

# Welcome to the Pre-Veterinary Experience Day

February 17, 2024, Kentucky Horse Park



**Presented by the University of Kentucky's  
Pre-Veterinary Advising Program,  
in conjunction with  
UK's Department of Animal & Food Sciences,  
UK Ag Equine Programs  
and the Kentucky Horse Council**

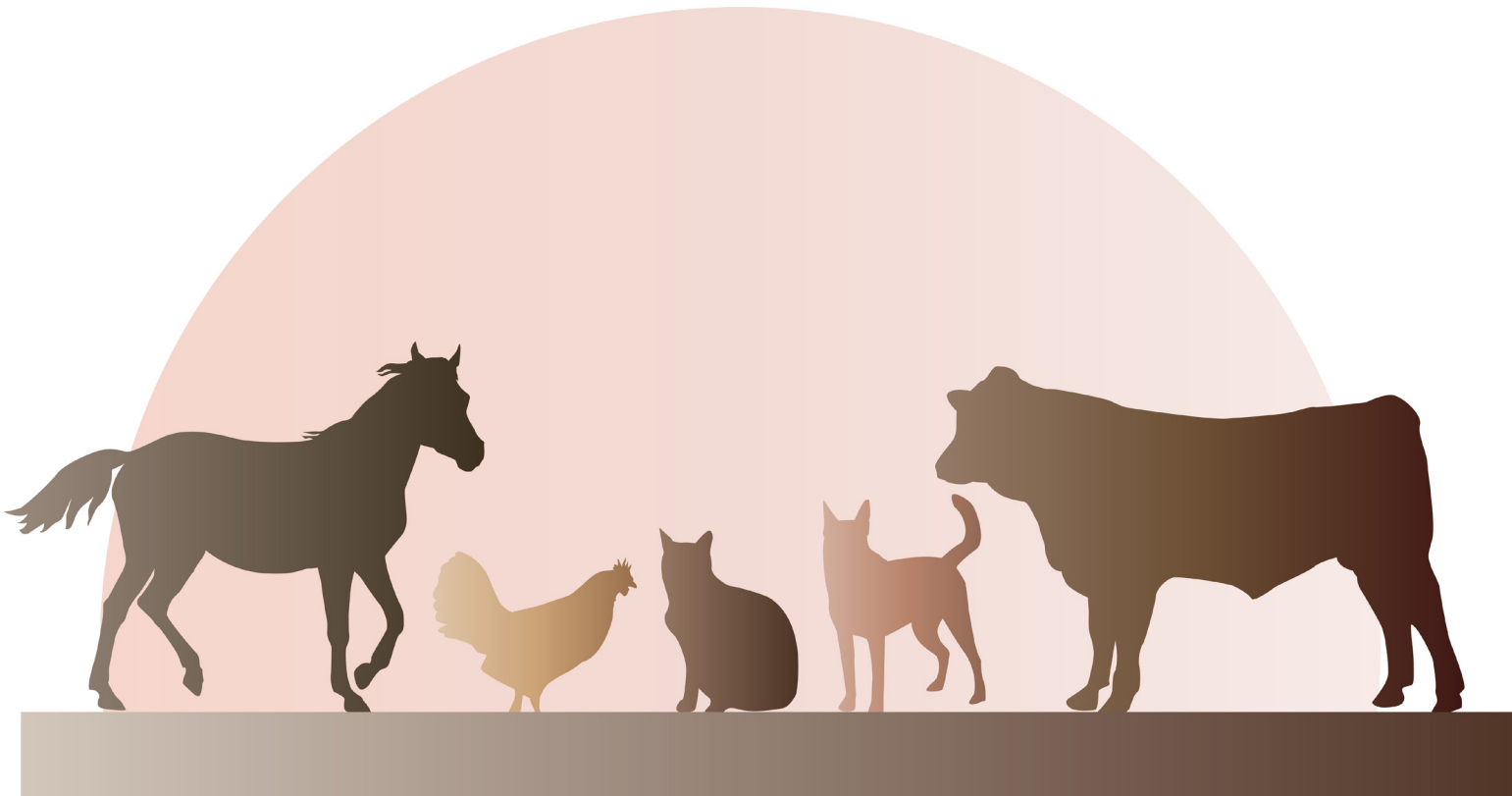


**Martin-Gatton**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
University of Kentucky.



**KENTUCKY**  
HORSE COUNCIL

*Veterinary medicine is an exciting profession offering a diverse array of rewarding career path options. The Pre-Vet Experience Day has been created to provide undergraduate students interested in a veterinary career information critical for informed decision making. We're glad you could join us. A special thank you goes out to our speakers and our sponsors for making this event possible!*



# Schedule of Events

## 7:30-8:30 a.m. Registration

## 8:30 a.m. Welcome & Introduction

*Dr. Amber McNamara, University of Kentucky*

**OVATION THEATER**

## 9:00-9:45 a.m. Session 1

Option A: Introduction to pre-veterinary requirements; what you need to be aware of to be a competitive veterinary school applicant, *Dr. Pedro de Pedro, Morehead State University*

**MANE THEATER**

Option B: Tips and tricks for vet school applications; insights into veterinary school interviews, *Dr. Andrea Sexton, Eastern Kentucky University, and Dr. Jessica Kenealy, Eastern Kentucky University*

**OVATION THEATER**

## 9:50-10:35 a.m. Session 2

Option A: Unraveling the vet school mystery: What vet school is right for you? A discussion of vet school formats, cost, location and accreditation, *Colette Tebeau, University of Kentucky*

**MANE THEATER**

Option B: You Graduated ... What's Next? Highlighting the scope, breadth and depth of the veterinary industry, *Dr. Amber McNamara, University of Kentucky*

**OVATION THEATER**

## 10:35-10:45 a.m. Break

## 10:45-11:15 a.m. Presentation

Issues in veterinary medicine: Debt, mental health and work-life balance; How you can best prepare yourself for your future career, *Drs. Jen Quammen and James Beckman*

