

For the first weekend in many years, the mercury was in the positive range for the Annual Horse Breeders and Owners



Conference. Around 490 horse enthusiasts left their sunny farms to attend the 32nd Annual Horse Breeders and Owners Conference in Red Deer for a weekend filled with fun and education. Delegates came from all over BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and New Brunswick. The exhibit hall hosted over 50 booths sponsored by equine businesses and organizations.

The weekend started off with the 8th annual Stable Owners' Seminar on Friday afternoon and included four sessions specifically designed for stable owners. Topics on taxation, attaining and retaining staff and a panel on getting youth involved were presented to a crowd of over 100 people. The last session was a Town Hall Meeting where the formation of a stables association was discussed.

Friday night's "Open Barn" Welcome Reception was hosted by Zoetis. Delegates and the public were welcome to get their first look at the trade show and treated to a spread of cheese and crackers and drinks. Early bird draw prizes were distributed to the lucky winners and delegates entered additional bucket draw prizes.

Saturday's sessions began with Gary Carpenter, who spoke about where the horse industry is going, sponsored by Alberta Equestrian Federation. After the coffee break, which was

sponsored by SciencePure Nutraceuticals, delegates had the choice of attending a session on osteoarthritis given by Dr. Mike Scott, Dr. Nancy Loving on starting and conditioning or Dr. Claudia Klein educating about reproduction and the problem mare. Thank you to break-out session sponsor Alberta Veterinary Labs, who sponsored Dr. Scott's session.

After the lunch break, Clay Maier shared his knowledge about driving horses, Jochen Schleese spoke on saddle fit for male and female riders, and Dr. Katharina Lohmann spoke on heaves. Twenty minutes later, the fourth round of sessions began with Lauren Barwick speaking about the pursuit of equine excellence, Dr. Stephen O'Grady, who spoke to a standing room only crowd about barefoot vs. shoeing, and Dr. Lori Warren presented on environmentally-friendly feeding. Thank you to break-out session sponsor Canadian Horse Journals for sponsoring Lauren Barwick's session. The last coffee break of the afternoon was generously sponsored by Western Horse Review.

The News Hour is the last session of the day on Saturday, and offers information on current issues in the horse industry. Dr. Kelsey Brandon from Claresholm Veterinary Services shared her experiences treating horses with Pigeon Fever in her area, Paul Ryneveld from Century Casinos gave an update on the Balzac racetrack, Dr. Ron Clarke spoke about a national biosecurity program and Dr. Larry Frischke from Zoetis updated delegates on West Nile in the province.

Saturday night, sponsored by Horse Racing Alberta, offered live music by local Lacombe singer/songstress Randi Boulton, a host wine bar and dessert, and an equine sporting event which brought laughter to all.

Dr. Nancy Loving took the stage again on Sunday morning and presented on colic. Running concurrent to Dr. Loving's session was Curt Pate on Ranch Horsemanship and Dr. Stephen O'Grady educating about the equine hoof. The sessions were followed by the final coffee break, sponsored by Horse Publications Group. Clay Maier took the stage again and presented on long lining benefits, Tammy Pate shared her experience with yoga and horsemanship and Dr. Lori Warren returned to the stage to speak about how feed can modify behaviour.

The very important Alberta SPCA Fred Pearce Memorial Lecture, dedicated to the welfare of the horse, was presented this year by Dr. Camie Heleski who spoke on stereotypies such as weaving and cribbing. She offered many suggestions to help understand and manage stereotypies as well as identifying areas for further research.

The draw for the equine treatment stocks, generously donated by True Heart Horses and 2W Livestock, were drawn in the final session. The lucky winner was Glenda Wagar from Dawson Creek, BC.

The Horse Industry Association of Alberta thanks everyone who attended and sponsored the event as well as the 22 presenters who brought their expertise and experience to Red Deer, Alberta.

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The Horse Breeders and Owners Conference is an annual event organized by the Horse Industry Association of Alberta and sponsored by a generous group of equine organizations and businesses. For more information visit www.albertahorseindustry.ca

Photos can be viewed on the HIAA web site: http://www.albertahorseindustry.ca/index.php?option=com_phocagallery&view=category&id=12&Itemid=364

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