

Three Months in America – Could it be You?

If you are a UK student just beginning your second or final year as an undergraduate, why not apply for the incredible opportunity of a three-month internship in the USA?

Virginia Tech is offering an incredible opportunity for a student to spend up to three months between May and September 2017 at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension Center (MAREC). The lucky student will be selected via a research competition which the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) administers on MAREC's behalf.

Students are asked to submit a 3,000-word paper focusing upon the advancement of the horse sector in the UK, or the improvement of the health and welfare of equines. Shortlisted students will be invited to a final interview day with Professor Graham Suggett and Dr Georgina Crossman.

The lucky winner will go to Virginia Tech and:

- Engage in active research related to equine nutrition, exercise physiology, genetics, reproduction and health;
- Engage and assist with outreach education programs for the equine industry;
- Attend with horse shows;
- Travel to regional breeding farms and events; and
- Network with leading owners, riders and trainers.

Further details of eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found at www.befred.org.

Michelle Hand, one of the two 2016 competition winners, was a final year student studying a BSc Hons in Equine Science at Reaseheath College at the time she applied for the competition. She was selected on the basis of her paper discussing overpopulation and indiscriminate breeding in the UK, along with her successful interview at the BEF headquarters at Abbey Park in Warwickshire and online interview with those from the MAREC in the USA.

Says Michelle: “the internship was a fantastic opportunity to explore multiple routes of progression in the equine industry and I am currently taking a gap year to consider the wide range of career routes now available. This summer has been filled with new experiences, many of which were empowering as a student; encouraging me to look into postgraduate courses that I had previously discounted due to low self-confidence. The entire experience was incredibly exciting and one that will undoubtedly improve my ability to compete with other candidates for jobs and further study. I'm so thankful that I had this opportunity, and to do so alongside such wonderful people, in such a beautiful part of the world. It was truly an amazing summer and one that I will never forget”.

The second of the two winners, Zoe Greenwood, also a BSc Equine Science student at Reaseheath submitted her application titled ‘How Improved Knowledge of Equine Helminths and their Resistance Could Improve the Health and Welfare of Juvenile Horses’.

Says Zoe: “being on the internship was the greatest experience of my life, it was even better getting to go with my close friend Michelle. I have gained so many skills that will enhance my CV for the future such as the practical skills needed for Master’s and PhD research projects. It has given me food for thought in terms of what I might want to do in the future because of the varying scientific and practical experience I have gained. It not only gave me these advantages but it also gave me much more confidence as a person through travelling to another country by myself and meeting new people. Overall, I got to see some fantastic sights at the same time as learning and participating in really fascinating research projects, this is something I will always remember and am extremely thankful for”.

To find out more about the 2017 Internship, and to apply, visit the British Equestrian Federation’s Researching Equines Database (BEFRED) at www.befred.org.

Photographs

BEF MAREC 2016 1 ‘Balencia VT’ and ‘Augustus VT’ with Katie DeLano (far left), Katie Kaufman (x1 from left), Zoe Greenwood (x1 from right) and Michelle Hand (right). Picture courtesy of Dr Bridgett McIntosh.

BEF MAREC 2016 2 Group photo outside the senate building: eight of the nine summer interns, two grad students and Dr Bridgett McIntosh (centre). Picture credit unknown.

BEF MAREC 2016 3 Visiting Shenandoah National Park. Picture credit unknown.

Further information

Student supervisor Dr Bridgett McIntosh is the Equine Extension Specialist for Virginia Tech and is headquartered at the MARE Center in Middleburg, VA. While she works in many areas of equine research and education, her main focus is on pasture and grazing management to improve horse health and environmental stewardship. Bridgett received her PhD (2006) in Animal Science with a concentration in equine nutrition from Virginia Tech. She was awarded the John Lee Pratt Fellowship in Animal Nutrition to study carbohydrate profiles in feeds and forages, and the avoidance of equine laminitis.

Virginia Tech www.vt.edu MAREC www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/middleburg

The British Equestrian Federation seeks to improve the links between research establishments, academic establishments and the equestrian industry www.bef.co.uk/Detail.aspx?page=Equine-Research

BEF’s Researching Equines Database, BEFRED www.befred.org

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