

A small step for stables became a tiny victory for their industry, their clients and future development. Throughout March, 13 Regional Stables Meetings were held in the province from as far north as Grande Prairie and as far south as Spruce Meadows (with more to come in April). Although meeting attendance was lower than expected, the information presented was highly valuable to all who attended. Touching on hot button issues like the traceability movement, equine welfare and evoking the Animal Keepers Act, the meetings were the perfect platform to discuss the concerns of horse professionals in the business.

ASI project coordinator Heather Mitchell-Matheson says of the meetings, "I found from talking to people throughout my travels that there are genuine concerns, within the equine industry as a whole, about the future success of their businesses. I think what we often see is a horse lover first and a business person second. Passions can get in the way of good business sense sometimes and it makes for all kinds of dynamics that are really damaging to the future of a borderline fragile livelihood. Even the sharing of information can be taboo, when it in fact does increase awareness, resources and understanding between horse professionals in all aspects of the profession." The answer "I think all horse enthusiasts should educate themselves about as many facets of the horse industry as they can. This creates an openness that allows us all to expand our knowledge beyond just our area or discipline of interest."

Attendees filled out a participant survey intended to provide feedback for future meetings. An individual starting a stable wrote, "glad I attended, Heather and Helen (AARD Staff) were very informed and helpful." A barn manager wrote, "found the meeting to be really informative about the new acts." A trainer said, "there is so much to know in our industry, I am surprised that more people didn't attend because the information is invaluable to our businesses". Comments from attendees indicated that the meetings are important with timely information and that more people need to be getting involved.

On that note, regional meetings are FREE and open to everyone, whether they are an ASI participating stable or not, whether they board one horse or 200 horses, have show grounds, or are a breeder or someone considering starting a stable in the future.

Visit the [Alberta Stables Initiative website](#) .

Upcoming meetings are as follows:

April 1st - Airdrie Agriculture Centre 1:00pm

April 14th - High River Agricultural Society 1:00pm

April 18th - Lethbridge, Rocky Mountain Turf Club 1:00pm

April 19th - Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede 1:00pm