



Dr. Horohov Addresses FFA Group

For several years, Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation and the American Association of Equine Practitioners Foundation have co-sponsored a speaker program at the FFA Convention. Each year, a speaker is selected for invitation to address sessions of that large association of young students interested in agricultural subjects. This year the invited speaker was Dr. David Horohov of the University of Kentucky, a distinguished researcher who has been frequently funded by Grayson and who has served on our Research Advisory Committee.

• What appealed to you about addressing the FFA group?

I looked forward to the opportunity to talk to some young people about the opportunities and advantages of pursuing a career in equine medicine and research. While we typically focus our attention on undergrads and those near graduating, it is important that we speak to students at the beginning of their educational process so that they may be made aware of the opportunities out there.

• About how many students attended your session?

The first session had around 100 students and some adults. The second session was filled to capacity, probably close to 200 people.

• How would you characterize them as to age and gender?

The vast majority were female (>90%). From those I talked to they appeared to include all four years of high school, freshman to seniors.

• What were the key messages of your presentation?

My goal was to make them aware of the opportunities at various levels for becoming involved in equine research.

• What types of questions were you asked by the FFA members?

They ranged from information regarding degree programs at UK, which major I thought would be best for them to pursue, and a few specific questions about research projects I talked about.

• What do you think the impact of the Grayson Foundation and AAEP Foundation partnering to make presentations to the FFA might mean for the future?

I think this effort can have a dramatic impact. The sooner we can get students to start thinking about a career in equine medicine and research the better. Programs like this one reach a group of young people that we don't normally get much of a chance to interact with at this stage of their lives. I think it is very important that we make them aware of what type of research is being done and how it benefits the horse. This not only leads to a better appreciation of our efforts, but also informs them of career opportunities that they might not have otherwise considered.

• Looking back at your young days, do you think an opportunity such as this was important to your career decisions and, if not, would it have been if available.?

I was very fortunate to attend a high school that had a strong biology program and teachers who were very interested in research. That experience certainly piqued my interest in a career in science. I don't think that same opportunity exists today. As such, we need to create new opportunities to reach those students with an interest in science and find ways to encourage them. The FFA certainly provides an opportunity to reach out to those students. Perhaps other programs are also in place to reach kids outside of that organization.

Thanks for the opportunity, I enjoyed it.