

Notes from the Office

This year BC faced events that could have been devastating for horse owners. Fires, floods, West Nile, Strangles and more have made their mark on BC.

There are at least 21,000 members of HCBC with a common interest, horses. There have been times this year that would have members shaking with anger over starved and abused horses. The fires in the Interior and other areas of BC had residents working hard to save their horses. No one can forget the starving abandoned horses in McBride that were saved through the efforts of local horse people who cared. The important factor here in BC is that our members care. Volunteers in BC cared enough to foster starving and abused horses; they donated hay and equipment to the SPCA and others that needed help. BC members have donated time and money to assist those who suffered traumatic injuries and those who had vet bills they could not pay. HCBC has a database of names of members who will house and transport horses in times of disaster. Caring and helping is not discipline specific nor is it breed or geographical. For HCBC we often say that our strength is in our membership numbers, but that is not really an accurate statement. Our real strength is in our members, each individual one.

HCBC & BC SPCA

The HCBC is proudly supporting and promoting the work of the BC SPCA. The BC SPCA is reliant on the support of animal-lovers like HCBC members. HCBC members are encouraged to

- Donate to help
- Donate goods or services
- Foster and help rescued horses on their road to recovery
- Report allegations of abuse and neglect

Currently, the BC SPCA:

- Rescues horses who are abandoned, abused or neglected by removing them from harmful situations
- Provides emergency and non-emergency medical attention
- Provides boarding, feed, essential grooming and farrier care
- Coordinates volunteers, staff and specialists to care for the horses
- Finds permanent adoptive families
- Finds caring foster homes
- Fundraises in the community
- Investigates allegations of cruelty or neglect and prepares cases for Crown counsel

In addition to the above, the BC SPCA also leads on a number of education and advocacy initiatives that indirectly benefit our equine friends now and in the future.

The Growing Need

There has been an unprecedented rise in the number of cases involving horse neglect in late 2008 and 2009. This has been largely due to the poor management practice of turning horses out for winter compounded by the weather. The fact that the BC interior has experienced a severe long winter and a particularly dry and hot summer has put the lives of many horses in jeopardy.

Our Horses - Our Industry!!

Horse Council BC in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture is embarking on a province wide Horse Industry Study. The purpose of this study is to determine the current status of the Horse Industry and estimate its economic benefits and values to the Provincial economy. This study will focus on the broad scope of all business and services in BC directly and indirectly related to the Horse Industry. The changing perspective of agriculture and livestock among the general public has a direct impact on issues such as environmental stability and animal welfare. These issues are important to all horse people and must be addressed through valid and acceptable strategies by the Equine Industry stakeholders.

In 1998, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands along with Horse Council BC did a detailed survey to estimate the size of the horse industry and its economic contribution to British Columbia economy. Results from this 1998 survey indicated land use exceeded 245,000 acres and an annual economic impact of 771 million dollars.

The past eleven years have seen significant population growth, economic challenges and a changing perspective of agriculture and livestock among the general public. These issues along with economic changes in BC necessitate an in depth review of the horse industry in its current state. Your input is extremely valuable. This is your opportunity to have a say in the direction you want to see your industry grow. Please take a few minutes and complete the Equine Industry survey. You can access the survey at www.hcbc.ca or if you would like a copy of the survey mailed to you contact the HCBC office. Kelly Coughlin 604-856-4304 email industry@hcbc.ca

Time for a Trail Ride!

Blazing a trail? Trail markers are once again available to clubs who maintain trails in their area. Contact recreation@HCBC.ca to order. [View a sample](#) on the Trails page of the HCBC website under Resources.

The bugs have been worked out of the Google Earth map on the HCBC trails database, so check out your local area on the Trails map at www.hcbc.ca/recreation/trails . We need input from trail users to keep the database a meaningful resource for recreational riders. There are descriptions, maps and driving directions for almost 125 trails, or parks with equestrian trails throughout B.C. If you find any inaccuracies in the database, or just want to add some comments about your own experiences on a trail, there is a form for you to post direct to the database. You can also post trail information, start a discussion, ask questions or seek ride companions on the Trails forum, or e-mail your comments to the HC office at recreation@HCBC.ca.

The new edition of the Road Safety Handbook for Equestrians is now available. Find out ways to keep you and your horse safe when you find yourselves sharing the road with cars and trucks. You can [view or download a copy](#) from the Recreation page on the HCBC website, or order hard copies for your club by contacting the HC Recreation Coordinator, Ruth Donald, at recreation@HCBC.ca or by telephone at 604-856-4304 or 1-800-345-8055.

For users of Campbell Valley Park Trails, please be sure to use only the designated trails for horses. The GVRD has noted that many of the Hiking trails are being used by horseback riders. Be careful to use this park as it was intended or we all risk losing the trails. We are all aware that all user groups do not follow all of the rules either, but that is not a good reason to break the rules ourselves.

West Nile Alert

There have been three confirmed cases of West Nile Virus in British Columbia, Two cases in the interior and one in south Aldergrove. All three cases were in previously unvaccinated horses. Horse owners are reminded this is a serious viral disease which can cause a variety of clinical signs most significantly neurological symptoms. Once symptoms are noticed it is too late for the vaccine to be effective and there is no specific treatment available to kill the virus in the brain, only supportive treatment to reduce the fever and keep the horse alive. Unfortunately any neurological damage may leave the horse with an unsteady gait making it unsafe to ride. If the horse goes down it may never get back on to its feet and have to be euthanized. Vaccination is the only way to protect your horse against this potentially deadly disease.

The available vaccines are safe and effective. The new Prevenile vaccine can be given to previously unvaccinated horses as a single dose without a booster. It is recommended that unvaccinated horses be immediately vaccinated and those horses not vaccinated within the last twelve months receive a booster.

For more information please contact your veterinarian. Readers should note that West Nile is not transmissible from horse to human or vice versa. Mosquito's are the common source of the spread of infection. In order to lessen the chance of West Nile stable managers should be sure to minimize the habitats for mosquitoes. HCBC has a brochure you can download from our website with more information on how to minimize mosquitoes at your barn.

Out & About with Horse Council BC

Our next venue for the HCBC booth will be the Mane Event in Chilliwack, October 23 to 25th. Please drop by and say hello, we enjoy meeting our membership. If you are an EC Certified Coach or Instructor, definitely come by and introduce yourself, there are still a few Coaches mugs available!

BC's Best... Celebrating Equine Achievements

The nominations are in for HCBC's Annual Awards and the Nomination Committee has their work cut out for them with so many deserving nominations to choose from.

Members are again invited to mark November 21st on their calendars, as this event will be well worth attending. If you have something you would like to donate to the silent auction, please contact Shawn at reception@hcbc.ca.

For ticket information, contact the office at 604-856-4303 or toll free 1-800-355-8055.