Letter from the Director

Welcome to the first installment of the Clemson University Horse Program's Newsletter. This is your source for updates on all of the activities we're involved with throughout the year. Our goal is to publish three times a year: at the end of the spring, summer and fall semesters.

As the year comes to a close, I am reflecting on all of the wonderful accomplishments of the Clemson University Equine Program. We certainly have a lot to be grateful for! The year started with some major changes for the program to accommodate the ever-growing activities offered through the Clemson Equine Center. With the equestrian team, Animal and Veterinary Sciences departmental courses and labs, therapeutic riding, public lessons, camps and educational short courses, we have certainly accomplished so much this year. To brand our programs, we developed our new Clemson Equine logo, which you can see at the top right of this page and on our website and Facebook pages.

Our Equine Business graduates have secured wonderful jobs across the industry as retail and pharmaceutical specialists, marketing specialists, barn managers, trainers, business owners and in government jobs. Our 4-H and Equestrian Teams have won national contests, continuing to bring the program to the forefront of the national stage. Our staff works tirelessly for the students and youth involved in our programs and all of this is paying off.

The New Year springs much promise for continuation of the positive momentum for the Clemson Equine Program. We are undergoing significant renovations to the facilities to accommodate the continued growth. This will allow us to continue to train and best prepare our students and the public for a progressive and educated entry into the horse industry. We thank you for your past and future support of our programs, and encourage you to visit us to see the impacts of your support. Have a blessed holiday season and may the New Year bring prosperity and peace to you all.

Best Regards,
Kristine Vernon,
CU Equine Program Director

Updates from CLEAT

The Watson Family Clemson Equine Assisted Therapy Program is a therapeutic riding program that offers riding lessons to people of all ages and abilities. The objective of CLEAT is first and foremost to benefit the special needs community, especially here on campus.

Student Highlight

In each newsletter, we will highlight a student who embodies the spirit of Clemson Equine. This quarter’s student highlight is Kelly McKinnell.
CUET Update

By: Jamie Grant

Fall of 2014 has been yet another busy one for the Clemson University Equestrian Team (CUET). With nearly 100 students trying out for showing positions, coaches Rebecca Shirley and Jamie Grant had to stay very focused in order to choose the most well-rounded teams for this IHSA 2014-2015 season. The western team is comprised of 18 riders that fit exceptionally well in their respective classes from Walk-Jog to Open Reining and Horsemanship. Twenty-three riders round out the Hunt Seat team whose classes range from Walk-Trot to Open Over Fences and Equitation on the Flat.

Our club encompasses around 50 co-ed members who actively assist in our shows, clinics and fundraisers. Fall semester included our first host show of the season, two western shows, four hunt seat shows and our annual participation in the George H. Morris clinic.

The first host show was our Clemson Fall Classic western double header. We hosted out of our own Equine Center facility on a beautiful November day. In both the morning and afternoon shows, CUET earned team championships as well as both high point rider championships. The western team is well on their way to being the top western team in the region once again this year and we are looking forward to them solidifying that goal as they show in five more regular season shows in the spring.

Hunt seat CUETs traveled to four out-of-town shows this semester. With strong showings at each, the hunt seat team currently sits in the third placing of a 12-team region—the highest team placing CUET has sustained in years. The hunt seat team looks forward to remaining among the top teams as well as qualifying a few individuals for post season this year.

Our annual co-hosting of the George H. Morris clinic was another great success. Sherry Pace of Fast Pace Productions generously allows us to assist her each year with this clinic and it is always a pleasure. This year was particularly exceptional as Mr. Morris admitted our T. Ed Garrison indoor arena is one of his favorite places in the nation to clinic and he also announced that our clinic would be his exclusive North and South Carolina public clinic in 2015! We had five of our own CUETs participating in the 13-participant clinic field. Some riders even borrowed our team horses to participate and they were lovely. Coach Jamie Grant, team supporter Jordan Burton and a mixture of different CUETs assisted as jump crew in the ring each day. Jamie also had the opportunity to be Mr. Morris’s assistant for the three-day clinic, riding horses over fences for demonstration purposes. We look forward to a larger auditor base for our 2015 clinic and will be eager to give more details to the public in the new year.

CUET had a wonderful, successful and eventful fall semester and we are excited for an even better spring semester.

Recent Successes

July 14-18: CUET hosted the first annual Tiger Talent Equestrian Camp

August 30th: CUEC lesson students has a great show at the CCHA Summer’s End Horse Show

September 5th: CUET rode in the 1st Friday Parade

September 27th: CUET Hunt Seat started the year off strong with a reserve champion team at the GSU show

October 4th: CUET had a booth at the CAFLS tailgate & CUEC hosted a Basic Management Short Course

October 11th & 12th: CUET Hunt Seat competed at Lander

October 17th: CUEC hosted a Livestock Business Principles Short Course on campus. This multispecies event was a huge success!

