AHC with any questions.

Don't forget the meeting January 3, 7:30 p.m., MSU Livestock Pavilion, East Lansing.