

Master Equine Program

By Forrest Connelly

With Stephens County such beautiful landscape and plenty of countryside, owning a horse may be just what the doctor ordered during these times of stress and economic uncertainty (above and beyond the cost of owning a horse). While it can be expensive the benefits can be numerous.

First of all horses “can” be a great source of mental stress relief. It is a chance to get away from your typical daily activities. Working around horses is also bound to keep you in shape. You get a physical workout from lifting hay bales, mucking stalls, pushing wheel barrows, riding and other activities.

Like any type of animal raising being it dogs, show animals such as steers, heifers, hogs or goats, caring for a horse is a character builder. It teaches responsibility, sportsmanship, patience, commitment, confidence and self-esteem. All these qualities is why it is perfect young people. Sometimes during teen years owning a horse can keep a young adult ‘grounded”, in the sometimes influential years of youth.

Owning a horse or purchasing one for the first time is not something to be taken lightly. Even if you have been a horse owner for quite some time there is always something new to learned. That is why the local Extension offices in our area are putting on a “Master Equine” training. It is a six week course that begins on Tuesday, Feb. 1st and is held each Tuesday, through March 8. Topics include, Industry Overview, Horse Husbandry & Nutrition, Horse facilities and design, Horse health, First aid, Forages, soil quality, Equine liability and legal issues, Budgets and conducting a small business plan for equine enterprises.

The course will be held at the Aquatic Center in Clarkesville, and is being co-sponsored by Stephens, Habersham, Banks and Franklin County Extension, Soil and Water and NRCS. The course is \$125, which includes study materials, CD, meals and cap. For more information contact me at Stephens County Extension at 706-779-5501.