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Marketing and delivering adult horse extension programming in 2019

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Michigan State University Extension has focused on digital marketing for adult horse programs to reach more clients at a lower cost. While participation in online programming has been consistent, face-to-face workshop attendance has decreased. To better understand our clients' educational needs, a marketing survey was conducted to identify their (1) preference on how they chose to learn about horses, (2) preference for marketing techniques, and (3) obstacles to participation and usage patterns in educational programs. An 18-question online survey was developed in Qualtrics. The survey was shared to the public through Michigan State University and Extension Horses equine social media channels and email lists. At present, there have been 570 respondents representing each state except for Hawaii. The 570 respondents described themselves as horse owners (50.8%), horse industry professionals (15.7%), volunteers (8.2%), non-owner horse enthusiast (8.2%), students (6.7%), and educators (6.3%). When asked how they preferred to learn about horses, respondents were very interested in online courses (61.8%), online webinars (46.4%), face-to-face workshops (46.2%), and YouTube videos (40.7%). Respondents preferred to find out about horse-related educational events through emails (12.8%), industry professionals (8.6%), veterinarians and farriers (8.5%), social media (8.5), websites (8.5%), and, to a lesser extent, from direct mail (6.5%), extension educators (3.7%), and community newspapers (1.5%). When choosing horse-related educational resources, respondents valued a trustworthy source (17.5%), easy access (16.7%), and science-based information (16.3%). The following were most likely to interfere with a respondent's ability to participate in a face-to-face workshop: driving distance (46.3%), expense (40.0%), interest in topic (34.1%), and time commitment (22.8%). Similarly, expense (30.9%) was most likely to interfere with a respondent's ability to participate in an online course or webinar, followed by interest in topic (29.8%), time commitment (13.3%), and technology (8.9%). When considering online learning, respondents valued scheduling flexibility as demonstrated by being very interested in self-paced (70.9%) as compared with scheduled instructor-led (30.4%) online courses and recorded webinars (50.9%) as compared with live webinars (31.9%). Survey results suggest that (1) adults value educational programs that are easily accessible, affordable, and interesting, from a trustworthy source with a preference toward online on-demand resources; and (2) adult horse educational programs should market both through online and horse industry professional networks.

Key Words: marketing, extension, adult

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Intercropped cool-season forages on dormant warm-season pastures: A preliminary study and an extension field day

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In Florida, extending the grazing season of warm-season pastures by intercropping with cool-season forages has been suggested as a way to reduce feed costs while improving the growth of young horses. The aims of this preliminary study were to (1) assess the potential for managing yearlings during the winter months on pastures intercropped with cool-season forages and (2) introduce these concepts to horse owners during an extension field day on pasture management. Sixteen Quarter Horse yearlings (11.9 ± 1.1 mo) were blocked by body weight and 4 horses within a block were individually assigned to either intercropped (IP) or dormant warm-season pasture (WP) for 56 d. Each IP (3.8 ha, 7358 kg DM/ha; SE = 93.9) consisted of 3 individual pasture types: annual ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum* Lam.) and oat (*Avena sativa* L.), both forages mixed with crimson clover (*Trifolium incarnatum* L), and dormant bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum* Flügge); whereas each WP (0.27 ha, 603 kg DM/ha; SE = 5.4) consisted of dormant bahiagrass only and *ad libitum* coastal bermuda *(Cynodon dactylon*) hay. Body weight was measured and average daily gain (ADG) calculated at 14-d intervals. The amount of concentrate offered was adjusted based on ADG. An extension field day was held during the study and attendees were provided information on planting methods, grazing management, forage nutritive value, and yearling performance on IP and WP. Horse performance data were compared using a mixed model ANOVA (SAS v 9.4) and program evaluation data were analyzed for descriptive statistics (Excel). Yearlings on mixed pasture had greater ADG (1.1 vs. 0.59 kg/d, SE = 0.06; $P < 0.0005$) and lower mean daily concentrate intake (3.26 vs. 3.50 kg/d, as-fed basis, SE = 0.07; $P < 0.0001$). Of the 14 horse owners attending the field day, 8 completed a program evaluation. All respondents indicated the program improved their understanding of forage management and 67.5% indicated the information presented was very useful. Topics identified as important to their operation included: incorporating legumes into grass pastures, extending winter use of pasture, cool-season forage recommendations, and evaluating performance of winter forages. Increased ADG and a decrease in the amount of concentrate fed to yearlings on IP may be a response to greater forage availability and nutritive value of IP compared with WP, in which warm-season grass hay was the only forage source. Intercropping winter pastures with cool-season forages appears promising for supporting growth of young horses with fewer feed inputs and potential cost savings.

Key Words: growing horses, pasture improvement, winter grazing

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Using survey results to enhance research: A case study of 3 web-based surveys addressing industry needs and practices

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Social media is a component of daily life, and web-based surveys can be quick and efficient needs-assessment tools for research and extension. Novel use of these surveys can enhance industry knowledge, study design, and application of results. This past year, the University of Minnesota (UMN) Equine Team conducted 3 web-based surveys using Qualtrics. All surveys were advertised through the UMN Equine Extension Facebook page and in their monthly e-newsletter. Survey responses were 1,180 on average (672 to 1,990) with completion rates of 90 to 94%, representing all regions of the United States, as well as areas outside of the United