

**Joint Council of Extension Professionals
2011 Excellence in Teamwork Award**

eXtension HorseQuest

Submitted By:

eXtension HorseQuest Leadership Team

If selected for the award the check
should be payable to: **Betsy Greene**

Team Leader

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Submitted by Team Members:

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Abstract

eXtension is a web-based educational tool created by extension specialists, agents, and educators for the purpose of providing a complementary resource for use by extension personnel and clientele. The eXtension HorseQuest leadership team was instrumental in developing and sustaining both web content and the team of national experts, resulting in an innovative, educational resource. The website (www.extension.org/horses) provides a variety of methods and learning opportunities related to health, care, management, and training of horses. Website resources include: Interactive Learning Lessons, Webinars, Frequently Asked Questions, Basic Information, and "Ask the Expert". Through self guided Learning Lessons, horse enthusiasts can move at their desired pace, or, research the topics through the "best of the best" articles available on the site. Content is delivered through text, photos, videos, podcasts, flash applications, and interactive chats. The HorseQuest Community of Practice has led the way in providing unique educational opportunities to reach their clientele.

Narrative

a. Situation Statement: As the first eXtension Community of Practice (CoP) to publicly launch in 2006, HorseQuest (HQ) has set the standards for effective and efficient techniques in all aspects of creative development, management, cooperation, collaboration, and delivery of peer reviewed, science-based information to our clientele. eXtension is a national collaboration that harnesses Cooperative Extension System's best information by providing clientele with an on-line source of relevant, timely, peer reviewed, and research-based information. By creating a national repository of high-quality research-based equine information, HQ serves the needs of the anywhere-anytime generation of users, providing quick access to the organized customized resources they need to make informed decisions.

b. Target audience: HorseQuest is available to horse owners, students, researchers, clinicians, professors, extension educators, and the general public, at any time from any internet connection. The information is presented for all ages of individuals ranging from 13 yrs+. HorseQuest provides interactive resources for viewers to help them learn more about horses and reinforce what they might read in a short informational article. These resources include: Instructional Videos, Learning Lessons with quizzes, Webinars co-sponsored by My Horse University, and Frequently Asked Questions.

c. Measurable goals and clientele based objectives:

- 1) To engage the expertise of equine specialists at a national level;
- 2) To provide an all encompassing, science-based, equine resource for a national audience; and
- 3) To track the usage and impact of HQ through user metrics and evaluation over time.

HorseQuest has a leadership team that works to promote, deliver, update, and sustain the site, but they also work to engage equine specialists and educators at over 50 land-grant

institutions to develop content, respond to frequently asked questions (FAQs), and provide new information to the site.

Since its inception, HQ has served as a true “Pioneer Community of Practice”, and worked closely with eXtension personnel, even to the point of serving as “guinea pigs” for each new type and level of technology introduced into the eXtension platform. HorseQuest uses a multitude of strategies including webinars, learning lessons, electronic newsletters, video streaming, Moodle, wikis (to create materials) and a HorseQuest Channel on YouTube (eXHorses). The different segments/forms of content allow us to reach out to particular groups of people depending on their age, education, and knowledge level of the topic in question.

Learning Lesson topics were identified based on most common FAQs topics and experience in our home extension programs to determine the highest need/ priority. Expert groups were established to create, organize, consolidate, and adapt the information into interactive learning lessons, complete with text, photos, video clips, and quizzes and/or evaluations.

To further broaden the HQ audience, we created the YouTube channel “eXHorses” (www.youtube.com/user/eXHorses) and loaded peer-reviewed, instructional videos originating from materials created by university equine professionals at their home institutions. Taking advantage of viral marketing through this free, social media distribution, HQ content is now more readily available to a larger number of users through YouTube. HorseQuest was very willing to embrace more effective technologies and methods. We moved from quarterly, hour long, synchronous online text chats; utilizing three equine specialists and a facilitator online for each chat to partnering with My Horse University to provide more focused, direct teaching through interactive webcasts. Internet users can search for answers in all equine subject areas in

the existing FAQ database. All published FAQs have been peer reviewed, copy edited, and published by HQ experts. Users can also receive customized answers to their new questions by using the “Ask an Expert” (AaE) feature.

