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## **2014 MERA/Manitoba 4-H Young Horse Development Project Presentations Highly Successful**

(September 11, 2014 – Brandon, MB) --- The seventeenth annual presentations of the Manitoba 4-H Young Horse Development Project (YHDP) were held September 1, 2014 at the Westoba Agricultural Centre of Excellence, in Brandon, Manitoba. The project provides a venue for senior 4-H members to demonstrate their knowledge gained through the 4-H Equine Program, as well as to showcase the stock being bred and raised on Manitoba's equine ranches.

Each year, interested senior 4-H members (14 years of age by January 1 of the current year) apply to the YHD Project's Advisory Committee. Upon selection, members are given a list of participating Manitoba Equine Ranching Association (MERA) and Saskatchewan Equine Ranching Association (SERA) ranchers from whom they may purchase a weanling. Prices are pre-set and ranchers receive half of the purchase price; the balance is placed in that year's Project Enhancement Fund.

The YHD Project involves a two-year commitment, and teaches 4-H members valuable life skills about taking responsibility, setting goals, and applying their knowledge gained. Members raise and train their horses with the objective of presenting them as a yearling "in hand", and as a two-year-old "under saddle". Members receive payouts through their yearling presentations (1/3 of the Enhancement Fund) and through their two-year-old presentations (the remaining 2/3 of the fund); completing their project books; and by adhering to the rules and regulations. Formal placings for the presentations are irrelevant. Members receive an Enhancement Fund payout based on their individual efforts so that the experience of their presentation will be self-achieving.

In 2014, four 4-H members exhibited their yearlings, all Quarter Horses, "in hand". They were evaluated on the elements of basic showmanship skills, conditioning of the horses, and their abilities to teach their horses to work on a longe line and to load into a trailer. Scores ranged from 195 points to 229.5 points, out of 260 possible points. The members earned a share of the \$525.00 in the 2013 Enhancement Fund. As a group, they accumulated 863 points, averaging 215.75 each, and will be paid \$0.61/point, based on their individual scores. Each yearling presenter received a copy of their evaluation, a tri-coloured neck banner, a Horse Industry Handbook – A Guide to Education, Care and Management, published by the American Youth Horse Council, and an EQUUS publication, "The Dictionary of the Horse", sponsored by the North American Equine Ranching Information Council (NAERIC).

### 2014 Yearling Presentations (in order of appearance):

<b>4-H Club:</b>	<b>4-H Member:</b>	<b>Horse's Name:</b>	<b>Participating Ranchers:</b>
<i>Portage 4-H Canter Club</i>	Michelle McCuaig	<i>SM Guinness Wildcat</i>	Kirk & Gail Bridgeman Bridgeman Land & Livestock Rapid City, MB
<i>Ethelbert 4-H Club</i>	Lisa Coffey	<i>Sea My Assets</i>	Kevin & Julie Bridgeman K & J Bridgeman Binscarth, MB
<i>Interlake Trail Blazers</i>	Will Mantik	<i>Fame Is Oh So Sweet</i>	Kelly & Ruby Stuart K & R Stuart Eriksdale, MB
<i>Interlake Trail Blazers</i>	Amber Hebert	<i>Finch's Flashy Jack</i>	Kirk & Gail Bridgeman Bridgeman Land & Livestock Rapid City, MB

Will Mantik of Ashern, Manitoba was a first time presenter with his yearling filly, *Fame Is Oh So Sweet*, bred by K and R Stuart. Will, 15, is a grade 10 student at Ashern Central School who said, "In the future I may decide to become a veterinarian, but if not, I want to do something involved with horses." Mantik has been riding since he was a two-year-old himself, "My Mom was always around horses. Besides me, my brother and sister also ride. We live on a farm and have 10-11 horses. I have one other horse myself which is six-years-old. I chose this filly after looking at weanlings at two different equine ranches. I chose her out of at least 10 others because I wanted a black filly and I liked her white socks. I really like how good she acts and how she learns so quickly. I'll be bringing her back as a two-year-old and hope she'll turn out to be a pleasure horse I can show and ride at the all-breed shows and local area fairs in the future."

