



Ohio State University Extension
REINS
(REGIONAL EQUINE INFORMATION NETWORK SYSTEM)
OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES¹

PROGRAM VISION

These values are imperative to our success:

Education is the focus of everything done within the equine program that enables individuals to unlock their potential through credible:

- quality educational experiences that stimulate learning
- relationships that encourage people to help themselves and others

Diversity strengthens the ability of individuals involved in the horse industry through change by:

- developing positive values among participants in today's changing industry
- developing and delivering quality educational programs emphasizing the most recent research proven technological advancements
- providing enrichment opportunities to clientele regardless of breed affiliation, expertise, age or industry involvement

Volunteerism is fundamental to:

- delivering quality programs
- provide assistance in maintaining a growing program
- providing guidance and leadership developing partnerships

Partnerships are essential in a successful program for:

- resource development
- program innovation
- creative delivery capabilities
- access to research-based knowledge

PROGRAM MISSION

The REINS Program creates a supportive educational environment to enable individuals to reach their greatest potential in the horse industry. To achieve this mission, and sustain the growth of the horse industry, we will:

- educate all individuals interested in Equine through regional REINS organizations with county and regional Extension educator guidance.
- provide appropriate educational experiences relative to issues impacting the industry
- nurture multi-disciplinary efforts between the Ohio horse industry and Ohio State University Extension to address new and changing issues
- disseminate research-based, scientific information applicable to industry need
- strengthen external partnerships for programming and funding
- foster leadership and volunteerism in adults
- establish a cohesive team of REINS volunteers and Extension professionals dedicated to achieving these common goals

Achievement of this mission will result in competent leaders and continued horse industry growth.

¹ Adapted from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service Operational Guidelines

THE "REINS" VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The REINS, Regional Equine Information Network System, Program was originally established as a pilot program of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service to assist in the education and development of the North Carolina Horse Industry, and has been adapted to meet the needs of the Ohio State University Extension and Ohio Horse Industry. The program is coordinated by the Extension Equine Specialist and participating county extension professionals. Through guidance of the coordinating extension professional, horse owners in a multi-county area are organized into a regional horse education organization. The regional organizations link together the educational efforts of the Ohio State University Extension and the promotional efforts of the Ohio Horse Industry with agribusiness contacts.

The regional horse organization also:

- develops and distributes educational newsletters
- assists in development of agribusiness supported, on-farm demonstrations
- provides resource leaders for 4-H
- administers funding of regional educational programs
- collects impact data on extension educational programs
- promotes the horse industry

Several producers from each participating county will be identified to receive specialized training as a REINS volunteer. Extension professionals from The Ohio State University and faculty members from the College of Veterinary Medicine will provide training on horse management topics. Volunteers will receive 16 hours of training on horse management and science topics, teaching technique and program planning. Upon completion of the training, participants who successfully complete an exam will:

- assist county extension agents in the development of educational horse materials, programs and on-farm demonstrations
- serve as horse industry contact within their county
- assist in the coordination of the regional horse organization

HOW DOES THE REINS PROGRAM BENEFIT VOLUNTEERS?

Through initial training programs and subsequent advanced REINS volunteer training sessions and workshops, REINS volunteers will become knowledgeable equine professionals. As part of their training, they will receive many publications and related materials. They will be able to attend workshops around the state as well as short courses and clinics. Through special seminars, newsletters and workshops, REINS volunteers are kept current on horse management information and technology. They will work with other volunteers and extension professionals to develop a regional horse organization. Finally, they will meet and network with many people who share their interest in the horse industry and desire to help others. Volunteer hours are flexible depending on interest and time available.

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

REINS volunteers are expected to share their knowledge gained in the training sessions with other horse enthusiasts in the community. They can also do this by participating in a variety of ways. Every time they respond to a question, they extend the knowledge they have gained. The REINS Program offers many volunteer opportunities, or volunteers can get their own projects to benefit the community.

Specific requirements include:

- Submit an application and 3 recommendations to the Extension Equine Specialist
- Complete the course of training and demonstrate knowledge of subject matter
- Be able to communicate with public by telephone, group settings, and farm visits
- Be available to devote volunteer time monthly to the county and/or regional educators
- Have knowledge and/or interest in horse management

- Have available transportation to travel to county extension offices, meetings and farm visits
- Be willing to work cooperatively with local extension professionals, agribusinesses, horse owners and others
- Remain updated on the most recent management information and technology relevant to the horse industry

ROLE OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATING AGENT

- Coordinate the development of a REINS organization within their EERA
- Serve in an advisory role to the REINS organization
- Assist in the development and delivery of in-service REINS volunteer training sessions
- Use REINS volunteers to coordinate the development of regional educational meetings, news releases, newsletters and on-farm demonstrations
- Direct REINS volunteers in the collection of impact data for evaluation of horse educational programs

ROLE OF THE SPECIALIST

- Coordinate development of a state-wide REINS program
- Provide support training to REINS volunteers
- Provide subject matter information to Extension professionals and REINS volunteers
- Maintain a communication network between the REINS volunteers, regional coordinating agents, and county Extension professionals

POLICIES REGARDING OHIO "REINS" VOLUNTEERS

The title "Ohio REINS Volunteer" is to be used only and exclusively in the Ohio State University Extension REINS Volunteer Program in which the trained and certified REINS volunteers answer horse management questions. In addition to University training, REINS volunteers receive administrative support via participating Extension professionals. REINS volunteers are also provided Cooperative Extension Service fact sheets, newsletters and other publications, which provide resource information. REINS volunteers are expected to identify themselves only when doing unpaid, volunteer educational work in the program.

