



# Horse Council Courier

The Horsemen's Council of Illinois newsletter dedicated to promoting a healthy horse industry statewide through information and education.

## HCI launches Chicagoland Equestrian Lifestyle Expo & Holiday Market November 22-23 at Arlington Park Racecourse

Horsemen's Council of Illinois' Board of Directors has approved a new trade show November 22-23, 2008 to present "everything equestrian" to the large Chicagoland horse market, including current horse owners and the one-in-three households wanting to own or ride a horse in the future, according to Horse Industry Alliance research.

Good news for the horse industry is that NBC Television's pre-Olympic research shows equestrian sports as the 4th most popular sport among women of all ages.

While the beautiful Arlington Park Racecourse grandstand in Arlington Heights can accommodate more than 300 booths indoors, it cannot accommodate horses, hence the new show will focus on education, fun and shopping, according to Joy Meierhans, who manages the Illinois Horse

Fair, and who will manage the new Equestrian Lifestyle Expo.

Prior to committing to the new venture, HCI surveyed Horse Fair vendors to learn if they would support the new Lifestyle Expo. "It's about time for something in the Chicago area," is the consensus Meierhans was told.

Arlington Park is 20 minutes northwest of Chicago's O'Hare Airport and is accessible from all major expressways, interstate routes and commuter trains. It has 7,814 parking spaces, Wi-Fi throughout building, and meeting/hospitality rooms and services.

Although it's a little early to announce specifics, Meierhans said, the types of vendors expected for the event include those with English and Western tack and clothing for all disciplines; feed, supplements, health care products; and facilities, equipment and stable supplies, such as barns, stalls, fencing,

generators and gators.

With only 30 days until Christmas, there will be a special emphasis on holiday gifts, including jewelry, art, books, stationery, home/barn/lounge accessories—even horse head chocolates.

Appealing to folks interested in becoming part of the equestrian lifestyle will be the clubs and associations on hand representing almost all breeds and disciplines. HCI member clubs will qualify for reduced exhibitor rates.

Fun new concepts being considered for the Lifestyle Expo include equestrian collectibles appraisals (paintings, prints,

(continued on page 6)

## Unwanted Horse Issue: What You Can Do!

The most pressing issue in the horse industry today is related to the number of unwanted horses in the U.S. due to a number of factors including the closing of U.S. processing plants, high fuel and feed costs and the mortgage crisis. It is our responsibility to do what we can to be a part of the solution!

**1. Educate yourself on the issue.** *It is important for everyone in the horse industry to understand the issues, how the horse industry arrived at the place it is today and how they can assist in keeping the horse industry viable and strong.*

**2. Encourage responsible horse ownership.** *Utilize the resources available to you to encourage new horse owners to understand all of the issues relating to horse ownership including cost and end of life issues. Go to the Unwanted Horse Coalition website, cited below for materials and information.*

**3. Support reputable horse rescues.** *Research the horse rescues in your area and consider supporting the programs that are directly helping horses.*

**4. Consider any breeding carefully.** *Look at all factors of the mare and stallion and weigh out if breeding is the way to go or if existing horses for sale or adoption can fill your needs.*

**5. Help educate those around you on the issues.** *Go to the Unwanted Horse Coalition's website and utilize the information to educate others. ■*

Resource: [www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org](http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org)

American Youth Horse Council

## Inside this Issue

<i>Animal Planet Trots Out Horse Programming.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Deadline for HCI Scholarship.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>HCI goes to OVETS.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Keeping Your Trails Open .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Mr. Bowman goes to Washington.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Poisonous Pasture Plants.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>President's Corner.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2008 Elections.....</i>	<i>4</i>

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## ***President's Corner***

### *The Voice of the Illinois Horse Industry*

The horses are fat and dappled here in the Sangamon Valley of Central Illinois, due in part to the above average rainfall making it greener than usual in these parts but also to a regrettable lack of saddle time as gas prices keep us a little closer to home this year. Prices from the pump to the grocery store are certainly putting a crimp on how we spend our discretionary funds. Not wanting to apply expensive fertilizer this year in tandem with the abundant summer rains has brought on certain pasture weeds in our more heavily grazed pastures that are outpacing the growth of the warm season grasses. Those weeds needed to be mowed in order for the sunshine to reach the grass.