Equine Ranchers, Kelly and Ruby Stuart of Eriksdale, Manitoba have owned and operated K & R Stuart, for more than 35 years. Ruby said, "We are strictly horse breeders raising mostly Quarter Horses and a few Paint Horses. Our herd consists of approximately 65 Quarter Horse mares and 10 Paint mares, plus 6 stallions. We have also raised three daughters, Wendy, Theresa and Megan who have helped out over the years, but now are out on their own. We have participated in the YHD Program since the very first year, because we have been involved with 4-H forever. We've been members, leaders, served on the 4-H regional and provincial committees and we know the value of their programs. We feel this YHDP program offers an excellent way to get started with training a young horse. We teach the 4-H members who have chosen our weanlings how to halter break and how to build on what you have done with that horse the day before. In our opinion, this program offers a good structural guide on how to train, it evaluates how the members are doing, and the members receive some reward from the process of evaluation. We are pleased that three weanlings previously chosen by 4-H members from our breeding program were presented at this year's event. One was presented as a yearling and two others were presented as two-year-olds."

Evaluator, Bev McLeod of Brandon, Manitoba advised the yearling presenters, "Make sure you line your horses up with the evaluator so that he/she can see your horses' legs and how they travel, and your show halters could have been fitted tighter to your horses' heads. The yearlings you presented were all well fitted, and most loaded well into the stock trailer. They all longed well and you paid appropriate attention to safety practices. I was impressed with how far you have come with your young horses."

Five 4-H members presented their two-year-olds, all Quarter Horses “under saddle”. Each horse and rider was scored based on their individual performance over a predetermined horsemanship pattern. Scores ranged from 182.5 points to 242 points out of a possible 270 points. The members earned a share of the \$1,166.67 remaining in the 2012 Enhancement Fund. As a group, they accumulated 1025.5 points, averaging 205.1 each, and will be paid \$1.14/point based on their individual scores. Each member received a copy of their evaluation, a tri-coloured neck banner, a trophy horse cooler, and a copy of the EQUUS publication “The Dictionary of the Horse”, sponsored by NAERIC.

**2014 Two-year-olds Under Saddle Presentations (in order of appearance):**

<b>4-H Club:</b>	<b>4-H Member:</b>	<b>Horse’s Name:</b>	<b>Participating Ranchers:</b>
<i>Happy Rock Horseshoes –H Club</i>	Karleigh Lewis	<i>Co Dry Dock Fritzzy</i>	Brent & Ginny Collins Winchester Stock Farms, Austin, MB
<i>Austin Blazing Saddles &amp; Beef Club</i>	Esther Funk	<i>Smart Leo Sue</i>	Kirk & Gail Bridgeman Bridgeman Land & Livestock Rapid City, MB
<i>Interlake Trail Blazers</i>	Kaelyn Dreger	<i>Dee Irons Hot</i>	Kelly & Ruby Stuart K & R Stuart Eriksdale, MB
<i>Interlake Trail Blazers</i>	Sara Meisner	<i>Skip The Blue Boy</i>	Kelly & Ruby Stuart K & R Stuart Eriksdale, MB
<i>Austin Blazing Saddles</i>	Destiny Sawatzky	<i>Co Shining Lucky</i>	Brent & Ginny Collins Winchester Stock Farms Austin, MB

Esther Funk of MacGregor, Manitoba, presented her two-year-old mare *Smart Leo Sue* bred by Bridgeman Land and Livestock Ltd. Funk, 20, is a pre-nursing student at Brandon University. She said, “I hope to get into nursing and eventually become a certified diabetic educator.” Funk visited three equine ranches before choosing her filly from the Bridgemans. “I chose her based on her conformation and barrel racing bloodlines. I liked her because she looked pretty with her dun colour, and I was impressed with the conformation of her sire and dam. I did not grow up riding horses. My Dad bought our first horse, a wild filly, when I was 12 when my sister got into horses. It looked like fun, but I hated it. When I was 17, my parents decided to buy me an older horse and she was wonderful. That mare taught me what I know now and she was an inspiration for learning to train young horses. This filly is the first horse I’ve trained from scratch. I enjoyed presenting her as a yearling at this event in 2013. My future plan for her is to be able to do some trail riding and barrel race her at some local shows and fairs.”