**OVATION THEATER**

## 11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Group Panel

Successfully navigating your vet med career, *Drs. Cage Cruise, Holly Helbig, Erin Homerosky and Marty Whitehouse Riney*

**OVATION THEATER**

## 12:30-2:00 p.m. Lunch

## 2:45 p.m. – Industry Tours and Discussions

Option A: Equine veterinary career focus – Spy Coast Farm

Option B: Livestock veterinary career focus - Blue Grass Stockyards

Option C: Companion/Small animal career focus - Nicholasville Road Animal Hospital

Option D: Industry/Government/Regulatory/Research career focus - Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

## 5:30-8:00 p.m. Optional dinner at the Kentucky Horse Park

*Hosted by the Kentucky Horse Council*

5:30-6:00 p.m. Networking

6:00-7:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00-8:00 p.m. Discussion

# Event Speakers

**Mr. Jim Akers** was born and raised on a small tobacco and cattle farm in Hardin County, Kentucky. After studying agriculture at the University of Kentucky he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in animal science in 1985.

Mr. Akers worked as a professional farm manager in Central Kentucky and then East Alabama for the next 15 years with involvement in purebred and commercial cattle, sheep, tobacco, feed grains, hay and timber production.

In 2000, Mr. Akers began working for the University of Kentucky as beef integrated resource management coordinator, where he was instrumental in the formation and operation of the Kentucky Beef Network and Southeastern Livestock Network and became a recognized expert on the issues and challenges that farms and markets face in the implementation of electronic identification systems. He was also credited with a significant increase in the number of calves participating in the Kentucky Certified Preconditioned for Health or CPH45 program, working cooperatively with local markets to make the program workable for producers and markets.

