



Gayle giving a talk on equine welfare, the improvement of which is a personal mission.

Equine Guelph

This world-renowned, non-profit institution has been serving the horse industry through education, research, healthcare promotion and industry development since it was founded in 2003. It is the world leader in online studies for equine pursuits, boasting 19 accredited courses. The award-winning 12-week university level courses attract more students every year, both locally and globally. Through its Equimania youth program, which brings interactive displays to a variety of events throughout Ontario, it engages and inspires the future of equestrian sport.

Currently helmed by the driven and award-winning Executive Director Gayle Ecker, Equine Guelph is not content to rest on its laurels. Says Gayle, “In response to feedback from our industry, Equine Guelph developed 'TheHorsePortal', an innovative online platform to develop a learning community and in partnership with all English-speaking federations in Canada. We now have nine online short courses on offer for short, focused, inexpensive programs for learning. We have also developed unique partnerships with the Ontario and Alberta racing industries, welfare organizations, nutrition, insurance and pharmaceutical companies and international partners as well. [These partnerships are] giving us the ability now to develop customized learning communities for more groups in the industry, which can save resources and increase opportunities for their members.” 🐾

Memorable Moments

“As an educator who is passionate about developing well-informed, evidence-based horse ownership, I take great pleasure in hearing from many of our students who have had the courses profoundly change the way they look at and manage their own horses. As well, I love hearing from those who have gone on to develop their own careers and businesses, or were even encouraged to pursue higher education, while keeping welfare advocacy as one of their top priorities. I would also add that one of our newer programs, Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue and Emergency Preparedness, is gaining traction and interest from other groups and once again has resulted in new partnerships, including Ontario Farm and Food Care, to train people in the ag and equine sectors, and this has helped developed a stellar training team in Ontario!”

Mission Possible

“While our organizations can be very different, at the heart of it all we need to consider working more closely together on shared mandates so we can do more. We are looking to partner with like-minded equine groups so that we can expand our youth/family programs for grass roots participation and build our industry with new owners and participants, while supporting health and welfare and advocating for our equines, in all their roles and stages of life. But we also must take a stronger role in supporting research into the health and welfare of our horses, at the individual level and the organizational level. We use horses, make money from horses, and get immense satisfaction from our relationship with horses, and we must continue to work together to fund equine research at the veterinary schools in Canada to continue to build solid and sustainable research programs. Our horses deserve that!”