

## UM Extension Service Conducts Survey of Horse Owners

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In a recent assessment, Brian Buhr, a UM Assoc. Prof. of Applied Econ, estimated MN's horse industry generates nearly \$1 bill. in economic activity annually. The 2002 USDA Census of Agric. indicated there were 14,289 horse and pony farms in MN, up 80% from 1997, and 92,770 horses and ponies, up 75%.

The UM Ext. Service conducted a state-wide survey of 1,000 horse owners. Survey objectives: identify topics horse owners want to learn about, identify preferred venues for obtaining new and updated information, determine where owners are currently obtaining educational material, identify the appropriate technical level of materials to be developed, identify possible partners and regional interests for future educational programs, and obtain demographic information about horse owners and horse populations. The survey was endorsed by the MN Horse Council and had an outstanding 69% response rate! Highlights of the survey include:

- The avg. owner is 44 years old, with an avg. of 14 horses owned on 30 acres.
- 39% board their horses, while the remaining keep them at their residential property.
- 45% buy 81-100% of their hay; 87% of horses are on pasture or grassy turn out during summer; only 24% of horses receive 100% of their nutritional requirement from pasture during summer.
- 67% indicate trail riding as the number one discipline done with their horse, followed by western pleasure, english, halter and games.
- Apx. 50% had a 2003 household income of \$50,000-\$125,000; 25% <\$50,000; 25% >\$125,000.
- 49% generate part of their income from horse sales; 46% from breeding; 32% from lessons and training; 31% from boarding; 16% from hay and straw sales and horse hauling.
- Top 10 topics of interest: basic training, vaccinations, hoof care, nutrition, colic, behavior, proper tack fitting, fly/pest control, when to call a vet, and poisonous plants.
- Majority obtain information from equine magazines, other horse owners, veterinarians, trainers and farriers. Owners purchase avg. of 7 magazines, 3 books, 5 pamphlets and 2 videos/DVDs per year.
- Owners prefer short publications, the Internet, and evening seminars. Saturday morning programs, on-line courses and all day Saturday programs were less desirable.

For questions/comments, please contact Krishona Martinson at 763-767-3842 or [bjork026@umn.edu](mailto:bjork026@umn.edu). To obtain a copy of the survey report, send \$10.00 (payable to U of MN) to UM Ext. Serv., Andover Reg. Ctr. Bunker Hills Activity Ctr, 550 Bunker Lake Blvd NW #L1, Andover, MN 55304. To view additional survey highlights visit [www.extension.umn.edu/horse](http://www.extension.umn.edu/horse).