REINS volunteers should not advertise their name or their place of business in relationship with the "REINS" program. The REINS program is an Ohio State University Extension public service program providing unbiased, research-based information. Appearing as a commercial activity, having association with commercial products, or giving implied University/Cooperative Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business is forbidden. In making recommendations which include the use of chemicals (e.g. insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), feeds, health care and other commercial products, Ohio REINS volunteers are to follow published Extension recommendations. Use of other recommendations is not approved. Questions concerning commercial applications on horse management should be referred to the local Extension professional.

An "Ohio REINS Volunteer" must attend the prescribed hours of instruction and plan an examination administered by The Ohio State University Extension before becoming certified. The certification is restrictive in nature in that it is valid only when the individual is participating in the Ohio REINS Volunteer Program. If an individual ceases active participation as determined by the Regional REINS coordinating agent, then the certification as a REINS Volunteer becomes void. New certifications will be issued each year only to those individuals who make a commitment for participation in the program for the coming year. Those not continuing in the program will not be re-certified and should be aware that if they represent themselves as an "Ohio REINS Volunteer" they are violating their original commitment to The Ohio State University Extension.

The training and experience gained by participating in the Ohio REINS Program are valuable and may rightfully be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment.

Once employed, and while serving as a paid employee, or if self-employed, REINS volunteers should not display credentials or give the appearance of being a REINS volunteer at the place of business (unless the place of business is specifically designated as an educational meeting, clinic or demonstration site or location by the county Extension professional.)

Experienced REINS volunteers are likely to receive invitations to speak before groups. Gratuitous payments and reimbursements for speaking are not a concern, since most speaking activity is entirely separate from the question/answering done at Extension offices. However, it is inappropriate to seek engagements for pay while participating in an authorized Extension function or a regional REINS program. Your work is much appreciated by the The Ohio State University Extension and your local horse owners who will receive your counsel.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR FOR REINS VOLUNTEERS

Horse owners place trust in The Ohio State University Extension to provide quality leadership and care for participants in REINS programs. The opportunity to work with horse owners is a privileged position of trust that should only be, held by those who are willing to commit to the upholding behaviors that fulfill this trust. For these reasons, the following behavior guidelines are provided for volunteers working in The Ohio State University Extension REINS Program.

- Treat others in a courteous, respectful manner demonstrating behaviors appropriate for a positive role model
- Obey the laws of the locality, state and nation
- Make all reasonable efforts to assure that REINS programs are accessible to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability
- Recognize the verbal and/or physical abuse and/or neglect of individuals is unacceptable in REINS programs and report suspected abuse to the proper Cooperative Extension Service authority
- Do not participate in or condone neglect or abuse which happens outside the program to participants, and report suspected abuse to the proper authorities
- Teach horse owners to provide appropriate animal care and treat animals humanely
- Operate motor vehicles (including machines or equipment) in a safe and reliable manner and only with a valid operator's license and the legally required insurance coverage
- Do not consume alcohol or illegal substances while responsible for REIN activities
- Failure to comply with any of these guidelines may be reason for your termination as a REINS volunteer

TRAINING FOR CERTIFICATION OF REINS VOLUNTEERS

REINS Volunteers will initially receive 16 hours of training annually on specific subject matter designed to enhance their knowledge of horse management. The training sessions will stress the most recent technology and practices in horse nutrition, breeding, health care, facility design, evaluation, genetics and other pertinent topics. REINS Volunteers will also receive instruction in program development and evaluation and public relation skills. A variety of manuals, fact sheets and newsletters will be provided to support training information. The initial 16 hour required course is offered once each year and may be held at The Ohio State University or other regional educational centers. Class sessions are conducted by OSU Extension Specialists, OSU faculty members, OSU veterinarians, REINS coordinating agents, REINS volunteers, practicing veterinarians and invited speakers. Certification will be awarded upon completion of training requirements and successful completion of a final exam.

To maintain their certification, REINS Volunteers must complete a minimum of 8 hours of continuing education credits (CEU) each year. One CEU is equivalent to one hour of participation in an approved educational event (i.e., meeting, conference, school). Other related training opportunities may be available and must be approved in advance and participation verified by the REINS coordinating agent. CEUs are reported to the Extension Equine Specialist each year.