HorseQuest has led the way to find the most effective and efficient ways to create, deliver, and evaluate quality peer-reviewed content. We use both quantitative and qualitative methodology to evaluate all aspects of our CoP. We have been tracking, documenting, and statistically evaluating our web usage statistics (now Google Analytics) since our public launch in September of 2006. Surveys were developed and administered to determine overall satisfaction of the users and impact data regarding how the tools influence practices and/or perspectives of the participants.

d. Outcomes/results/impacts:

- From 2005, HQ has produced/published more than 14 learning modules, 8 web chats, 21 webcasts, and 572 videos segments, 1191 FAQs (viewed 18,558 times), resolved 1606 AaE questions, 1572 published/in progress articles, 239 calendar events and 297 news articles.
- Within a one year period (March 2008-2009) the number of page views for HQ nearly doubled, from 40,000 to almost 80,000 per month.
- In the first year, our eXHorses’ YouTube channel has gained 434 subscribers, 24 friends, and has been viewed by people all over the world (Total Video views: over 149,453).
- Learning Lessons evaluations show people increasing their knowledge on the subject matter (from 14% to 46% very knowledgeable) and 78% very useful (a 5 or 6 out of 6), and 64% very likely to recommend lesson to a friend (6 out of 6).
- Over 600 participants viewed the first 17 free webcasts. Over 1,400 individuals accessed the archived webcasts. Post-webcast survey results indicated that the webcast was very useful (58

%) or somewhat useful (41 %) to help viewers make more informed horse management decisions; 77 % would recommend the webcasts; and 67 % planned to make at least one change in their horse management practices based on information gained from the webcast.

- In 2008, Dr. Greg Crosby, CSREES National Program Leader in Natural Resources and Environment commented “...This is one of the best compilations of data on outputs/outcomes that I have seen for an eXtension CoP” in response to impact data provided by HQ.
- The Leadership Team has presented peer reviewed abstracts and posters at national (over 40) and international (Canada, Sweden) professional association meetings.
- HorseQuest was awarded 3 National 2009 eXtension Awards and the 2008 National Outstanding Website (National Association of County Agricultural Agents).
- HorseQuest is an active contributor to three external grants, totaling over \$400,000 and leadership has published a refereed journal article (Journal of Animal Science, August 2010).
- HorseQuest was awarded the 2010 National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Partnership Award for Effective and Efficient Use of Resources.

After the official public launch, there was a steady increase in average number of visits and page views per month as reported in the Journal of Animal Science. Regressions show a statistically significant increase in visits per month (approximately 450; $P < 0.001$) and page views per month (about 373; $P = 0.004$). In addition, HorseQuest is a resource for several state 4-H advancement and competition programs.

This leadership team has been instrumental in facilitating, guiding, creating, and sustaining both the content on the website and the national team of equine experts making up the outstanding, innovative, and effective eXtension Community of Practice known as HorseQuest.

e. Role of each Extension team member:

Betsy Greene is the immediate past chair of the HQ Team. She has been involved in all aspects of the CoP formation and development, including but not limited to CoP leadership, grant writing, presenting webinars, creating and reviewing content, publishing a peer reviewed article, and serving as an FAQ expert. Betsy has written and presented numerous HQ abstracts at national meetings (with Anderson, Skelly, Martinson, Waite, etc.). (20%)

Kathy Anderson is the current chair of the HorseQuest team. Kathy has provided articles, videos and developed content for learning lessons and presented two webcasts. (10%)

Krishona Martinson provides expertise in pasture and toxic plants. She helped develop the pasture management learning lesson and presented a webinar on toxic plants. In addition, she peer reviews content and is PI on an active grant that includes Learning Lesson creation. (20%)

Christine Skelly organizes and produces the monthly webcasts and electronic newsletter. She has presented webinars, helps develop and review web content and answers FAQs. (10%)

Karen Waite has provided leadership for the development of the HALTER module. In addition, she has presented a webinar and answers FAQs and is Co-PI with Greene on a USDA CSREES grant for developing Youth Horse Safety Learning Lessons. (15%)

Elaine Bailey has worked on FAQ's, Article and video review, HALTER content review & quiz question development, (content appraisal stuff), AaE questions, and worked on grants. (10%)

f. Collaborations/partnership within and external to the Extension System: Internally, HorseQuest team members work together to combine knowledge and information and convert that into articles, learning lessons, etc. The use of Extension publications in content areas allows for broad coverage of many different topics. Externally, HorseQuest has developed important partnerships with My Horse University (MHU), American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) and Purina Mills. The partnership with My Horse University allows this team to offer customers

a broad array of educational opportunities from receiving information, to participating in webinars, to certificates of on-line course completion, to college degree courses.

