ABSTRACTS
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82 The relevance and importance of the equine sciences in contemporary animal sciences curricula. G.D. Potter* and P.G. Gibbs, *Texas A&M University, College Station.*

Historically, programs in the equine sciences have been conducted as a comparatively low priority in most departments of animal science. This was understandable following WW II, because the expansion of the modern horse industry didn't start until the mid 1960's. However, comparatively few departments of animal science developed priority equine sciences programs in response to the tremendous expansion of the horse industry. In those departments of animal science where surveys have been made, the majority of students indicate that the species of farm animal for which they have the most interest is horses. Consequently, faculties with equine expertise are challenged frequently with large enrollments in equine science courses. In general, equine research is comparatively under funded relative to the size, scope and significance of the equine industry. In the United States, the horse industry provides $25 billion in goods and services annually, which is comparable to that of the motion picture and apparel manufacturing industries. There is an active horse industry in every state, and the industry has a $112 billion annual impact on the U.S. economy. However, the horse industry is much more significant in some states than others, relative to other segments of animal agriculture. For example, horses and horse activities are woven into the social fabric of Texas where there are 288,000 households that own over 1 million horses. Cash receipts from sales of Texas horses rank behind only beef cattle and broilers among animal commodities, and are over twice the receipts received from sheep and swine, combined. The horse industry in Texas generates $11 billion annually (approximately 15% of the agricultural economy of the State), which is larger than many traditionally viewed important areas of agriculture. Thus, the equine sciences are very relevant, and to attract students, meet their educational goals and meet the research and educational needs of a large segment of agriculture, the equine sciences should be a high priority component in many departments of animal science.

Key Words: Equine, Curriculum, Industry