

Equine Science

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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009

IBERS courses get top score in National Student Survey

We are very pleased to get top score in the National Student survey (NSS), a poll of recent graduates that seeks to gauge satisfaction with a range of attributes such as teaching, assessment, support and feedback. We have always enjoyed high ratings and the 2008 results are better than ever. Agriculture and related subjects (such as equine science, animal science courses etc) run at IBERS achieved the top score for student satisfaction in the UK.

Institute Director Professor Wayne Powell commented on the results, "this survey serves to confirm what our students already tell us about our teaching. The commitment and expertise of staff, the excellent resources such as farms, laboratories and the wonderful Aberystwyth environment, all combine to make IBERS an obvious first choice".

As Professor Will Haresign, Director of Learning and Teaching observed, "these results reflect the hard work that goes on within the Institute in listening to students about their needs and working hard to ensure they get the best educational experience that we can give them".

World Final Student Riders Nation Cup – Good luck Bea

Bea Meitner is continuing to reach the heady heights of success. Bea, an MSc Equine Science student, has been training hard for the SRNC (Student Riders Nation Cup) World Final in Luxembourg over the New Year, where, along with 2 others, she will be representing Great Britain against 17 teams from around the world, including USA, Canada, Africa and Europe – Good luck Bea!

Do you know what lives in your horse's gut!?

Well Tim Snelling one of our post graduate students working in our Equine Nutrition research group has a good idea.

Tim completed his BSc and recently his MSc at IBERS and is now researching for a PhD, studying the strange microbial world of the horse's hind gut, in particular ciliates. Ciliates are only a single cell but 10-100 times the size of bacteria and have all they need to move around and scavenge the horse's diet, graze on bacteria and occasionally other ciliates. Their role is unclear but they thrive in horses fed fibre and it is believed that they help control the growth of harmful bacteria that cause colic and laminitis. Tim is part of the IBERS research team working on the classification of these microbes using genetic sequencing and whether they have the ability to acquire genes from other species in a process known as Horizontal Gene Transfer.



Tripalmaria Dogieli one of the ciliates found in the horse's gut.



Cycloposthium, another of the ciliates found in the horse's gut.

IBERS ABERYSTWYTH
Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences

List of Courses

MSc

Equine Science (D391)

PG Diploma

Equine Science

PG Certificate

Equine Nutrition

Equine Reproduction and Stud Management

BSc Honours

Equine Science (D322)

Equine Studies – 1-year top-up (D325)

Equine and Human Sports Science (CD64)

Foundation Degree

Equine Studies (D324)

Higher National Diploma

Equine Studies (423D)

Equine and Business Studies (1HND)

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Gregynog



Gregynog House, a bit of luxury for the MSc students!

The MSc Equine Science students returned brain tired, full of food, but enthused from their biannual 3 day conference at Gregynog where they had lectures from Professor Duncan Hannant (Animal Health Trust), Chris Pardoe (Royal Vet School), Dr Colin Roberts (Cambridge Vet School) and Richard Coomer (Cotts Farm Equine Clinic Ltd, Pembrokeshire).

Research success for Lee-Ann

In November, Lee-Ann Penaluna, an MSc Equine Science student, travelled to Utrecht to present her MSc dissertation project at the European Society for Domestic Animal Reproduction (ESDAR) annual conference. The aim of Lee-Ann's project was to design and optimise a method of growing uterine cells from mares, a technique that has not been refined in horses but is used extensively for cows. Now that Lee-Ann has designed this technique, it is possible to grow uterine cells in the laboratory and challenge them with foreign molecules such as bacteria and sperm to mimic the uterine environment after breeding. This will enable us to better study the response of uterine cells to mating and understand the processes that lead to inflammation after breeding which may lead to infertility. Lee-Ann submitted her work in the form of a poster which was displayed during the 3 day conference and enabled her to discuss her project and new ideas with eminent scientists and veterinarians from across Europe. Well done to Lee Ann who has now taken up a lecturing position at Abingdon and Witney College.



Lee Ann by her poster at the ESDAR Conference

Lluest Events

The Lluest equine centre has been its usual bustling self again this year running competitions three times a month.

Affiliated dressage competitions are held each month which bring competitors from all over Wales and from England. In addition to the regular dressage competitions we have also run qualifiers for novice, elementary, medium and Para competitions.

Unaffiliated show-jumping competitions are held monthly supported by our own students and the local community. Lluest runs a winter league for unaffiliated dressage and jumping shows where the competitors are awarded points for their placings over the six competitions with a championship final to be held at the end of semester 2.

International Dressage Judge and Trainer, Andrew Gardner, visited the centre on Monday 8th December to hold a clinic for riders/students with their own horses. As well as taking part students were also able to watch the master at work.

BHS training

As a BHS approved riding centre many students have booked lessons with the staff during the week and on Sunday mornings and 10 have been entered for BHS stage exams in Equitation and Horse Care. Lessons continue next year with an additional 6 week course to prepare for the BHS Preliminary teaching certificate.

Another very successful “Your Horse Live” Event

We had another very successful stand at the Your Horse Live Event, handing out in excess of 1500 equine course brochures, and university information packs to people interested in our courses. First year Equine Science student Joseph Baxter performed at the show as part of the “Rockin Horse Stunt Team”. This equine acrobatic team put on an unbelievable display of horse back acrobatics at the event – great to have such talent.



The Your Horse Live stand

Aberystwyth Riding Club starts off another year victorious

On Wednesday 26th November, the Aberystwyth B riding team triumphantly started off their season when they competed in the first of three British University and College Student (BUCS) riding events against Cardiff and Swansea University. The B team finished in a well deserved first place with 7 penalty points, followed by Cardiff with 14 penalties, and finally Swansea with 43 penalties. All team members also had individual placings – well done to all.

On Wednesday 3rd December, the Aberystwyth A team followed the success of the B team by coming first when they competed in the first of three BUCS riding events also against Cardiff and Swansea University. The A team, despite some horrendous cold weather, managed to secure a very proud 1st place ending on 0 penalty points, with Cardiff coming in 2nd on 24 penalty points and Swansea on 53 penalty points. Individual 1st place went to our own Joanna Francis, after a superb dressage round – congratulations to all.



University Riding Club A Team:
Monika Lauber, Jemma Cooper, Nikki Clarke and Joanna Francis



University Riding Club B Team:
Ayesha Banks, Ellen Brouwer, Claire Law and Lowri Powell

Both teams would like to thank Lluest Equine Centre for their brilliant help and use of their facilities, and also Shearwater Insurance and Celtic Equestrian for their sponsorship.

These riding club successes are all part of a team effort as the Foundation Degree and HND Equine students all help prepare the horses for these events which involves a great deal of work to ensure the horses are turned out to a high standard. The horses were all a credit to the students and staff – well done.