Finally, the team has worked extremely well with eXtension as a whole, but specifically Ashley Griffin (content development leader and executive co-chair of HorseQuest) and Jennifer Whittle (University of Kentucky graduate student).

g. Describe how this program addressed the need of a diverse audience: eXtension

HorseQuest provides content for a diverse audience in that we provide content through a variety of multi-media and types/forms to all ages of individuals who have access to the Internet. The Internet does not discriminate based on age, experience, etc., so we are able to reach a diverse group of individuals with wide ranges in age, location, experience, and knowledge. Numerous studies have demonstrated that Extension clientele are seeking new ways of obtaining information. In a 2008 survey of Minnesota horse owners (unpublished), 59% want to receive information via websites and 48% want to receive information via online courses. On-line resources complement in-person programs and enhance extension and outreach activities.

HorseQuest has learned how to adapt traditional content to the online environment to maximize Search Engine Optimization (SEO), in order to be more discoverable and relevant in the online world. This means that HQ resources are consistently being found on the first page of search results. Also, by researching keywords searched by Internet users, HQ has guided new content direction and determined potential webcast topics based on relevance and frequency of those searches. In addition to establishing good SEO, HQ has been utilizing the "viral networking" aspect of the popular social network, YouTube. By uploading clips of existing equine educational videos to YouTube, HQ content appears in mainstream media, is passed on by the user, and helps HQ effectively reach their community of interest (horse enthusiasts).

Supplemental Information:

Presentations/Publications: (not all listed)

- E. A. Greene, K. L. Waite, G. Heyboer, J. Whittle, C. D. Skelly, K. Vignare. 2011. "The Development, Evaluation and Implementation of an Online Safety Course for Youth Working on Equine Facilities" *American Society of Animal Science Annual Meeting* in New Orleans, LA (July, 2011) Accepted.
- Anderson, K., E.A. Greene, and K. Martinson. 2011. "Assessing the Impact and Usefulness of eXtension Horses (HorseQuest)". *Equine Science Society Symposium* in Murfreesboro, TN (May, 2011) Accepted.
- Waite, K.L., K.M. Wilson, G. Heyboer, and E.A. Greene. 2011. "Survey of Adult Volunteer Horse Leaders for the Development of an Online Equine Educational Program" *Equine Science Society Symposium* in Murfreesboro, TN (May, 2011) Accepted.
- Greene, E.A., J.L. Whittle, K.L. Waite, G.A. Heyboer, and C.D. Skelly. 2010. "Development of an Online Curriculum for Youth Safety in Equine Facilities." *6th International Equitation Science Conference*. Uppsala, Sweden, (July/August, 2010).
- Greene, E.A. 2010. "Roundtable Discussion: Creating a Toolbox for Integrating eXtension into State Extension Daily Use" *2010 National eXtension CoP Workshop*. Austin, TX (June, 2010).
- Greene, E.A., and C.D. Skelly. 2010. "Good, Better, Best: Engaging Your CoP Audience Through Directed, But Interactive Webinars." *National eXtension CoP Conference*. In St Louis, MO. (October, 2009).
- Greene, E.A., and K.P. Anderson. 2010. "eXtension's HorseQuest – Getting Equine Education to the Top of the List." *National eXtension CoP Conference*. In St Louis, MO. (October, 2009).
- Greene, E.A., A.S. Griffin, J. Whittle, and K.P. Anderson. 2010. "Going Viral: Using the Audience to Market HorseQuest Content." *National eXtension CoP Conference*. In St Louis, MO. (October, 2009).
- Greene, E.A., K.P. Anderson, A.S. Griffin, and A. Howard. 2009. "Maximizing Reach Via The Internet While Providing Tools for Dissemination in Traditional Extension Environments." *National Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Meeting* in Portland, OR (September, 2009)
- Greene, E.A., K. Anderson, C. Williams, and J. Whittle. 2009. "Using Web 2.0 Technology in Extension Education Programs." at *Equine Science Society Symposium* in Keystone, CO (May/June, 2009)
- Greene, E.A. 2009. "Theories, Practice, Challenges, Implications, and Impact: Partnering with Outside Entities to Broaden Extension's Reach." *American Society of Animal Science Annual Meeting* in Montreal, Québec, Canada (July, 2009)
- Greene, E.A., A.S. Griffin, K.P. Anderson, C.D. Skelly. 2009. "Maximizing reach via the internet while providing tools for information dissemination in traditional extension environments." *American Society of Animal Science Annual Meeting* in Montreal, Québec, Canada (July, 2009)