October 19th: Clemson Equine had a booth at the Greenville Polo Classic

November 9th: SC Hippology team wins 4-H Eastern Nationals and Team Presentation took 5th Place

Nov 9th: CUET hosts and wins 2 western shows.

Nov 15th: CUEC hosts a judging clinic with over 100 participants

Nov 15th: CUET Hunt Seat competed at College of Charleston

Nov 21st-23rd: CUET hosts a wonderful George Morris clinic at T Ed Garrison Arena

Dec 6th: CUEC hosted a successful FFA Horse CDA and 4-H Horse Judging Contest

Dec 7th: CUEC lesson students had a great show at the CCHA Trotting ‘Round the Tree Show
Timeline of Upcoming Events

Jan 24th & 25th: CUET Western at Lander
Jan 31st: CUET Hunt Seat at GSU
Feb 21st: 4-H State Horse Bowl Contest
Feb 21st & 22nd: CUET hosts Clemson Classic IHSA horse show, Hunt Seat and Western
Feb 22nd: 4-H State Hippology Contest
March 7th: CUET Hunt Seat at CoC
March 8th: Hunt Seat Regionals at CoC
March 21 & 22: IHSA Semi-Finals for Western CUET in Oklahoma
March 28th: CUET Hosts IHSA Hunt Seat Zone 5 Finals
April 11th: CUEC Annual Open House and CLEAT Family Fun at the Farm Fundraiser
April 30th-May 3rd: IHSA Nationals in Massachusetts
June 24th-27th: 4-H State Horse Show
July 6th-10th: 4-H Horsemanship Camp
July 13th-17th: Tiger Talent Camp

Clemson University Equine Center Update

By: Rebecca Shirley

As we wrap up the Fall 2014 semester, the Clemson University Equine Center (CUEC) reflects on a busy time filled with classes, remarkable students, 4-H events, clinics, and our current herd of 58 horses. Often, CUEC is the hub of a bustle of activity, and on any given day, visitors may encounter equestrian team lessons, CU courses in session, youth activities, therapeutic riding sessions, and general day-to-day tasks. The schedule is always full and there are always chores to be completed.

This fall, CUEC hosted a number of CU classes and labs, including one of the most hands-on courses, Equine Behavior and Training. Students enrolled in this course worked to gentle young horses and put the first rides on horses that were old enough. All told, by the end of the semester they had trained 8 horses, putting the first under saddle time on 5 of them. Two of the horses involved in this course were part of our Send Your Horse to College program, and have returned home to happy owners. In addition to the horses in this program, CUEC has accepted a number of elite donated horses in recent months. Please check our website for new additions to the herd.

CUEC is in the middle of major farm renovations, the bulk of which are occurring as this update is being written! Students will be pleasantly surprised when they return from winter break! Renovations that have already been completed include updating the old barn, doubling the number of stalls and creating tie stall areas. Also already completed are new fences for the front foal pasture and stallion paddocks. Farm updates that are currently in progress include more new fencing and a major facelift to the main barn. A little suspense is fun, so we will save the complete renovation update for the next newsletter.

And finally, speaking of suspense, CUEC is anxiously awaiting the arrival of 7 foals in the spring. The first mare is due early in February, so be sure to watch our Facebook page for baby pictures! Expected foals will offer buyers top selection of hunter, western pleasure, and ranch type prospects. There are also several top two- and three-year-old prospects available that are started under saddle. CUEC foals and prospects are known to be quiet minded with exceptional show potential.

So as we reflect on a successful 2014, we are grateful for faculty and student support. Our students are among the top in the country, and at CUEC we are reminded of this daily through their interactions with the horses and farm management. As we look forward to 2015, we are constantly working to raise the bar in all areas of farm management, teaching, farm infrastructure and engagement with our students. We hope you can visit us in the near future, either online or in person!
Student Highlight:  
**Kelly McKinnell**

**Class:** Junior  
**Major:** Animal and Veterinary Science with an Equine Business Concentration  
**Clubs/Organization Involvement:**  
Clemson Collegiate Horsemen’s Association- President, American  
College Horsemen’s Association- Vice President, Clemson University  
Equestrian Team- Western, Undergraduate Student Government Agriculture Committee- Outreach Director, CAFLS Student Ambassador  

Q: **What led you to choose the Clemson Equine Program?**  
A: My mom graduated from Clemson, which first put the school on my radar. I was originally interested in psychology, but didn’t want to pay out of state tuition for a degree that I could get at home. Instead, I remembered that Clemson has a great equine program, and I had enjoyed the limited amount of riding I did growing up. I decided to give the equine program a try and found it to be a great fit!

Q: **What activities have you participated in at the Clemson Equine Center?**  
A: As a freshman I joined CCHA and volunteered at the Equine Center. I started taking lessons in the public lesson program and volunteering with the CLEAT program. Sophomore year I joined the equestrian team and participated in the breeding and foaling practicum. Junior year I became president of CCHA and am currently looking forward to the breeding and foaling season.

