Here we are at the end of another year . . . so out with the old and in with the new! Attached to this newsletter, you will find a survey to help me evaluate our equine programs. I know, I know – who wants to fill out a boring survey? But your suggestions and opinions really matter and they play a big role in the programs and services that the Extension office offers. I read every single survey that is returned to the office and I consider every suggestion that is made. If there is something that you need or would like to see, please speak up! I sincerely appreciate everyone’s input and I hope that I can continue to improve the equine programming that the Onslow Extension office offers. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

-Emily

Thank you from REINS and Bits

The REINS and Bits Fall Trail Ride that was held on November 18th at Pine Cliffs was a big success! A big thanks goes out to all who attended and have supported these two groups in their efforts to educate fellow horse owners and improve our area trails. If you missed us this fall, look for information about our next ride that is tentatively scheduled for Spring ’08.

Join the new BITs group on Yahoo!

By now, many of you are familiar with Benefiting Intracoastal Trails (BITs) which is a non-profit organization that supports multi-use trails in Southeastern North Carolina. In order to continue improving communication in the BITs organization a new Yahoo! Group has been created on the Internet. This group will allow volunteers and supporters a central location to share ideas, trails pictures, and upcoming rides and workdays in the Croatan. Anyone is welcome to join this group! Visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BITsNC/ today and sign up to be a number of the BITs group.
2007-2008 Extension Horse Short Course and Clinic Series

For more information about the following short courses and clinic or to receive a registration form, please visit http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/horse/hhmain.html or call the Onslow Extension office at (910) 455-5873.

December 1-2: Southern Horse Festival Championship Open Horse Show – Hunt Horse Complex, Raleigh, NC

December 5-8: NCSU Horse Breeding Management and Transported Semen Short Course – NCSU Equine Educational Unit, Raleigh, NC

December 9: NCSU Foaling Management Short Course – Ramada Inn - Blue Ridge, Raleigh, NC

January 5-6: NCSU Advanced Level Horse Judging Short Course* - Ramada Inn – Blue Ridge, Raleigh, NC

February 1: Ring Steward Program – Ramada Inn – Blue Ridge, Raleigh, NC

February 2-3: NCSU Open Horse Show Judges Certification Clinic – Hunt Horse Complex, Raleigh, NC

February 2: Youth Horse Judging Team Training Clinic – Holshouser Bldg. State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, NC

February 29 – March 2: American Youth Horse Council Symposium – North Raleigh Hilton, Raleigh, NC

March 14-15: NCSU Equine Hoof Care and Shoeing Short Course – Extension Hose Husbandry and NCSU Equine Educational Unit, Raleigh, NC

May 5-7: Horse Protection Officers’ Short Course – NCSU Equine Educational Unit, Raleigh NC

May 15: NCSU Horse Feeding Short Course – Ramada Inn – Blue Ridge, Raleigh, NC

May 16: NCSU Horse Forage Management Short Course – Ramada Inn – Blue Ridge, Raleigh, NC

Cold Weather Feeding

When the temperature begin to drop, a good way to help your horse stay warm is to help him increase his internal body heat through his diet. Feedstuffs differ in the amounts of internal heat that they produce when digested by the horse. Forages, which are digested by microbes located in the cecum and large intestine, will produce more internal heat than concentrate mixes, which are digested by the enzymes in the small intestine. Therefore, the easiest and safest way to increase internal body heat is to increase the amount of hay your horse is eating. The average horse should eat between 1.5 to 1.75% of his body weight in hay during those really cold periods of time. This means that a 1,100 pound horse should be eating about 16.5 to 19.5 pounds of hay a day in order to meet his energy needs in cold weather.

When the temperature outside, including the wind chill factor, drops below 45°F (which is referred to as the “critical temperature”), large amounts of energy are needed by the horse to help maintain his internal body temperature. If the outside temperature drops below the critical temperature and stays there for several days, you should increase the concentrate as well as the forage portion of the diet in equal proportions. The critical temperature is affected by wind chill, amount of moisture in the air, and thickness of the horse’s coat, which is very good at insulating against the cold and
Wind. If the horse’s coat becomes wet, this will increase the critical temperature by 10 to 15°F! For more information about cold weather feeding for horses, contact the extension office or visit the publication on the web at: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/resources/livestock/horses/ag558-6html

Calendar of Events

December
1-2: Southern Horses Festival Championship Open Horse Show – Raleigh

8: Holiday Classic Barrel Show – Equine Country, Jacksonville

8: EDCTSA Dressage and Combined Training – Miracle Meadows, Jacksonville

28-31: Raleigh, Indoor Holiday Classic – Hunt Horse Complex, Raleigh

January
5-6: NCSU Advanced Level Horse Judging Short Course, Raleigh

25-27: NCHJA “C” Indoors – Hunt Horse Complex, Raleigh

Have a Holly Jolly (and Safe) Holiday Season

The year-end holidays are an exciting time of year. Here are some tips to help ensure everyone has a safe holiday season.

Beware of holiday lighting. Take care when burning candles. Be sure they are kept away from decorations or other combustible materials. Don’t leave children unattended in a room with lit candles, as well as matches and lighters, out of the reach of children. Never display lighted candles in windows or near exits. Lit candles should not be used as tree decorations. Avoid using candles during parties. If guests will be smoking, provide them with large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently. After the party, check inside and under upholstery and in trash cans for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.

Decorate only with flame-retardant or noncombustible materials. Avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable. Keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children. Pieces could be swallowed or inhaled. Avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food. Artificial snow spray cans irritate linings if inhaled. Place older ornaments and
decorations that might be painted with lead paint out of reach of small children and pets.

**Toys.** Purchase appropriate toys for the appropriate age. Some toys designed for older children might be dangerous for younger children. Electric toys should be UL/FM approved. Toys with sharp points, sharp edges, strings, cords or parts small enough to be swallowed should not be given to small children.

**Think about pets.** Rich foods and inappropriate feeding can create health complications for pets. Dangerous food items include holiday favorites such as chocolate, coffee, onions, fatty foods, alcoholic beverages and cooked bones. Grapes and raisins can also be hazardous. The ingestion of inappropriate foods, tinsel, ribbons or garland can cause sickness or obstruction. Keep décor items out of reach of your pet or in places your animals cannot get to them. Remember that many holiday plants (holly, mistletoe, poinsettia, lilies, Christmas rose) are poisonous to pets. Pine needles can create problems if ingested.

Unsecured Christmas trees pose hazards to climbing critters as they can topple or be knocked over. Scented items can be harmful – especially to birds.

**Keep Christmas trees fresh.** Choose a fresh Christmas tree and secure it in a sturdy stand. Place the tree away from heat sources and exits and water it daily. If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant. If you plan to hang stockings on your fireplace, do not use the fireplace for fires.

**Designate a driver.** When attending a party, always designate a non-drinking driver. If you are the host of a holiday gathering, be sure there are non-alcoholic beverages available for guests who are driving.

**Buckle up.** During The Holiday months, people travel more than ever. Wearing a seat belt is the easiest and best way to prevent injury in a motor vehicle collision. Buckle up children (under age 8) into approved child safety seats in the back seat. Ensure that all other passengers are also wearing safety belts.