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Groundbreaking ceremony for Equine Reproduction Facilities at UK's Maine Chance Equine Campus recognized donors

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Oct. 28, 2009) – A groundbreaking ceremony for University of Kentucky Equine Reproduction Facilities was held Oct. 26 at UK's Maine Chance Equine Campus. The ceremony recognized supporters who generously donated money to fund the remodeling of facilities for equine reproduction research by experts at the Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center.

The remodeled facilities will help develop the best equine reproductive research program in the country and give the Gluck Equine Research Center the opportunity to match the signature equine industry it serves. The remodeled facilities will be used for the management of mares and stallions and laboratory facilities will be constructed for handling semen, embryos and reproductive tissues.

Lexington is the epicenter of the state's signature equine industry and as such reproductive health is of top concern. Statistics show the importance of equine reproduction research at UK and the significance of equine breeding in the area. In 2008, 41 percent of all Thoroughbred mares bred in North America were bred in Kentucky and 608 Quarter Horse stallions covered more than 10,990 mares. In 2007, 30 Standardbred stallions covered or inseminated 1,543 mares and 752 foals were registered. Each year, the American Saddlebred Horse Association reports about 1,050 mares are bred in Kentucky.

"This facility augments a program that is of highest significance to a region which represents the equine reproduction capital of the world," said Nancy Cox, associate dean for research of UK's College of Agriculture, Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station director and administrative leader for the Equine Initiative. "The college appreciates the advice from our stakeholders to make a shared investment in reproduction research. We are grateful to those who showed their confidence in us through investments in this facility."

Major donors who have supported the remodeling of the facilities are: Ashford Stud, Darley USA, Flaxman Holdings Limited, Hagyard Equine Medical Institute (Drs. Walter W. Zent, William D. Fishback Jr., Kevin B. Pfister, Stuart E. Brown II, Ed Fallon, Luke Fallon and Kristina Lu),

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Kentucky Thoroughbred Association/Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders (KTA/KTOB), Lane's End, Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital (Drs. Tom Riddle and Peter Morresey), Shadwell Farm, Shawnee Farm, Dr. Ed Squires and Dr. Mats Troedsson.

Funds donated by stakeholders were matched through UK's research challenge trust fund.

"The new reproductive area at UK's equine research farm includes state-of-the-art mare and stallion facilities with modern laboratories to study reproductive problems in horses," said Troedsson, chair of the Department of Veterinary Science and director of the Gluck Equine Research Center. "The facilities will allow researchers at the Gluck Equine Research Center and the Department of Veterinary Science to conduct research on reproductive diseases in mares and stallions, and to respond to emerging problems that are presented to the breeding industry in Kentucky and elsewhere.

"The facilities are the result of generous support from the equine and veterinary communities in central Kentucky," Troedsson said. "It is a great example of how the horse community and the university can work together with a common goal to further our knowledge in equine veterinary science. We are very thankful and excited about the enthusiastic support this project received."

"The mare and stallion facilities, when finished, will provide researchers with laboratories and barns to conduct cutting-edge studies on fertility issues in both stallions and mares," said Squires, executive director of the Gluck Equine Research Foundation and director of advancement and industry relations.

Areas of reproductive health research at the Gluck Equine Research Center include causes, diagnosis and treatment of embryonic and fetal loss in mares; early embryonic development; uterine infection; nutritional affects on reproduction; stallion behavior; diagnosis and treatment of fertility problems in stallions; and fescue toxicosis.

Major equine research contributions from the reproductive health group at the Gluck Equine Research Center include demonstrating the usefulness of artificial lights and progesterone/estradiol treatments for hastening the onset of the breeding season and as part of the team to perform the definitive experiments identifying the cause of Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome (MRLS).

For more information about the Gluck Equine Research Center, visit www.ca.uky.edu/gluck.

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Writer: Jenny Blandford

UK College of Agriculture, through its land-grant mission, reaches across the commonwealth with teaching, research and extension to enhance the lives of Kentuckians.