

Auburn Promotes Animal and Equine Sciences at Alabama Horse Fair Headlined by Craig Cameron

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Rigs hauling various shapes, sizes, and breeds of horses began pulling up on the Garret Coliseum grounds around morning coffee hour. The frigid temperature did not deter horsemen and women from attending the Alabama Horse Fair, the state's largest equine trade show in Alabama on January 22 and 23.

This year Craig Cameron, a well-respected horseman and RFDTV personality, headlined the Horse Fair. Horse folks also braved the cold in anticipation of Craig Cameron's clinic the Friday before the Fair, and to compete in the Alabama Stock Horse Association (ASHA) show on Sunday.

The weekend of equine events opened with Craig Cameron's clinic. With their pens ready and notebooks open, auditors sat on the edge of unforgiving seats bundled up like snow bunnies and soaked up every word of wisdom about horsemanship from Craig Cameron. The auditors, who had been on a long waiting list to ride with Craig Cameron, watched him ride closely, and paid attention to every instruction he gave his riders in the arena.

Horsemanship is a thinking game. Many good horseman have reiterated this point. You must pay attention to the smallest of details while riding, training, or working with a horse in any manner.

"Horsemanship when done correctly is an art form, and like any art form, time must be taken to learn patience," Cameron said. "Consistency and a desire to get better is an important aspect, and it's something to keep working on."



The different levels of riders learned together, and improved noticeably throughout the day. In admiration, the auditors watched the cream of the crop ride, and learned from the mistakes of everyone. During a break, the participants mingled. Participants, the new horsey friends they made, and Craig Cameron went out for Mexican food after the clinic. Spending time with Craig Cameron for some, is like spending time with Cam Newton, or talking to Johnny Depp or Eva Longoria for others.

On Saturday and Sunday, the Alabama Horse Fair offered a variety of clinics, demonstrations, acts, and vendors offering the latest in equine products. Dr. Cynthia McCall, a professor in the Department of Animal Sciences and a coordinator of the Auburn University Horse Unit, is president of the Alabama Horse Council, the organization that hosted the Horse Fair. Dr. McCall said that people must know how to care for their horse well and economically, and that those within the horse industry must work together.

Dr. Betsy Wagner, an Equine Nutrition professor who has conducted research projects sponsored by Alabama Horse Council, helped promote the Department of Animal Sciences and Equine Science option at the event. Dr. Wagner said that a career is available for anyone who desires to work with horses or livestock. She said that the industry needs people who understand science, and who can help producers take the best care of their animals.

Auburn University's Horseman's Club volunteered, and helped promote the Department of Animal Sciences and Equine Science option at the event. Hayley Ann Dickinson, president of the club, said that it was important for college students to see the variety of equine disciplines and activities, and to network.

Casey Eckert, a student who is studying Veterinary Medicine, attended the Horse Fair, and enjoyed Craig Cameron's clinics and all of the vendors. Casey also loved competing in the ASHA show on Sunday, and won the trail class division on her McCurdy Plantation Horse, Shadow.

Kate Marley, a student majoring in Animal Sciences, is a nationally ranked mounted shooter who participated in the Bama Bandits mounted shooting demonstration at the Horse Fair.

The weekend's equine events allowed students to promote Auburn's Department of Animal Sciences and Equine Science option, showcase their talents, and connect with other horse folks. The connections I have made in the horse world, both human and equine, have been rewarding. "Some friends leave footprints on your heart."

[This video is a compilation of Casey Eckert](#), a student studying Veterinary Medicine at Auburn, and her horse Shadow competing in ASHA shows. Her riding is an example of what was seen at the Alabama Horse Fair.