While mowing, I got to thinking about how much that canopy of weeds resembles the various animal rights and protection groups and the effect they are having on the horse industry. Much like the grasses, the interests of our horse community are largely being overshadowed by those organizations ability to get their agendas in front of our legislators. They have basically unlimited resources (lots of money) and claim to be able to deliver votes, all the right things needed to be heard in Washington DC or Springfield. At HCI, we need your help to do a little mowing to let the sun shine brightly on the horse industry so we can grow and flourish too!

I recently got back from Washington DC where I was attending the American Horse Council National Issues Forum, the State Horse Council Advisory Committee meetings and

USDA's Unwanted Horse Forum. I also spent a bunch of time visiting with every Illinois congressional delegate. Time that could have been more enjoyably spent in the saddle to be sure, but wisely spent on your behalf. We were able to discuss a wide range of issues from just who is it that actually knows best about equine welfare to what really constitutes humane transport conditions for horses. The legislators and their staff members were unanimous in expressing the need for the horse people of Illinois to regularly participate in the process. That's not just from me – they need to hear from you, too!

Sitting in the saddle ranting and raving may feel good for a little while but it's a poor strategy for effecting solutions to the issues that face our horses and equestrian lifestyle. Nothing carries more weight with a legislator than a message from a constituent. In order for HCI to become more effective and develop stronger relationships with our legislators, we need folks like you to be willing to contact your legislator and his/her staff while on summer recess and when important issues arise.

You are the grassroots of this organization; only you can make it happen. Please consider becoming an HCI Equine Ambassador and signing up for the American Horse Council's Congressional Cavalry. Contact the HCI office for details and let us know your thoughts on how to let the sun shine brighter on your equine interests. ■

*Frank Bowman*

## Mr. Bowman goes to Washington - Again!

HCI President Frank Bowman went to Washington, D.C. in June, attending meetings of the American Horse Council and its National Issues Forum and State Horse Councils sessions, taking time to stop by the offices of every Illinois senator and representative. Here's an overview of his efforts:

**American Horse Council National Issues Forum:** Bowman attended the AHC National Issues Forum and participated in both the State Horse Council Advisory Committee meeting and the Unwanted Horse Forum held at the United States Department of Agriculture. Bowman supplied HCI directors with copies of the issues book, proceedings from the USDA forum and other pertinent information. "I'll be happy to discuss the events at length with all interested members," he says.

### **Major themes for the week included:**

- ◆ Relationship building (industry, legislative, regulatory and organizational)
- ◆ Grassroots involvement
- ◆ Partnership development (within and without)

**Capitol Hill Visits:** Bowman stopped by every Illinois delegate's office to drop off HCI information and was received by many. Personal contact was made with staffers for Sen. Dick Durbin, Sen. Barack Obama, Representatives Bobby Rush, Peter Roskam, Mark Kirk, Jerry Weller, Bill Foster, Tim Johnson, Phil Hare, Ray LaHood and John Shimkus. Shimkus was the only legislator who made time to meet with Bowman personally.

### **Issues discussed typically included:**

- Equine Welfare – Who understands it best (we do!)
- The importance of agriculture in Illinois and the role horses have in agriculture
- The burgeoning problem of unwanted horses across the US
- Our need and willingness to be included in discussions on animal and equine welfare
- Introduction, by Rep. Mark Kirk, of the House bill prohibiting transportation in double-deck trailers and our experiences with the same piece of legislation in Illinois
- Cavel v. Madigan appeal to the Supreme Court
- The Senators and Representatives decision to co-sponsor S311 or HR503
- Bills to "Preserve our Equine Heritage on Public Lands" and "HIPPA"
- Health insurance parity for participating in legal recreational activities.

**"The overwhelming consensus is that it is important for us to be there, having these discussions and becoming more visibly active in the process (both in Washington and at home)!"** Bowman says.

