

## HORSE PALOOZA

This past summer Whispery Pines Percherons teamed up with the Percheron Horse Association of America Education and Charitable Fund to put on an event called Horse Palooza at the Ashtabula County Ohio Fairgrounds. It was a three-day event full of fun and learning that took a lot of planning.

Sam and I worked very hard on this for a year with 4-H advisors and could not be prouder of all our work because Horse Palooza 2022 was a tremendous hit! During the weekend, one day was especially put aside for everything draft. We started by learning about harnessing and basic draft horsemanship. Then went on to the Drive-a -Draft Clinic. No matter what age or experience level, we worked with over 50 children ground-driving our horses one on one. We used our younger horses for this to make sure that the students got the feel of having to actually drive the horse.

During the weekend, all the students watched presentations on nutrition and dentistry and when all was said and done, also discussed were the many potential careers with horses that you can have.

Dr. Melissa Milligan of Equine Specialty Hospital, Burton, Ohio, is a veterinary surgeon with a particular interest in gastric issues. She is an excellent example of pursuing a career that includes her love for horses. During her presentation, Dr. Milligan scoped horses for ulcers. Yes, horses do get ulcers.

We had different horses that were scoped and got to watch the process on a projector screen. There are three different stages of ulcers that are measured by severity. It is so important to treat ulcers and many times people do not even know their horse is having a problem. The students learned some signs to watch for such as a change to an irritable personality, tender to the girth area, biting at the stomach, and being prone to colic. These are some warning signs that your horse might have ulcers. All the students got to see what the three stages of ulcers looked like. This was certainly a weekend filled with knowledge to take back home.

Liberty Training sessions on Friday and Saturday morning gave the students an introduction to natural horsemanship. Some of these sessions were demonstrations but two hours were spent working one on one with four advanced students and their own horse. Luke Gingerich demonstrated basic on-the-ground level training with his final performance demonstrating some magnificent riding without reins. Pleasure and gaming shows, tack auctions, a rigatoni dinner and catching up with old friends were a part of the weekend. Seeing world class liberty trainer, Luke Gingerich, perform, plus being able to work one on one with over fifty 4-H students was just the tip of the iceberg for our exciting weekend. Many thanks to our sponsor the PHAoA Education and Charitable Fund for making our participation possible.

Submitted by Kellie & Sam Rettinger