In 2007, Mr. Akers was tapped to serve as COO of the newly formed Blue Grass Livestock Marketing Group. Since that time, Mr. Akers has helped grow the company and diversified its operation well beyond the operation of seven local/regional livestock markets and an internet marketing business. Blue Grass is the largest livestock marketing firm in the Eastern U.S., selling around 500,000 cattle annually.

Mr. Akers, his wife Dr. Christine and their two daughters Elizabeth and Caroline, son-in-law Tylor Buckles, and grandson Thomas James, live in Paris, Kentucky, where Christine operates Paris Veterinary Clinic.



---

**Dr. James Beckman** is originally from southern Indiana and is a graduate of Oklahoma State University College of Veterinary Medicine. After traveling the country working with horses, he and his beautiful wife moved back to the Louisville, Kentucky, area and opened their first practice, Gas Light Equine. Seeing a need to manage emergency calls in a better way, they also opened Bluegrass Equine Emergency Service.

Dr Beckman spends his days playing with horses and chasing his kids. He enjoys working with vet students so that they can love equine practice as much as he does.

---

**Dr. Modesty Burleson** was born and raised in York, Pennsylvania. She started riding at 6 and got her first pony by 9. From that moment, she always knew she wanted to go to veterinary school for equine medicine.

Her mentor growing up, Dr. William J. Solomon of Pin Oak Lane Farm in New Freedom, Pennsylvania, introduced her to the Thoroughbred and Standardbred breeding industries. Dr. Burleson attended Virginia Tech for undergraduate studies and then the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine.

After graduation, Dr. Burleson moved to Lexington, Kentucky, for a one-year ambulatory internship at Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital with Dr. Tom Riddle. She had always planned to move back to Pennsylvania to work with Dr. Solomon but after her internship, Dr. Riddle asked her to stay on as the resident veterinarian at Shadwell Farm owned by Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum. During this time, she met her husband, Lyn Burleson, and decided to stay on as a Rood & Riddle associate.

In 2010, Spy Coast Farm hired Dr. Burleson from Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital to be their resident veterinarian. At the time, Spy Coast Farm had only 20 horses on 200 acres and a handful of employees. Over the last decade, Dr. Burleson has worked closely with owner, Lisa Lourie, to grow and develop the farm to become a world-renowned breeding and training facility. The farm now spans 800 acres with more than 60 employees and includes a reproduction center, young horse training facility, a quarantine center and a state-of-the-art rehabilitation and fitness center. Dr. Burleson is now the chief operating officer as well as the primary reproduction veterinarian on the farm.

Dr. Burleson and her husband, Lyn, own and operate a commercial Thoroughbred breeding operation in Midway, Kentucky. They breed more than 100 Thoroughbreds a year and run a sales consignment at Keeneland and Fasig-Tipton.

---





**Dr. Cage Cruise** graduated from Mississippi State College of Veterinary Medicine in 2013. He worked as an associate veterinarian at Southern Equine in Pilot Point, Texas, for one year, then two years as an associate veterinarian with Fraley Equine Podiatry in Lexington, Kentucky.

He started Bluegrass Equine Podiatry in 2016. Dr. Cruise specializes in laminitis, injuries/infections related to the hoof and angular limb deformities in young horses.

Dr Cruise and his wife live in Georgetown, Kentucky, and have two boys, ages 5 and 2. He enjoys roping and raising cattle with his family.

---

**Dr. Pedro De Pedro** has been an equine internal medicine practitioner in Lexington, Kentucky, for more than 12 years.

In 2016, he joined the faculty at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine where he taught large animal (equine) internal medicine and clinical pharmacology.

In 2022, he joined the faculty at Morehead State University Department of Agricultural Sciences as assistant professor of veterinary science. His research interests and current projects focus on performance horses and veterinary education.

Dr. De Pedro continues to practice equine internal medicine and is a veterinary consultant to general practitioners and non-profit organizations.