**Federal Legislative Activity – Congress Overrides Presidential Veto (again) and Passes Farm Bill – Includes Provisions Beneficial to Horses**

- Depreciation of Race Horses Shortened**
- Equine Farmers and Ranchers Eligible for Emergency Loans**
- Horses Specifically Included as Livestock in Disaster Assistance Program.** ■

## Keeping Your Trails Open

Will you go on a trail ride one day only to find your favorite riding trail closed to horses, or your trail blocked by a new subdivision? That depends on you! Or phrased more accurately, "It depended on you!"

Trail closures don't happen overnight. Urban sprawl, the rising popularity of paved trails, and objections to erosion and manure are gradually taking away trails. Here's what you can do to protect your trails:

**1) First, practice good trail etiquette.** Just one negative encounter with an equestrian can give rise to significant adverse actions.

- Take care not to scare anyone with your horse, not even by accident.
- Remove manure dropped on paved trails and clean up around your trailer.
- Preserve your trail by not riding on muddy, soft, eroded, or closed trails.
- Respect the rights of other trail users to enjoy their activities.
- Do not trespass on private property or ride over planted fields.
- Stay on the trail.
- Don't create new trails or alter the terrain without permission.
- Serve as a goodwill ambassador every time you ride.

**2) Secondly, join an equestrian group.** It is critical that equestrians have a unified communication with state and local governments and private property owners if you want your voice to be heard. Become a member of the HCI directly, or join a group that has a representative on the HCI, so we can provide information to help you:

- Establish goodwill with your local trail manager.
- Contact other equestrians and trail users who have a common interest.
- Keep abreast of current issues and problems affecting your trail.
- Effectively lobby government officials on trail matters.
- Apply for funding for trail improvements.
- Protect trails in designated greenways and open space.

Trail riding on public and private property is a privilege that can be revoked. It only takes one gallop through a cornfield to make a farmer really mad. It only takes one horse making a muddy mess on a wet trail to justify closing the trail to equestrians. There is only one person who can save your trail. YOU! ■

# Let's get involved in the 2008 Elections!

Excerpts from The American Horse Council publication "Getting Involved in the 2008 Elections," a federal election guide for the horse industry. Copies of the full text can be obtained by contacting the AHC at (202) 296-4031 or by email at [ahc@horsecouncil.org](mailto:ahc@horsecouncil.org).

The 2008 elections provide an excellent opportunity to get to know the candidates, both incumbents running for re-election and those running for the first time, and remind them that the horse community is a large and important part of our national, state and local economies. It is a diverse industry that involves agriculture, sport, gaming, entertainment and recreation.

Anyone running for public office has an obvious interest in the concerns of those who they ask to vote for them. Candidates want, and need, the support of their constituents and election years are when they come and ask for your vote and support. Without that they cannot be elected. So election years present a real opportunity for the horse community to get involved and make ourselves important to the candidates.

## Know the Candidates

Members should take the time to learn about the candidates and where they stand on the issues important to the horse community. You need to do some research on their backgrounds and views.

Ways to learn about the candidates include:

- Visit candidate websites.
- Go to Town Hall meetings.
- Consider endorsements given by trusted officials, groups, and organizations
- Watch televised debates.
- Read news, political blogs, and watch programs, for a variety of viewpoints.

## Start a Relationship

Part of the democratic process is effective communication between candidates and constituents. Make sure the candidates know what is important to

you and the wider horse community. There are many different ways you can accomplish this.

·Invite a candidate to your home, farm or business so that they can gain first-hand knowledge about your operation and activities.

·Invite a candidate to your organization's meeting, show or event. Give him/her the opportunity to speak or present an award. A crowd and an opportunity to speak are great magnets for those running for public office. Be sure to take pictures and publish them in your newsletter or local paper.

·Include a candidate and their family on a trail ride.

·Organize a "meet and greet" for candidates to introduce them to your organization's members. Reach out to other horse owners and organizations to host a joint event in order to provide a crowd.

