"Tea Time" Review...
Annual Region I Connemara Tea

by Carolyn McEvitt

March 22nd dawned sunny and cold with a brisk northwest wind of 15 mph that kept everybody bundled in their winter garb. The below average temperatures in central Connecticut, however, did not keep the sturdy, ACPS Region I New Englanders from venturing to their annual Connemara Tea hosted by Carolyn McEvitt at her Hope Valley Farm in Amston. There were 26 attendees from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont that participated in this year’s Connemara Tea.

Guests began to arrive around 10:30 bringing many delicious food items with them. Some of the food items included several varieties of quiche, venison chili, stuffed bread, deviled eggs, a cold cut platter, Caesar salad, cabbage & Swiss chard salad, fruit salad, coffee cake, plenty of Irish Soda bread with REAL butter, oatmeal cookies, chocolate cakes, cheese cake, chocolate covered strawberries, pastries, an assortment of cookies and many other items that made for a great brunch!! In true Irish tradition all dieting intentions were left at the door and the food was set upon with gusto!

Socializing took place until about noon when our President, Pat Shields, opened our meeting. We began with general introductions around the group, putting faces to names, who owned what ponies, new members/old...
ACPS Region I Officers
Chair
Patricia Shields: 860-866-7116
57 Lake Rd., Harwinton, CT 06791
drybrookfarm@yahoo.com

Vice Chair
Linda Haines: 603-934-3895 or 603-387-0157
149 Shaw Road, Northfield, NH 03276
troutranch@metrocast.net

Treasurer
Susan Goodhouse: 802-484-5540
Rolling Meadows Farm
1212 Bailey Mills Road, Reading, VT
goodfarm@vermontel.com

Secretary
Carolyn McEvitt: 860-228-8675
32 Hope Valley Road, Amston, CT 06231
cbmcevitt@comcast.net

Show Organizers
Amy Plavin: 413-834-1804
403 Parker Hill Road, Bellows Falls, VT 05101
whconnemaras@gmail.com

Susana Goodhouse: 802-484-5540
Rolling Meadows Farm
121 Bailey Mills Road, Reading, VT
goodfarm@vermontel.com

ACPS Board of Governors
Region I Representative
Amy Plavin: 413-834-1804
403 Parker Hill Road, Bellows Falls, VT 05101
whconnemaras@gmail.com

Newsletter
Art Director/Managing Editor
Hannah Howard: 603-934-4081
Wyndover Farm
PO Box 9, Salisbury, NH 03268
designpoint@mac.com

Communications Manager
Carolyn McEvitt: 860-228-8675
32 Hope Valley Road, Amston, CT 06231
cbmcevitt@comcast.net

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REGION I CHAIR cont.

Recently, I received test results from University of California, Davis on two of my ponies. The process was not difficult or expensive. The cost is $40/test each. The test can be paid for online directly to VGL website, and if paid for in this manner, the owner can print out the prepaid test. To fill out the form, you will need your pony’s registration #, full registered name, and their sire and dam’s registration #’s and their full names respectively.

I pulled twenty hairs from my stallion, Bailey’s Irish Dream’s mane and twenty hairs from one of my brood mares, Lasrachai’s Blue Oak Dunlaith. The wait time to receive results was just over one week. While all the foals from my mare and by my stallion are normal — these tests could have had an negative impact on my breeding program — a great emotional and financial investment.

These tests are not about a single breeder’s program, they are a necessary tool for breeding responsibly while not narrowing the gene pool and remembering that most ponies are not going to be future breeding animals. Most colts are gelded and many mares will never be bred.

My Test Results:
My stallion, Bailey’s Irish Dream is N/N which means no copies of the HWSD mutation; animal is normal, therefore Dreamer is not a carrier. My mare, Lasrachai’s Blue Oak Dunlaith is N/HWSD, which means she has 1 copy of HWSD mutation; normal but a carrier of the recessive gene.

The great news for my breeding program is that Dreamer can be bred to a carrier mare, or even a mildly affected mare but will never have a foal that is physically affected, or suffer with hoof wall problems caused by HWSD.

How a recessive gene works:
If a breeder pairs a carrier mare — like my mare “Dunlaith” to a non carrier stallion, like Dreamer, the possibilities are: 1) The resulting foal has a 0% chance of manifesting HWSD physical problems. 2) The resulting foal has a 50% chance of being a carrier without any physical manifestation of HWSD or 3) The resulting foal has a 50% chance of being N/N, normal and not a carrier. Note: It is interesting that even with the pairing of two carriers, this breeding would result in a 75% chance of no physical manifestation. Regardless, is the potential for the heartbreak of putting a foal down a risk I’d take? My answer would be that I would not knowingly opt for carrier to carrier breeding.

