

Equine Leaders Unite!

BY Jess Hainstock, *Resource Development and Communications Specialist*

February 20-22 marked the sixth gathering of the Provincial 4-H Equine Leaders' Forum (PELF), a bi-annual conference aimed at educating equine project leaders on new skills and approaches to project work, equine-related health issues, as well as industry developments. The Forum, which is put on by the Provincial 4-H Equine Advisory Committee (PEAC), also gives equine leaders the chance to connect with one another.

"The Provincial 4-H Equine Leaders' Forum provided an opportunity for 115 4-H equine leaders from Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the Yukon to participate in educational sessions, and to learn from each other," said Janet Kerr, co-coordinator of PELF and Regional 4-H Specialist for East and West Central.

Session topics were varied, with experts being brought in to talk on a range of subjects, such as biting and osteopathy, both of which were delivered by Dave Elliott; Dr. Roxy Bell spoke to delegates on equine parasites and equine dentistry, and Tyree McCrackin addressed equine hoof care, touching on the importance of the farrier-client relationship and farrier evaluation.

In terms of enhancing members' learning experience, Jimilee Chostner's session suggested how to teach members mounting skills



Tyree McCrackin addresses equine hoof care with PELF attendees.



Saturday night's activities and games see leaders testing their skills and racing against the clock ... and one another.

through games; Ruth Fowler gave an introduction on drill teams and how to incorporate one into your club dynamic, Christina and Lindsay Seidel discussed with leaders how dressage is applicable to riders and horses of all ages and levels, and also introduced the stages and elements of dressage training. Lee Carothers outlined the “how-to” of planning and hosting a horse event on a club, district and regional level.



The 2010 Provincial Equine Advisory Committee.

As a key element to the overall 4-H program, judging was presented from both sides of the ring, with “A Judge’s Viewpoint” giving the insider’s perspective on what a judge is looking for in the show ring, and conversely, Susann Stone speaking on how leaders can use horse-related judging activities to increase a their members’ knowledge confidence, which in turn increases their eye for judging all equine classes.

Through an informal discussion, Record Books were also touched on in an attempt to help leaders gain a better understanding of the purpose, rationale and method behind the Equine Project Record Book.

As always, a full schedule, a desire to learn and the need for some networking time ensured that the weekend flew by, with leaders leaving the Alberta Centre on Sunday with already-keen anticipation for the next PELF conference.

PEAC’s mission is to promote and enhance Alberta’s 4-H equine projects. The committee is selected via election, where each region elects two official members to serve for a minimum of a two-year term on the committee. Alternate regional representatives attend meetings or volunteer at PEAC activities.

Presenting Partners of PELF were Apache and UFA; with Partner Supporters being AFSC, AMA Insurance, Government of Alberta, Growing Forward, Kubota, Lakeland College, Lammle’s Western Wear and Tack and Servus Credit Union.