Kirk and Gail Bridgeman, who own and operate Bridgeman Land & Livestock Ltd., at Rapid City, Manitoba, have been equine ranchers for 33 years. Kirk and Gail are second generation equine ranchers, as Kirk’s late parents, Ken and Janie Bridgeman were pioneers in business. Gail said, “We farm about 2,200 acres of grain, hay and pasture and have some commercial cattle. Our breeding operation consists of approximately 150 horses, of which nine are stallions. Quarter Horses make up 75% and Appaloosas make up 25% of our herd. Our daughter, Kristy helped us in the business before she married, and now she and her husband also raise horses, but are not equine ranchers. We have been offering weanlings to 4-H members in the YHD program since the beginning. We feel it’s a good opportunity to get youth involved in the horse industry

by owning a good colt and raising and training it, providing an excellent education for them. We've seen a number of these 4-H members go forward with their YHDP horses into 4-H shows, fairs and rodeos." Two yearlings and one two-year-old presented at this year's event, were from the Bridgeman's breeding program.

Evaluator, Bev McLeod advised the two-year-old presenters, "You need to work on your sidepass manoeuvres to ensure your horses' front legs cross over each other. When crossing the poles make sure you don't come at the obstacles from an angle, come to the poles with your horses lined up straight at the obstacles to help avoid ticking the poles. To ensure your horses take the correct leads when cantering, bend your horses' heads slightly to the inside arc, so you can just see the inside eye. When presenting your horses for conformation evaluation, be sure your horses' feet are squared up underneath them, so they look their best. You have all done a great job, you've put a nice foundation on them so far, and you will have some nice horses to ride in the future."

Meghan Sprung, 4-H & Youth Specialist, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Brandon, Manitoba said, "We have a total of 2,317 Manitoba 4-H members in 2013-14 and 449 equine projects were undertaken. The YHD Project's Working Committee manages enrollment in the project, provides the project materials, and directly administers the project. The project provides an opportunity for members to establish relations with Manitoba and Saskatchewan equine ranchers and to own and develop a young horse. The members gain advanced skills in selecting, feeding and handling horses, and an increased awareness of the equine industry."

Lynn Coffey, Chairperson of the YHD Project's Advisory Committee said, "There are five senior 4-H members approved to select weanlings in 2014. We have a commitment from MERA and SERA ranchers and NAERIC to continue this program through to the 2016 'under saddle' presentations. We are grateful to the Manitoba 4-H Council for sponsoring the fees to cover our project evaluator. We also appreciate the ongoing support of the individual NAERIC-member equine ranchers who offer their weanlings, and NAERIC for sponsoring the costs of awards, facilities – including the arena and stabling, post-event press releases and colour photographs for the members and ranchers."

The YHD Project's Advisory Committee consists of: Lynn Coffey, Ethelbert; Nancy Lewis, Gladstone; Ken Lewis, Gladstone; and Marsha Dudar, Ethelbert.

For more information regarding the 4-H Young Horse Development Project, and to view photographs of all the 2014 4-H members with their horses visit: [www.naeric.org](http://www.naeric.org).

#### About NAERIC

NAERIC is a non-profit association of equine ranchers that serves its members, the horse industry and general public as an agribusiness resource by providing the latest information and research on all aspects of the equine ranching industry – including equine ranch management, horse care, breeding practices and innovative marketing programs. For complete information, visit [www.naeric.org](http://www.naeric.org)

#1. Group photograph of yearling presenters: (l to r) Amber Hiebert, Michelle McCuaig, Lisa Coffey, and Will Mantik, with evaluator Bev McLeod

#2. Group photograph of two-year-old presenters: (l to r): Destiny Sawatzky, Esther Funk, Kaelyn Dreger, Sara Meisner, and Karleigh Lewis with evaluator Bev McLeod

#3. Photo of Will Mantik of Ashern, with his yearling filly *Fame Is Oh So Sweet*

#4. Photo of Esther Funk of MacGregor, with her two-year-old mare *Smart Leo Sue*