So, based upon what I now know my plan for Dreamer is to continue to breed him with confidence to any Connemara mare without concern that one of his babies will have a physical manifestation of HWSD. My plan for Dunlaith (she is an approved mare) with beautiful movement and mind, is to continue to breed her to Dreamer. If I choose another pairing for her, I would consider the HWSD test results in selecting another Connemara stud for her.

For, Dunlaith’s and Dreamer’s offspring, they have a 50% chance of being N/N like their sire or 50% chance N/HWSND like their dam. As a responsible breeder of performance ponies, I believe this is an excellent pairing, additionally I will test their offspring so if their offspring are purchased for future breeding animals their breeder can make informed breeding plans while not narrowing a gene pool.

Healthy, happy foals are the goal of any breeding program, so please get your ponies tested. These tests will help all breeders to protect and promote Connemaras.

Bits & Pieces Summer Issue Deadline: MAY 1st !!
members identified, and interests each pony owner had. The first topic of discussion was Field Day, which will be held on May 24th from 9:00 to 4:30 at Lollipop Farm in Brooklyn, CT with Laurie Davis-Sigfridson as our host and clinician. According to Pat the afternoon session is full, but there is still room in the morning session. If we have advanced riders/ponies that have not yet responded we will do our best to accommodate, but please respond as spaces are limited.

We then moved on to discuss the breed show. Amy Plavin is in charge of the breed show this year, which will be held July 18th & 19th with the traditional fundraiser trail ride on July 17th. We will be in need of volunteers and in Amy’s words, “I need extra hands to help in general as I will be managing the show this year and my head might be spinning by the end!” So anybody wishing to help at the show, PLEASE email Carolyn McEvitt at cbmcevitt@comcast.net. A volunteer listing will be sent out in May/June which will list each job and the responsibility it carries. For the trail ride, if anybody would like to be able to drive their pony, please let us know!! GMHA has driving trails that they will mark for us. The proceeds for this year’s trail ride will go to UC Davis Melanoma Research.

2016 will be our breed show’s 50th anniversary!! Members all agreed that we need to do something special for it. One suggestion was to have an Irish judge and try to coordinate with Region III’s show so that we might share the judge. It was agreed that we needed to set up a show committee for next year’s festivities. Please let Amy know if you would like to help out on the committee! Amy’s email is whconnemaras@gmail.com.

Availabilty of scholarships was then discussed. The application for the Region I Kessler Scholarship is due April 1st and may be found in last quarter’s Bits & Pieces. Liz Platais also brought applications to the Tea for anybody interested in applying. The ACPS also offers both adult and junior scholarships and applications may be found on the ACPS website.

The topic of registering the quarter-bred Connemara pony with the Connemara Sport Horse Registry was brought up. As described by the ACPS, the quarter-bred Connemara is “no less than one-quarter Connemara. A stallion service certificate is required if sired by a Halfbred Connemara Stallion. If the dam of the Connemara Sport Horse is a halfbred Connemara, her registered name and registration number are required. Those eligible for Connemara Sport Horse certificates are the result of breeding a Registered Halfbred to a Registered Halfbred or Registered Halfbred to a Non-Connemara.”

Finally, the talk on Straightness Training was given by Meg Brauch, owner of Narnia Stables in Ashford, CT. Meg trains with Marijke de Jong of the Netherlands, founder of the Straightness Training philosophy and exercises. Meg spoke with the group for about an hour describing the exercises through a PowerPoint presentation as well as showing some actual videos of Straightness Training taking place. We proceeded outdoors where we were greeted by bright sunshine and an almost clean pony. Ripleigh’s Abra Cadabra was the demo pony for Meg to demonstrate the very first steps of working with the Straightness Training exercises.

The Tea concluded with members indulging in some final refreshments as they warmed up before saying goodbye and heading home. Many thanks to all that traveled far to come to this year’s TEA, especially to Kim Sterl for helping with the pre-TEA setup, Ginny Winkler, Sue Antilla, Katie Donaruma for arriving early and providing extra hands and laughs, Bethany & Hannah Powell for cleaning the dirty white pony, Meg Brauch for educating us on Straightness Training, Pat & Rebecca Shields for transporting the Region I Store to the Tea, Sally Oxnard & Liz Platais for the lovely flowers and everybody else for their great sense of humor and camaraderie. We really are a great group of pony lovers!!! Here’s to warmer weather and happy trails! See you all at Field Day! 🌼
Region I Financial Report - 2014
By Janet Chayes

Last year our overall finances ended in good shape again. Thanks to careful management, the Show nearly broke even. Equine Affaire costs were fully covered by calendar income (thank you again Sue Antilla for an amazing job!) And Store sales remained excellent.