·Take advantage of campaign events in your area to have a face-to-face conversation with the candidate and discuss the issues.

·Write letters to potential candidates to let them know what issues are important to you.

·Ask candidates to complete a questionnaire about issues important to the horse community.

·Invite a candidate to write something for your organization's newsletter or publication.

Going to a farm or ranch, a show, a trail ride or similar event is a pleasant way to spend a few hours. Having constituents there makes it even better for candidates.

The horse can offer fun and unique opportunities not available to other industries. Take advantage of these.

## Fundraise

Candidates rely on money raised from individuals, business and organizations to finance and run their campaigns and you can help them.

·Contribute money to a campaign. Any amount of money you are able to

contribute helps a candidate further their platform and successfully run for office.

·Hold a fundraiser at your home or business for a candidate and invite the horse community to the event.

·Know the rules governing candidate appearances before your organization, particularly if you are a non-profit organization.

·Know the limits on political contributions and fundraising for individuals and organizations.

## Volunteer

Candidates depend on volunteers to make their campaigns function. Volunteering to work on a campaign is a great way to meet a candidate and help him/her get elected. It is also a good way to meet others supportive of the candidate and their staff. In many instances staff is as important as the candidate since they have more time to really understand the issues in depth.

·E-mail or call the campaign manager of the candidate you support and offer to volunteer on their campaign.

·Canvas neighborhoods or work at a phone bank for the candidate. By directly contacting citizens you make the general public aware of your candidate's issues. Grassroots contact is usually far more effective than traditional advertising.

·Volunteer at a rally. You will likely meet the candidate and many people associated with the campaign that may end up working for him/her if elected.

·Volunteer to work for your candidate at a poll on Election Day passing out fliers and information about his/her positions.

·Drive people without transportation to the polls. By transporting those in need, you ensure that their vote is counted.

## Register to Vote

In general, you can register at your county election office, Drivers License Facilities or other government offices.

# Vote!

# HCI goes to OVETS

Horsemen's Council of Illinois Director Peter Veit and Trails Committee member Sara Rhoades represented HCI at the Ohio Valley Equestrian Trails Symposium June 19 – 21 in Eddyville. Sara also is a member of the OVETS planning committee.

Here is Sara's report: The theme for the 2008 Ohio Valley Equestrian Trails Symposium was "Urban to Wilderness – There's a Place for Horses." The conference was held at the Little Lusk Trail Lodge near Eddyville just outside the Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois. The symposium is held each year to bring together trail advocacy groups and land management agencies to further the communication that will keep our horse trails open and, hopefully, allow room for expansion of those trails.

The 2008 OVETS was sponsored by Horsemen's Council of Illinois, Illinois Trail Riders, Indiana Horse Council, Inc., Indiana Trail Riders Association, Hoosier Back Country Horsemen, Kentucky Horse Council, Michigan Horse Council and Wisconsin Horse Council.

Attended by 75 participants, the conference was especially important to equestrian advocacy groups since it showcased the design, construction, and sustainability of the Lusk Creek Wilderness Area trails involved in the Shawnee Trails Designated Project which was signed in 2006. The pre-conference trail ride was guided by USFS personnel and led riders to four prominent areas of work on the trails in the Wilderness Area. USFS trail crew members who were present at each construction site were articulate in explaining the theory and practical application of their trail design and sustainable construction.

Allen Nicholas, Supervisor for the Shawnee National Forest, welcomed participants. He emphasized the need for continuing communication between trail advocacy groups and the USFS. Nicholas then introduced the keynote speaker, Tom Seay, host and producer of RFD-TV's "Best of America by Horseback." Tom advocated the unification of horse groups by inviting the political candidates to address their groups and publicly support the equine industry. Following Seay's inspirational speech, Tim Pohlman, acting Director of the



*Tom Seay, host of RFD-TV's "Best of America by Horseback," with Sara Rhoades, Illinois Trail Riders.*

Hidden Springs Region of the Shawnee National Forest, explained the Wilderness policies that are federally mandated to the USFS concerning the design, construction, and maintenance of trails in the Shawnee Trails Designation Project which was signed in 2006. The Trail Crew trained by Brian Bourne, covered the theoretical and actual factors involved in designing and building equestrian trails through a federally mandated Wilderness Area such as Lusk Creek.