- LaVigna, A., Paleg, B., Bailey, E. L., Clingerman, E., Dawson, N., Jacobson, L., Johnston, S., King, P., O-Neil-Haight, M. 2009. "Experiences with Innovative Technology-Enhanced Programs." *UME Annual Conference*, Greenbelt, MD.
- Bailey, E. L. and Wilson, K. S. 2009. "What can eXtension and HorseQuest Do for You? Exploring Online Learning Opportunities Using eXtension HorseQuest." Super seminar presented at *National Association of Extension 4-H Agents National Meeting*, Rochester, NY.
- Brady, C.M., K. Martinson, and E. Greene. 2008. How to Incorporate the Newest National Extension Program (eXtension). *Proceedings Galaxy 3 Conference* (pg.8). Indianapolis, IN. (September, 2008)
- Greene, E.A. 2008. The "eXtension" Horsequest Community of Practice Website: www.extension.org/horses. Awards Poster presented at *National Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference* in Greensboro, NC (July, 2008)
- Greene, E.A. and R. Koelsch. 2008. "Utilizing eXtension in Your Local Program." *National Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference* in Greensboro, NC (July, 2008)
- Greene, E.A. 2008. "HorseQuest." "Symposium: From 40 Acres and a Mule to Today: Historical Perspective of Extension: *American Society of Animal Science Centennial Celebration*." Indianapolis, IN (July, 2008) Invited
- Greene, E.A. and A. Crocker. 2008. "Potential CoP Awards Recognition. *2008 National eXtension Community of Practice Conference in Louisville, KY* (June, 2008)
- Waite, K. and E.A. Greene. 2008. "Partnering with Established Extension Programs and Industry Collaboration." *2008 National eXtension Community of Practice Conference in Louisville, KY* (June, 2008)
- Greene, E.A. and K. Anderson. 2008. "Chatting Up HorseQuest Users Online." *2008 National eXtension Community of Practice Conference in Louisville, KY* (June, 2008)
- Greene, E.A. 2008. Putting the Numbers to eXtension Horse Annual Impact. *2008 National eXtension Community of Practice Conference in Louisville, KY* (June, 2008)
- Greene, E.A. 2008. Quantifying eXtension Horse Annual Impact. *2008 Ag Outlook Forum*, Washington D.C. (February, 2008)
- Greene, E.A. 2007. "Best Practices in On-line Learning." *National Epsilon Sigma Phi Conference* in Charleston, SC (September, 2007).
- C.D. Skelly, E.A. Greene, C. Heleski, K. Vignare. 2007. "An update on two new on-line educational opportunities for equine enthusiasts through eXtension and My Horse University." *3rd Annual International Equitation Science Symposium* In Lansing, MI (August, 2007).
- Greene, E.A. and A.S. Griffin. 2007. "eXtension: Leveraging National Equine Expertise for an Internet Environment." *Equine Science Society Symposium* In Hunt Valley, MD (June, 2007).
- Greene, E.A. and C. Depew. 2006. "Pioneer Community of Practice Leaders Panel Discussion" at *eXtension CoP Leadership Workshop* in Louisville, KY (October, 2006).
- Greene, E.A. and C. Depew. 2006. "Pioneer Community of Practice Showcase" at *eXtension CoP Leadership Workshop* in Louisville, KY (October, 2006).
- DePew, C, A.S. Griffin, Southern Regional Equine Extension Specialists, and Associates. 2005. HorseQuest.info – Answers To Horse Questions With Every Click. *Proceedings of the Equine Science Society Symposium*.