End of Year Account Balances:

Checking ................................................................. $ 2,911
Savings ................................................................. 10,726
Store ................................................................. 3,794
Equine Affaire ......................................................... 2,183
Total ................................................................. $19,615

What won’t this year’s horseshow offer is the real question! First we begin with our Friday afternoon trailride with this year’s proceeds going to the UC Davis Melanoma research study.

Saturday morning we begin with our inhand classes which will include fitting and showmanship classes again. We end the morning with the Dales ponies showing inhand and go right to a real driving division setup by the Dales and Fells pony people (of course this will include any Connemaras that would like to participate). Then we continue the day with flat classes in the white ring including a fun sit a buck class. Finally we move to the jumper ring in the afternoon for the ever popular jumping classes which will end with a six bar class this year. All of our ridden classes will be available to all breeds this year although we will track Connemara’s separately for show end championships. And Saturday will finish up with the ever loved costume class and a bridleless riding demo by some of our junior riders. If you aren’t busy enough on Saturday CVDA will be offering a ride/critique/ride day in the Upway arena.

Sunday we will again share grounds with CVDA and their schooling dressage show. The Connemaras will be scheduled in the morning to help with tracking points. Sunday morning we will have our ever popular trail classes in the dustbowl and two division of dressage/trail class in the White Ring. At noon our hunter classes will begin on the outside course and we will once again have a Connemara hunter championship. Again most ridden classes are open to all breeds. And Sunday afternoon will end with the awarding of our many championships.

Now if that sounds like a lot it is and we need lots of volunteers to help run the show. Please contact Amy Plavin or Carolyn McEvitt and let us know what job you would like to volunteer for!

And this is our 49th annual Region I show at GMHA and that means 2016 marks fifty years of consecutive shows!!! I think we need to make 2016 special and would like to invite people to join the 50th Annual Show Committee as I think we need to start planning now. ♥

PICTURE PERFECT!

Think NOW about photos for the 2016 Connemara Calendar

Reserve your favorite month today! The cost for January thru November is $75.00/per month, December is $100 because it will also be included in the 2017 calendar.

A Connemara Calendar photo is a great way to promote your farm, your stallions or pay tribute to your wonderful ponies. The 2015 Calendar, once again, was a huge success! Why not help make the 2016 Calendar another success?

For more information or to reserve your favorite month, contact Sue Antilla at: antilla.suzanne@gmail.com.

"Welcome to Spring" Photo Contest...

After this long, cold and snowy winter, Region I thought it would be fun to hold a PHOTO CONTEST showing our "winter" ponies in the snow. Look through your picture libraries and send your best pics to win a cash prize!

Basic rules:
• Those submitting photos should be an ACPS Member in Region I or Canada.
• Photos must be of pure bred or half bred Connemara Ponies.
• Photos submitted must be taken in the snow during the winter 2014/15.
• Each person or farm can submit 2 photos.
• Judges will be John and Linda Miller from Spectrum Photography
• Cash Prizes: 1st place = $75; 2nd place = $50; 3rd place = $25.
• Deadline for submissions is May 1st. Winner will be announced and the winning photo will appear in the Summer B&P.

Submit photos by May 1st via e-mail to Susan Goodhouse at: goodfarm@wavecomm.com
ACPS Region I Field Day
Sunday, May 24, 2015

with Carolyn McEvitt • 660 New Sherborn Road, Athol, Massachusetts

Carolyn and her husband Rob own Hope Valley Farm in Amston, CT; which is home to the half-bred Connemara ponies: C.K.C. Katie (Erin Go Bragh x Feather in My Cap) and Crib Glas Mandolin (*Bobby Brown x G.G.s Dove), and the Connemara purebred Ripleigh’s Abra Cadabra (Ripleigh Go Bragh x Lean on the Wind), 1 Quarter pony, 1 Shetland pony, 2 Australian Kelpies, and 2 felines.

Carolyn is very involved with Connemara's and serves as our Region I Secretary. She is also a Hebron 4H Horse Club leader and a Pony club instructor for nearly 20 years. Her riding background includes Eventing up through Training Level, Dressage through 2nd Level, Jumpers, Carriage Driving and Vaulting. She has worked under such instructors as David O’Brien, Kerry Milliken, Jimmy Wofford, Beth & Jennifer Baumert, Sarah Geike and currently is training with Claudia Tarlov and Meg Brauch.