Saturday's presentations began with Mary Hanson, National Park Services, who did a comparison of the National Park Services and other agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management, as to their policies affecting equestrian trails. Next, David Daams, a volunteer from the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, gave a presentation on the need for partnerships between volunteer trail groups and equestrian interest groups to further expand and maintain trails in the Cuyahoga National Park which is located between the Ohio cities of Cleveland and Akron. Then, Connie Schmidt, Trail Riders of DuPage, gave a presentation on trail advocacy by private individuals in an urban setting based on her personal experience. Completing the presentations was Ned Enrietto, IDNR, who gave statistics on DNR trails in Illinois and expanded on the idea that IDNR trail projects are spurred by local interest in these economically stressed times. ■

## December 1st deadline to apply for HCI Scholarship

Deadline to apply for the Horsemen's Council of Illinois (HCI) Ruby Holmquist Memorial Scholarship and the R. Dean Scoggins Memorial Scholarship is December 1. Guidelines and application forms for the scholarships are available by writing to the Council or on its web site: [www.HorsemensCouncil.org](http://www.HorsemensCouncil.org).

"The Holmquist scholarships normally are given in one or two categories broadly described as 'vocational/professional' and 'academic/educational,'" according to Sheryl S. King, Ph.D., Department of Animal Science, Southern Illinois University, who chairs the program for HCI.

Scholarship recipients must hold an individual HCI membership during the term of the award; the scholarship is restricted to Illinois residents and must be used as assistance in the pursuit or advancement of a horse-related career; and the amount of the award is determined by the HCI Scholarship Committee in consultation with the HCI Board of Directors, according to King.

"This scholarship is to be used expressly for the direct funding of an education program or event and/or to support travel to/enrollment in such event," King said. The entire scholarship must be spent within the year awarded.

The Scoggins award honors Dean as a life-long horseman, veterinarian and educator whose wisdom and dedication helped guide and direct HCI from its formation in 1987 through 2006 when he died. Dr. Scoggins was a champion of the species and a man who always put the horse first. The scholarship goes to an Illinois veterinary student pursuing a career as an equine vet. ■

The Council may be contacted at Horsemen's Council of Illinois, 3085 Stevenson Drive, Suite 308, Springfield, IL 62703. Phone (217) 585-1600. Fax (217) 585-1601. Web site: [www.HorsemensCouncil.org](http://www.HorsemensCouncil.org).

(continued from cover)

## HCI launches Chicagoland Equestrian Lifestyle Expo & Holiday Market

sculpture, figurines, tack, clothing), a bachelor auction, equestrian lifestyle fashion show, equestrian-themed games, food and wine tasting and valet parking.

Industry experts will provide educational opportunities on a wide variety of subjects and formats suitable for the pros and the "just interested" alike - U of I College of Veterinary Medicine, SIU's four-year Equine Science Program, saddle fitting sessions, sports psychology (winning, overcoming fears), legal issues (taxes, environment, zoning), info on how to buy your first horse, requirements for getting a the right driver's license to pull a horse trailer, horsemanship (training techniques, problem solving), first aid for horses - what to do until the vet arrives, and the business of horses (marketing, management, stabling, pasturing, etc.).

"Some of these opportunities will be in traditional seminars, others will be at roundtables (literally) where participants gather for 20-minute sessions with an expert, asking their own individual questions before a timer signals a move to another table with a different expert and topic," Meierhans said.

"HCI has recognized the size of the

northern Illinois market for years," said Frank Bowman HCI president. "We've always wanted to better serve the area, but couldn't assemble the right package until now," he explained.

Dr. Kevin Kline, U of I professor and an HCI director, has gathered data on the area, concluding that "Industry estimates from the American Horse Council and Illinois Department of Agriculture tell us that nearly a third of all the horses in Illinois are in the northern 23 (of 102) counties - more than 65,000 of them - from the I-80 corridor on up."

