



The University of Vermont

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\$450,000 Manton Foundation Grant Helps Pave a New Future for the Historic UVM Morgan Horse Farm

The Manton Foundation has awarded \$450,000 to the University of Vermont to fund essential renovations at the UVM Morgan Horse Farm, the University's historic, 200-acre breeding farm, teaching facility and tourist destination in Weybridge, VT.

Recognized on the National Register of Historic Places, the farm has been an official breeding site for the Morgan horse, Vermont's official state animal, since 1878 and is believed to be the oldest, continuous Morgan horse breeding program in the world. Today, the facilities house approximately 30 horses, student apprentices, a breeding lab, as well as a public exhibit area and gift shop.

"What makes the farm unique is our dual mission of undergraduate teaching and public education, while also upholding the historical significance of the farm," said Thomas Vogelmann, dean of the UVM College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "Improving our infrastructure is the first step to enable expanded educational opportunities and improve the tourist experience. We are grateful to the Manton Foundation for this catalytic investment."

The farm provides invaluable hands-on learning opportunities for students of all ages, as well as farm apprentices who spend 12-months fully immersed in the day-to-day operations of the farm working alongside faculty and staff. Each year, approximately 10,000 visitors arrive by bike, bus or automobile to see the horses, tour the farm and learn about the historic site.

The new funding will support facility upgrades in the iconic, three-story main barn, which houses the majority of the horses for public viewing, an indoor arena, a classroom, historical exhibit and gift shop. The focal point of the farm, the towering Victorian-style barn totals 14,530 square feet with several distinctive features, including a 19th-century cupola and weather vane on the center of the roof.

The renovations are part of a three-phased approach to renovating and restoring the farm's facilities and grounds, and represent the latest development in a new chapter unfolding in the farm's 140-year history.

Kim Demars was named farm manager in 2017 after the retirement of longtime director Steve Davis '72. Together with equine specialist Sarah Fauver '16 and farm operations coordinator Margot Smithson, the team is focused on continuing the farm's legacy and building a strategic plan for the future.

"It's an honor to be spearheading the farm during this transformative time," said Demars. "We have some big ideas and are excited to put them in motion."

In collaboration with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the University launched a strategic action plan process for the UVM Morgan Horse Farm in April 2018, which included more than 40 volunteers, staff and MHF advisory board members. Throughout the spring and summer, participant working groups met to formulate action plans that will serve as a living document to guide investments and decision-making.

A three-year capital campaign is currently underway to boost the principal of existing endowments, raise funds for one-time capital expenses and engage loyal supporters to invest in this American treasure.

About the UVM Morgan Horse Farm

The University of Vermont Morgan Horse Farm has been a proud steward of the U.S. Government Morgan Horse bloodline since 1951, when the United States Department of Agriculture first bestowed the farm to the State of Vermont, who in turn entrusted it to the University. Since then, with the University as its caretaker, the farm has successfully raised over 850 UVM Morgans, educated over 220 student apprentices and welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Weybridge campus. The farm is open to the public for tours from May to October each year and is a favorite destination of several regional touring companies.

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