

To all Horse Council BC Members:

For many years now, our Horse Council BC members have trusted the Board of Directors and staff to work with Equine Canada on your behalf. Since the 2000 membership year your HCBC membership has included membership in Equine Canada, and a portion of Horse Council BC membership fees have been paid to Equine Canada.

Many of you never realized that you have membership in Equine Canada, as you have never needed any of the services they provide. Prior to 2008, many of you who did require Equine Canada services would have struggled to get a timely response from the national office, and when you did, you likely experienced poor service, poor communication, and a lack of care for your concerns.

In 2008 the Equine Canada Board hired a new CEO, who like many of us, had negative experience with the Equine Canada office. Mr. Akaash Maharaj immediately began work to change the culture in the Equine Canada office, and over the last year has worked diligently to ensure that members can speak to staff who are courteous, considerate and knowledgeable. As part of his commitment to ensure that Equine Canada is living up to its mandate and providing full value to all members, the non sport divisions of our national organization have identified key projects which only a federally registered organization can take action on. These include:

- Creating an online information and communication strategy to advise members of all current and urgent information with regards to Government legislation, border crossing issues, disease control and information.
- Ongoing work with federal government agencies on issues such as fair and equitable taxation status including having horses "zero rated" for GST, address the need for horses to be considered livestock and accorded the same rights and privileges as other livestock as well as access to public lands for recreational riding.
- Representing Canadian horse owners to the federal government with regards to a national equine identification and information system that will be approved by government and used for all horse movement in Canada. Equine Canada will insure the rights of horse owners are protected.
- Continuing to develop equine health and welfare standards throughout Canada which include minimum standards of care, minimum standards for transportation, and work with legislators on standards for what is considered acceptable humane treatment. This work includes updating the Code of Practice for horses, which will be accomplished over the next 2 years.
- Develop National standards for equestrian trails and ensure access to the Trans Canada Trail and our National Parks for riders
- Work with the Canadian Trails Coalition to enable Provincial organizations to access the currently available federal trails funding
- Develop national standards for public riding centers and rental facilities and promotional help for lesson programs, rental centers, backcountry outfitters, etc.
- Development of a relationship with Industry Canada enabling access to funds for Domestic Market development such as apprenticeship programs for grooms, and training an equine labor

force.

Yes, Equine Canada has been primarily a Sport organization but it is evolving! The majority of its revenue is currently generated by sport related products and services, and the majority of its activities support its sport enthusiast members. Over the next 18 months, the President and CEO have committed to change this. The vast majority of our joint members are non sport riders, who need help with building and maintaining access to local trails, who would like to know if there is a major disease outbreak that could affect their horses and who care passionately that all horses are treated humanely throughout their lives. Your membership will help ensure all of this. The reality is, all these things cost money, and the sport members' fees alone cannot fund them. Horse Council BC and Equine Canada need your help. We hope you will continue to support Horse Council BC's work with Equine Canada on your behalf, and express this support with your joint membership.

Your Horse Council Board of Directors has worked hard to ensure that our ongoing affiliation with Equine Canada addresses members concerns. As we develop the Affiliation Agreement that will define and control this working relationship between our organizations, member fees will be held in trust, here in BC. As part of this Affiliation Agreement, HCBC will be the communication link to EC, and your private information will not be shared with EC at this time. We look forward to an Affiliation agreement which is of benefit to HCBC, and to you, the members.

Current member benefits from Equine Canada include:

- the Members First program, with its significant discounts for members;
- the Rider Education Levels which provide standards for Riders to achieve as their skills progress;
- the Long Term Equestrian Development model with its guidelines for parents and riders on age appropriate activities; and
- current information on Equine Disease outbreaks and Border crossing regulations.

Our members will see immediate benefit from their \$5 membership fee in 2010. Recreation members will see benefit from work protecting our right to ride in National Parks and on the Trans Canada Trail.

Especially important is that all members will have the ability to vote in the upcoming Director at Large elections, and if our BC members choose to vote, we have the membership to ensure that both "Director at Large" positions are filled from British Columbia, bringing our voice directly to the Equine Canada Board of Directors and ensuring all our concerns are raised there.

I hope you will join me, in giving our national federation a chance to prove that it has value, and to demonstrate that your membership fees can create benefit for all equine enthusiasts in BC. Like all of you, Horse Council Board members and staff will be watching to see if Equine Canada can live up to its promises. We will also be working hard to ensure our members are well served, and respected.

Best Regards,

Sarah Bradley  
HCBC President