---



**Dr. Katie Flynn:** Growing up with Standardbred racehorses, Dr. Flynn gained extensive hands-on experience caring for, handling, training and driving Standardbreds.

As an editorial intern in Kentucky for a leading U.S. horse racing publication, The Horseman and Fair World, she developed professional communication and presentation skills.

Her veterinary regulatory career expanded her skill sets in areas of equine health, program management, fiscal management, strategic planning, policy development and implementation, drafting and enforcement of regulations, engaging stakeholder collaboration and preparation and delivery of written and oral communications for diverse audiences.

Protecting equine health and welfare are the focus of her career path.

Dr. Flynn served as past Kentucky State Veterinarian and is now senior staff veterinarian for the United States Equestrian Federation.

---

**Dr. Holly Helbig** is an equine technical services veterinarian with Zoetis. She graduated from The Ohio State University with a focus on lameness and sport horse medicine.

Dr. Helbig was the official veterinarian for the World Equestrian Center-Ohio and the Kentucky Horse Shows for 10 years prior to joining Zoetis. She covered FEI competitions such as Split Rock and spent time working at competitions in Michigan. She also had an ambulatory practice serving patients around her hometown of Columbus, Ohio.

Dr. Helbig is an avid rider and competes professionally at hunter/jumper shows in her free time. She lives at home with her husband Alex, his two kids, Matan and Elianne, and their dog, Bad Boy Brady.

---





**Dr. Erin Homerosky** is large animal veterinarian practicing at Orrville Veterinary Clinic in northeast Ohio. She grew up on a farm in southern Ohio, where she helped her family raise beef cattle and various 4-H critters. It was during those years that she developed a love for all animals, especially horses, and traveled around competing with her barrel horse.

Dr. Homerosky graduated from Ohio State in 2016 with her bachelor's, majoring in animal science. She then stayed at Ohio State, graduating in 2020 with her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree.

Dr. Homerosky thoroughly enjoys all aspects of rural veterinary medicine, especially getting to work on horses, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and even the occasional chicken.

When not working, she loves spending time with her two horses, two dogs and cat. She enjoys the outdoors year-round, and can often be found reading in her hammock, cruising around in her Jeep, skiing the slopes and working out at the local CrossFit gym.

Dr. Homerosky loves having students ride with her on farm calls and enjoys getting to share her experiences on what it's like to be a young, female large animal veterinarian.

---

**Dr. Chris Jolly** is a Kentucky native, born and raised in Versailles. His father, a small animal veterinarian, influenced him to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. His love of the cattle industry, which he has been involved in since a young age, ultimately compelled him to focus on bovine practice.

Dr. Jolly attended Eastern Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky to complete his veterinary pre-requisites. He is a graduate of Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine (2015). Upon graduation, he returned to Versailles and went to work for Allen Veterinary Service.

Since 2015, Dr. Jolly has provided veterinary service to Bluegrass Stockyards in Lexington while also providing ambulatory service to central Kentucky farmers. In 2018, he became a partner and Allen & Jolly Veterinary Service was formed. In 2023, Allen & Jolly expanded to also cover the Bluegrass Stanford location.



**Dr. Jessica Kenealy** is an assistant professor at Eastern Kentucky University, where she started working in 2019. She earned her Bachelor of Science in animal science at Murray State University in 2014, then went on to get her doctorate in veterinary sciences from the University of Kentucky in 2019.

Her research is focused on equine parasitology, specifically anthelmintic resistance in *Parascaris* spp., commonly known as the equine roundworm. Notably, she played a pivotal role in the development of a veterinary clinical rotation in collaboration with Lincoln Memorial University and the UK Gluck Equine Research Center. It was during these clinical rotations that Dr. Kenealy discovered her true calling in teaching, which ultimately led her to her current position.