"What these figures do not tell us, but which we have seen from participation in hunt/jump, dressage, saddleseat events - and heard from other equestrian associations," Kline said, "is that in addition to its Western riders, Chicago is home to substantial numbers of English riders, mostly women, mostly with higher than average income: so a pre-holiday shopping opportunity for all things equestrian is a natural."

For exhibitor information, contact Joy Meierhans at (630) 557-2575 or JM@TheMeierhans.com. Attendees may get information from HCI at (217) 585-1600. A web site is to be set up at www.HorsemensCouncil.org to present programming and facilitate information exchange for exhibitors and attendees. ■

**Join Us Today!**

**Individual Membership Application**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

How many horses do you own? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ at home \_\_\_\_\_ boarding stable

**Individual Membership Dues** (includes \$1,000,000 insurance coverage) **\$39/yr**

**Organization Membership Application**

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

# of Illinois Members in Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Check appropriate category  
 Business/Professional  Association  Charity

**Organization Membership Dues: \$50/yr.**

Make check payable and mail to:



Horsemen's Council of Illinois  
 3085 Stevenson Dr., Ste. 308  
 Springfield, IL 62703  
 Phone: 217.585.1600  
[www.horsemenscouncil.org](http://www.horsemenscouncil.org)

Total amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Save the Dates

**HCI Chicagoland  
Equestrian Lifestyle Expo & Holiday Market  
November 22-23, 2008  
at the Arlington Park Racecourse, Arlington Heights, IL**

**Illinois Horse Fair  
March 6-8, 2009  
at the Illinois State Fair Grounds, Springfield, IL**

# Animal Planet Trots Out New Stable of Horse Programming

Animal Planet is releasing three new programs that showcase the guts, high stakes drama and competitive spirit of horses and riders at the top of equestrian sport. From the intense pressure leading up to the final U.S. Olympic equestrian team selection to the adrenaline-filled action of a sport where every hundredth of a second counts, Animal Planet's world championship equestrian line-up gallops into homes beginning July 2008 with the *Rolex Superstars of Show Jumping*, *Rolex Grand Prix of Show Jumping*, *FTI Hampton Classic Grand Prix* and returning favorite the *Animal Planet Sporthorse Cup*.

"With the addition of these thrilling world-class competitions to the Animal Planet roster, we are tapping into equestrian enthusiasts' passion for horse sports," said Victoria Lowell, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Animal Planet Media. "Expanding our commitment to horse programming enables us to celebrate the fantastic sport of show jumping and honor the immense skill and talent of both human and animal athletes, while reining in a new crop of horse fans

as we ramp up the excitement for the upcoming original documentary series *Jockeys*, debuting next year."

This suite of horse programming is hosted by athlete and sports commentator Lewis Johnson; sports anchor and contributor for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, Andrew Catalon; and top international show-jumping competitor and U.S. horse trainer, Kim Prince. This team of co-respondents will give viewers the play-by-play of each event and behind the scenes stories from each competition. Up first is *Rolex Superstars of Show Jumping* (which premieres Saturday, July 26, at 3 p.m. ET/PT). In this special, the defending U.S. champion Beezie Madden travels to Germany to compete against the top horses and riders in the world in a one-of-kind ride-off.

In August, saddle-up with the *Rolex Grand Prix of Show Jumping* (which premieres Saturday, August 2, at 3 p.m. ET/PT), which rounds up the top athletes and their horses from around the world for this prestigious event. This competition is the last chance for American athletes to qualify

for the U.S. Olympic equestrian team.

In October, some of the key competitors just back from the Olympic Games will be featured in the *FTI Hampton Classic Grand Prix* (which premieres Saturday, October 4, at 3 p.m. ET/PT), one of America's most fashionable and prestigious equine events. And wrapping up our equine line-up in January, experience the thrill and danger of Olympic-level show jumping when *Animal Planet's Sporthorse Cup* (which premieres Saturday, January 10, at 3 p.m. ET/PT), invites seven of the world's top riders to compete in a unique three-round test of rider and horse.

