

Extension Workgroup
Horse Pasture Educational Programs in the Southeast
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Forage and Equine Extension specialists generally agree that equine producers are a growing demographic throughout the southeastern United States. As a result, requests for information and materials concerning “horse pastures” have increased dramatically over the past decade.

In preparation for this presentation we sent a seven question survey in February 2005 to selected Forage and/or Equine Extension specialists in the Southeast. Twelve of the fourteen states have responded and the results are summarized below.

Although accurate statistics do not exist for equine numbers; our best estimate is that there are over 3.6 million horses, mules and ponies in the Southeast.

All responding states agreed that there has been an increase in interest for horse pasture information. Six of the fourteen states have developed slides and/or Powerpoint presentations addressing horse pasture establishment and/or management. None of the states surveyed have developed a “horse pasture” VHS or DVD video. Five states regularly conduct seminars/workshops which deliver some type of forage information. Ten states indicated that information specifically addressing horse pasture management was also being taught in a forage or animal science course. Several states indicated that other Universities within the state also offer equine education programs.

Eleven of the Forage and/or Equine Extension Specialists surveyed indicated that they or someone in their department or college was conducting short courses or workshops which target horse producers. Furthermore, some states are considering Grazing Schools which specifically focus on horse pasture management.

In addition to the questions above each respondent was provided the opportunity to list additional comments. Selected comments are listed below:

- Louisiana has a "Master Horseman" Program.
- Tennessee conducts “horse colleges” in 8-9 locations across the state. Attendance at each college ranges from 30-150. The colleges run from 4-6 nights with a cost ranging from \$20 to \$50.
- Mississippi developed a forage course for horse owners in 2005 and will offer it in two locations.
- Texas conducted over 150 horse related programs in 2004.
- Kentucky offers seven “horse colleges” each year consisting of five sessions with one of the five addressing forage management.
- Georgia offers a three night “Horse Pasture, Hay, and Supplementation Management” series. Cost is \$55 and includes a copy of Southern Forages. One hundred percent of short course evaluations indicate that the “registration fee was reasonable”, that “Southern Forages should be included in future seminars” and that “Southern Forages will be helpful in the future”.
- Oklahoma ranks 4th in the number of horses but has the highest ratio of horses to people in the nation, 1:11!

Summary

With over 3.6 million horses, mules and ponies in the Southeast and a growing interest in forages for horses, we expect an increased interest, opportunity and demand for equine forage educational programs. Extension Forage and Equine Specialists are at the forefront in most states in developing, organizing, and implementing effective programming for a diverse and emerging clientele.

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