At ECU, Dr. Kenealy teaches a variety of courses, including animal diseases, anatomy, companion animal management and equine production, among others. She is also the advisor for the Pre-Veterinary Club and the Sigma Alpha sorority, actively guiding and mentoring students in their academic and professional pursuits. Her current research interests revolve around the free-roaming horses of Eastern Kentucky. Dr. Kenealy believes in involving her students in various activities, trips, workshops and more, to help them gain a well-rounded perspective on their future careers and develop networking skills.

Outside of her work, Dr. Kenealy enjoys spending quality time with her wonderful family. She got married to her husband, Brandean in 2016, and they have two beautiful daughters, Josie (age 6) and Julia (age 4). The Kenealy family loves everything outdoors, is actively involved with their church and enjoys playing board games together. They also have several rescue animals, including two dogs, a cat and a horse, who complete their family.

---

**Dr. James N. MacLeod** is a veterinarian and PhD scientist who holds the John and Elizabeth Knight Chair in musculoskeletal sciences at the University of Kentucky's Gluck Equine Research Center. He also serves as director of UK Ag Equine Programs, the interdepartmental multidisciplinary unit that aims to support and facilitate all equine-associated activities in UK's Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment. This includes the large and highly successful Equine Science and Management undergraduate major that draws students from all around the country to attend college at UK.



Dr. MacLeod's laboratory conducts research on equine orthopedic and sports medicine issues, with a focus on osteoarthritis, articular cartilage repair, bone development and the changes in bone structure that occur prior to bone fracture. Dr. MacLeod and his students have been active in the equine genome project, gene expression studies and, most recently, the application of emergent machine learning computer technologies for analyzing equine bone structure in medical images of the skeleton.



**Dr. Amber McNamara** joined the University of Kentucky in January 2024 as an associate professor and director of pre-veterinary advising in the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

Prior to UK, she was a faculty member for more than 10 years at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina, working in clinical, academic and advising roles. Teaching duties included comparative vertebrate anatomy, advanced clinical wildlife rehabilitation, zoonotic diseases and, most recently, an introductory One Health class.

As the veterinarian for the college's May Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, she worked alongside students and staff to provide veterinary and rehabilitative care to more than 1,500 injured wildlife patients admitted annually.

She earned her DVM from Purdue University in 2003 before completing a yearlong internship in wildlife medicine at the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) in Sanibel, Florida. One year turned into eight, as she continued full-time work at CROW until 2011, becoming a certified veterinary acupuncturist in that time. She worked for two years in a mobile acupuncture (and in-home euthanasia) practice prior to moving to North Carolina in 2013. She recently completed a master's degree from the University of Florida, focusing on One Health and is excited to have joined the team at the University of Kentucky.

**Dr. Jennifer Quammen** earned her DVM from The Ohio State University in 2011, her MPH from the University of Iowa in 2010 and a Bachelor of Science in both mathematics and biological sciences.

Dr. Quammen has been a leader in the veterinary field for many years. She began as a veterinary technician working in private practice. As a veterinarian, she has worked as an associate, medical director or a relief veterinarian at various points throughout her career. Clinically, her interests are in surgery and pain management. She also has a very strong passion for veterinary well-being.

Dr. Quammen co-founded Veterinarian Coaching ([www.veterinariancoaching.com](http://www.veterinariancoaching.com)) with her partner in 2014. Through this work, she helps veterinarians, practices and students on topics ranging from stress management to career transition to improved work-life integration.



Dr. Quammen is the Chief Veterinary Officer of Otto (<https://otto.vet>). Otto is a comprehensive customer engagement platform that helps veterinary clinics streamline communications, improve clinic profitability and increase customer satisfaction. She currently serves as the AVMA Vice President. Dr. Quammen was deeply engaged with the Veterinary Leadership Experience and the Veterinary Leadership Institute from 2011 until 2019, when she stepped back from her role on their outreach team. She continues to champion the themes from VLE/VLI and has developed many friends and colleagues from these experiences.



