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AWARDS REFLECT DIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN EQUINE COMMUNITY

Three individuals and an agricultural organization were the recipients of the 2010 Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS) and the Saskatchewan Horse Federation (SHF) Awards of Distinction for Equine Welfare.

"The awards not only demonstrate appreciation to the recipients, but also remind everyone about the importance of responsible members providing exceptional service to the care of the animals," SHF Executive Director Mae Smith noted.

Taryn Holtby, a second year Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) student from Marshall, received the Equine Welfare Young Steward of the Future Award of Distinction. This award recognizes a young person between the ages of 13 and 25 who has shown, through practices as a horse owner or interaction with others, the importance of commitment to responsible equine care.

A dedicated horse owner since she was eight years old when she joined 4H; Taryn volunteered with 'Big Brothers Big Sisters' to teach children about horses while attending high school. During her first year at the WCVM, she volunteered to work on a farm where horses were recuperating from injury; as she fulfills her lifelong dream of becoming a veterinarian specializing in equine medicine.

The Yorkton Exhibition Association (YEA) received the Equine Welfare Innovation Award of Distinction, which recognizes a person or company who has developed a new process, product or source of knowledge that has made a significant impact on the improvement of the welfare of horses in Saskatchewan.

The YEA, through its directors, staff and dedicated volunteers, is credited with reviving harness racing in the province by making its facilities available to the standardbred racing fraternity in 2006. Recognized in 2007 by Standardbred Canada as the only racing track outside of Ontario to receive sponsorship and promotion, the YEA has since expanded its facilities, making it a hub of horse activities.

The Equine Welfare Award of Distinction for Excellence in Communications recognizes a person who has taken an active role in effectively conveying equine welfare issues and raising awareness of equine welfare. The award was presented to MLA for Lloydminster Tim McMillan for his part in protecting the herd of wild ponies living in the Bronson Forest, northeast of Lloydminster along the Alberta border.

Tim introduced Private Member's Bill 606 in 2005 that sought to make it illegal to "willfully molest, interfere with, hurt, capture, or kill" the ponies. Tim's unwavering commitment to the ponies finally saw the Bill become law in 2009.

Doug Howe, a familiar name among thoroughbred owners and trainers, was awarded the Equine Welfare Award of Distinction for Excellence in Leadership. His leadership in the

Saskatchewan thoroughbred racing and breeding community, his involvement with Canadian Western Agribition and his innovative approach to horse management combine to demonstrate exceptional leadership qualities.

"The annual Equine Awards of Distinction is one of many ways FACS collaborates to ensure responsible animal care remains in the forefront," FACS Executive Director Adele Buettner said.

The awards were presented at the 2010 SHF annual banquet, which was held on March 12, 2010 in Regina.

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