

Extending Knowledge – Changing Lives

Annie's Project Suppers: Equine Business Focus

How a multi-state Extension collaboration strengthens business practices of women managing equine farming operations

ISSUE

U.S. census data confirms that women are increasingly involved in managing farm operations. Delaware itself has seen an increase in the number of farms operated by women, and those in the equine industry are predominantly women. Frequently, most equine programming focuses on the management of the horse itself—not the business side of an equine operation.

RESPONSE

Annie's Project Suppers: Equine Business Focus was developed by a team of Extension professionals from the University of Delaware and the University of Maryland. This three-night educational program was modeled after the Annie's Project program that began in Delaware and Maryland in 2008; 500+ women have gone through training since its inception. It empowers women in farm management to manage risk and to build networks throughout the state and region. Each three-hour session began with a meal followed by guest speakers and discussion. Topics included business structure, personality IQ, business planning, farm insurance, equine insurance and liability, lender requirements, credit reports, social media and website design tips. Participants and presenters linked simultaneously through distance technology in Salisbury, Maryland, and Dover, Delaware.

IMPACT

Thirteen women representing more than 900 owned and leased acres participated in the inaugural offering of Annie's Project Suppers: Equine Business Focus. Post-session evaluations indicated:

- 100% would use the resource materials
- 70% gathered names of other participants for networking purposes
- 60% said their questions were answered
- 60% said they were willing to use ideas immediately
- 71.5% might or would obtain/change their insurance policy
- 89% might or would write a farm business/marketing plan
- 55.5% might or would check their credit report
- 80% might or would implement/change their current business structure
- 90% might or would increase communication and family relations because of information about personality traits
- 89% might or would be more effective communicating with clientele through social media and website design
- 90% of program participants showed an interest in participating in follow-up or advanced equine business management training