**Dr. Marty Whitehouse Riney** is a veterinarian in Lexington, Kentucky. She is a 2009 graduate of the University of Kentucky and a 2014 graduate of the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine. She completed an internship at Hagyard Equine Medical Institute. She is an owner of Nicholasville Road Animal Hospital and MWR Equine Dentistry. Preventative care, internal medicine and dentistry (of both small animals and equine) are her areas of interest.

Outside of work Dr. Marty Whitehouse Riney enjoys being with her children and husband, competing in eventing and spending time outdoors.

**Dr. Andrea Sexten** was raised on a commercial cow-calf and tobacco farm in Nicholasville, Kentucky, where she was very involved from a young age. Growing up, she also showed registered Tennessee Walking Horses and was active in her local FFA chapter. She earned two Bachelor of Science degrees from the University of Kentucky in 2005 in animal science and agricultural biotechnology. She also completed her master's in animal science at the University of Kentucky in 2007.

From there, she went on to Oklahoma State University where she earned her doctorate in ruminant nutrition in 2010.

She then accepted a position in the Department of Animal Sciences and Industry at Kansas State University where she developed the KSU Department of Animal Sciences and Industry Undergraduate Research Program, taught courses in livestock nutrition and advised students. Her research interests included the interaction of nutrition and gene expression on cattle performance.



Dr. Sexten joined the Department of Agriculture faculty at Eastern Kentucky University in fall of 2015 and was promoted to director of the department in fall 2023. She teaches a variety of animal science courses and advises students in the Animal and Veterinary Sciences Program.

She dedicates time outside the classroom advising the Block & Bridle Club and the Delta Tau Alpha (DTA) Agriculture Honor Society as well as working with students competing on the Animal Science Academic Quadrathlon Team.

Dr. Sexten, her husband and two children currently live on a small farm in Jessamine County where they raise beef cattle. They also enjoy cheering on their children's sports teams, showing Hereford cattle, spending time with family and friends and being active in their church.



**Ms. Colette Tebeau:** As an undergraduate student, Ms. Tebeau was convinced she wanted to be a veterinarian. However, an academic enrichment opportunity with a heavy teaching responsibility opened her eyes to the possibilities of becoming a university instructor.

She finished her bachelor's degree in animal and veterinary science with an emphasis in pre-veterinary medicine from Clemson University and went on to pursue a master's in animal physiology with an emphasis in equine reproduction (also from Clemson University). Upon completion of her master's, she spent six months teaching and co-managing a horse farm in Drumree, Ireland.

Once back in the United States, she accepted a position at Utah State University, where she remained for more than seven years, co-managing their university horse farm, teaching equine classes and overseeing the equine 4-H state program.

In 2016, Ms. Tebeau joined the University of Kentucky as a pre-vet academic coordinator, a position that encompasses teaching, recruitment and pre-veterinary advising. Ms. Tebeau said she loves working at UK and thoroughly enjoys her advising and teaching responsibilities and the ability to help pre-veterinary students along their pathway to veterinary school.

**Dr. Julie Vargas** is a graduate of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. She completed a hospital and an ambulatory internship at Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, before joining a sport horse practice in Wellington, Florida.

She completed her veterinary acupuncture certification at Chi Institute and her chiropractic/spinal manipulation certification at the Integrative Veterinary Medical Institute, both in Reddick, Florida.

Dr. Vargas has a passion for equine sport horse medicine and strives to find the best outcome for her patients, combining years of conventional veterinary medical practice with alternative and regenerative therapies. She currently runs the Spy Coast Farm Equine Rehabilitation Center in Lexington, Kentucky.



Please help us better understand your needs by completing the pre-event survey here:



# Thank You to our Sponsors and Collaborators!

## PLATINUM SPONSOR



## GOLD SPONSOR



## SILVER SPONSORS



## BRONZE SPONSORS



## COLLABORATORS