"These programs provide an inside look at some of the world's top riders and the training and skill that go into becoming a champion," said Executive Producer Mick Kaczorowski. "I'm pleased to be a part of this project and hope by exposing more people to the beauty and awe of this sport, that we inspire a new generation of equestrians." ■

By Melissa Berry,  
Wisconsin Horse Council

## Horse Hay Alternatives

**If high quality hay is in short supply, here are some other options for providing your horse with essential roughage.**

Weather conditions can result in hay shortages, sending the cost of available hay through the roof. With gasoline prices so high, shipping in hay from areas of plenty may not be a viable option either. Shortages of good grass hay may be particularly severe since many grasses have a shorter growing season than, say, alfalfa. In some areas, grass meadows may yield only one cutting under the best of circumstances.

This calls for some creative changes in the way you feed. But before getting to some

possibilities, there are two things that you should not do:

- Do not simply replace hay with more grain.** The horse's metabolism and intestinal tract are designed to run on fiber, not grain. Hay is more than just roughage. It is food both for the beneficial organisms in the intestinal tract and for the horse's own body, and a natural source of precursors for vitamin A, D and K.
- Unless your fields are in good shape, do not allow for more pasture time to make up for less hay.** If the fields are also in poor shape because of adverse weather, the horses will be driven to eat things they would normally avoid, including toxic plants.

**Now, on to some alternatives:**

- Grass hay pellets or cubes** are simply hay that has been carefully dried, then cut and compressed. It can be fed as an alternative to loose hay. And because the hay is high quality, you can often feed less than you do of regular hay (up to 25% less). The drawback is cost and horses consume them much quicker than loose hay so may develop vices like wood chewing because they have too much time with nothing to do. Bagged loose, chopped forage is also available in many areas, often with a light coating of oil or molasses. Mineral balancing/supplementation will be needed just like it is with baled hay. ■

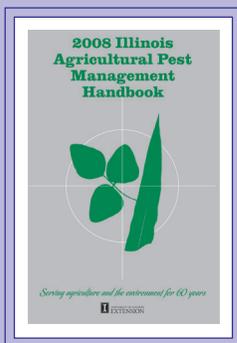
By Eleanor Kellon, VMD

# Be Wary of Poisonous Pasture Plants

A hot, dry summer often means reduced pasture growth and overgrazing. Livestock on overgrazed pastures are more likely to graze on potentially poisonous plants.

There are many plants that have the potential to cause health problems for livestock. Some are toxic, others may cause photosensitization or they may produce other symptoms. Identify and then remove or destroy poisonous plants from your pasture.

Signs of plant poisoning differ considerably upon the kind of plant eaten; the stage of its growth; the amount eaten; the amount and kind of other feed eaten



during the time that the poisonous plant was in the animal's digestive tract; and the tolerance of the individual animal to the poison.

Although many plants can cause problems, only a few are responsible for most difficulties. Some of the plants that may affect animal health include black cherry, choke berry, cocklebur, hemp dogbane, jimsonweed, black locust, milkweed, nightshade, pigweed, poison hemlock and white snakeroot. Also, remember that yews, commonly planted in many landscapes, are considered among the most toxic plants to animals.

A well-managed pasture minimizes problems associated with toxic plants. Maintain adequate soil fertility to encourage

desirable forage growth. Mow and/or utilize herbicide applications to control problem weeds.

For the most current weed management recommendations, consult the *2008 Illinois Agricultural Pest Management Handbook*. The handbook can be purchased through local University of Illinois Extension offices and is also available online at [www.ipm.uiuc.edu/pubs/iapmh/index.html](http://www.ipm.uiuc.edu/pubs/iapmh/index.html).

There are numerous electronic and print references on poisonous plants. One of the more recent books on the subject is *A Guide to Plant Poisoning of Animals in North America* by Knight and Walter. ■

By Dennis Eppin  
Crop Systems Extension Educator



**Horse Council Courier**  
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