Q: **What has been your favorite part of the Clemson Equine Experience, and why?**  
A: I have really enjoyed learning to ride western and showing horsemanship with the equestrian team. All of my experience growing up was hunt seat, so learning a whole new side of the industry has been a ton of fun.

Q: **How do you feel better prepared to go out into the horse industry after your time at Clemson?**  
A: In horse care techniques (AVS 2040), I loved the breeding and foaling section. I enthusiastically shared this interest with my family, and a family connection in Northern Virginia helped me get a summer internship in 2013 at Equine Reproduction Concepts. I loved that summer experience and knew I wanted to pursue a career in breeding. When I got back to Clemson and found out that there was a breeding and foaling practicum I immediately signed up for the comprehensive experience. I spent the summer of 2014 back at the clinic and will be participating in the breeding and foaling at Clemson again this spring. I am certain that all of this hands-on experience will make me prepared to succeed in the horse industry.

Q: **What is your favorite memory from your time here so far?**  
A: In 2014, CCHA planned and hosted the national convention for ACHA. As part of the convention we planned farm tours, a delegate meeting, a career panel of equine professionals and went to the steeplechase! I was very involved in this arduous process and seeing the whole thing come together smoothly was completely amazing.

Q: **Is there anything that you are really excited about for the rest of your college career?**  
A: I am really excited for this spring semester’s course load because it includes a lot of equine classes. I know that I will love learning about my industry and getting hands-on time at the barn. The breeding and foaling practicum will be particularly fun, since I will get to help foal out mares that I bred last year. All of this experience will strengthen my resume as I look toward applying for the Kentucky Equine Management Internship (KEMI) and moving into the work force.

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Horse Highlight:  
**Bet on Tebow- “Tebow”**

*Tebow poses for the camera.*

Tebow is a 14 hh 2007 Chestnut Quarter Horse Gelding. He is owned by Michelle Higdon and has been leased to Clemson since December 2013. This is a big horse in a little package. Tebow was started as a cutting horse and then received reining training before coming to Clemson.

Since his arrival at Clemson, he has spent his school years as a western equestrian team horse, doing both horsemanship and reining. During summer break, Tebow sidelined as a school horse in our lesson program. He made a really cute hunter pony! Tebow has also done work in our summer camp and therapeutic riding programs. This all-around horse has been a champion from day one and is an integral part of our program!
Updates from the Watson Family Clemson Equine Assisted Therapy Program (CLEAT)

by Meredith Donaldson

This fall has been very busy for the CLEAT program. We continue to focus our efforts in three main program areas: Clemson Life program, school partnerships and private lessons. Program support has grown and our volunteer base now has over 20 participants who regularly help out. Next spring we hope to add an additional program and grow in our financial support to continue to expand our offerings.

Programs: The Clemson Life Program has been a partnership of CLEAT since the very beginning. This program started with 4 students and has continually grown. This fall, we are offering this program two nights a week and have 9 students participating. They are progressing rapidly in their skills and confidence and are riding independently at the walk.

The school day program began in 2013 with Central Elementary school. This program allows 21 high risk youth to spend a day at the horse farm once a month. Central Elementary school was able to find funding to continue this program this year. We are having a ton of fun with their students and hope to add an additional school to this program for the next school year.

Finally we have continued to offer private and semi-private therapeutic riding lessons. This program area has been limited by availability of instructor and arena space, but all students are progressing toward their goals.

Support: The CLEAT program has continued to enjoy excellent support from the Clemson Equine Center and Clemson Horse Program, Clemson students, and community members. We now have over 60 volunteers on our contact list, more than 20 of which regularly donate their time. It would be impossible for us to do what we do without their support.

We are excited to announce that one of our volunteers, Carol Miller, has decided to pursue her PATH Intl. Instructor Certification. She will be helping to teach the private and semi-private lessons following her certification and will provide the opportunity for that program to expand.

We also wish to thank our donors who are helping to support our programs. We are very excited to announce that Encompass Construction will be working with us to build a wheelchair ramp, which will allow us to reach a greater group of students. This project is financially supported by David Wulfhorst. We are very grateful for this support and look forward to unveiling the ramp.

Growth: We are very excited to continue to see the CLEAT program grow. In the spring of 2015 this growth will entail starting a drill team. This new program will allow up to 6 students to work together as a team to design, memorize and preform a drill team exhibition with the support of their instructor and volunteers. The exhibition will be held at the SC State 4-H Horse Show at the T Ed Garrison Arena in June. We are looking for a donor to support this program and minimize the cost to participate. We are super excited to see all that our students will achieve in this program. We will also be expanding our Family Fun at the Farm day, held in conjunction with the CU Equine Center open house event on April 11, 2015.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support of this program. We are very excited to see what the future has in store for the program. Please contact Meredith Donaldson at mcole@g.clemson.edu to find out how you can support the program!