Carolyn is a PATH Registered Therapeutic Riding Instructor and teaches physically, mentally and emotionally challenged riders at Camp Care in Columbia and High Hopes in Old Lyme, CT. Carolyn is also a certified Master Equine Manager through the University of Connecticut & Iowa State University.

In her own words, “I have basically lived & breathed ponies for a lifetime!”

Schedule:
8:30 am: coffee /pastries

Session 1:
9:00–11:30 Flatwork with a Dressage emphasis
11:45–12:45: Pot-Luck Luncheon meeting—Please bring a dish to share.

Session 2:
1:00–3:00 Jumping. Ground poles to 3 feet

Riders can participate in one or both sessions. –
(When responding your interest, please advise your current level of dressage and/or jumping)

Cost: $35.00 for single session or $50.00 for riding in both sessions
Proof of current negative Coggins is required.
Provide name of rider (if a junior, age) and registered name of pony.

RSVP to Pat Shields at: drybrookfarm@yahoo.com

Note: I had received previously, information and payment for the previously scheduled Dressage Clinic, if you are not able to attend our revised venue – any fees paid will be returned.

Auditors are welcome. No charge to come learn and socialize!
Make Your Worming Program More Effective.

Use Fecal Egg Counts!

By Nancy S. Loving DVM

It is important to reduce the selection pressure for parasite resistance—this is best accomplished by limiting the frequency with which wormers (anthelmintics) are given.

We are blessed to have several types of deworming drugs (anthelmintics) that are safe and efficacious. So much so that by the 1980s it was recommended to deworm every two months to attack burdens of large strongyles infecting a horse—a practice that continues on to the present.

However, horses are now more impacted by small strongyles (cyathostomins). Small strongyles encyst within the lining of the colon and have the potential to wreak havoc on a horse’s intestinal tract.

Pressure from intensive drug use has stimulated both small strongyles and ascarids (round worms) to become resistant to existing dewormer products. In light of this situation, and particularly because no new classes of deworming products are in development, it is important to reduce the selection pressure for parasite resistance—this is best accomplished by limiting the frequency with which wormers are given.

Minimizing Resistance

The fewer doses of dewormer administered, the less the selection pressure on worms to develop resistance. To minimize the number of doses a horse receives each year while still retaining intestinal health in your herd use fecal egg counts (FEC), which is a quantitative test that counts the number of internal parasite eggs in a manure sample. Fecal egg counts are best conducted at least 12-16 weeks after previously medicating with an anti-parasitic drug.

A fecal sample requires just two FRESH normally formed balls of manure, preferably collected within 12 hours. The collected manure sample should be refrigerated until it is given to your vet for evaluation.

A negative (or clear) fecal egg count does not necessarily mean that your horse is free of strongyle or ascarid worms; it only means that any adult worms present are not actively shedding eggs at that point in their reproductive cycle. Furthermore, a fecal egg count doesn’t show evidence of the burden of encysted small strongyles, migrating larvae or immature ascarids within the horse.

Fecal Egg Count Reduction Testing

One of the most important elements of performing fecal egg counts is to not only perform the preliminary count before a horse is dewormed, but to also follow up with a comparative fecal egg count 10-14 days after giving deworming medication.

Ideally, there is at least a 90% reduction in fecal egg counts between the pre and post deworming fecal egg counts; this is known as fecal egg count reduction testing (FECRT). Your veterinarian is well equipped to offer this testing service and to interpret the results. It is possible that resistance has developed in your herd to a particular anthelmintic. It is also possible that the worms are still susceptible to anthelmintics, but their egg re-emergence period is shortened to 5-6 weeks instead of 10-12 weeks. The FECRT yields information to help you develop a tailor-made deworming program for each horse.

If you have a large herd, then cost-consciousness might dictate that you don’t test every horse. Instead, test at least 5-6 members of the herd to arrive at an estimate of how well your deworming program is working.

Tailoring the Program

Warm weather is the seasonal time when the eggs develop into infective larvae and pose the greatest risk of infection. Horses in a paddock environment where the manure is cleaned up daily have a limited risk of parasite infection as compared to horses out on pasture where manure is allowed to accumulate, particularly if there is a high stocking density of horses.

Fecal egg counts arm you with the information to make necessary decisions on deworming strategies for individuals and the herd while helping to reduce the selection pressure on worms that stimulates them to develop resistance.
Rolling Meadows Farm News...

After a long winter the snow is finally melting. Ponies are starting to move around and coats are starting to shed. Roads are a mess but that only means one thing. No foals this year but the 2 young ones are growing fast. Both are *Kippure Cara fillies, Finny a grey 2 yr old and Aiofe a dark dun yearling. Brittany’s pony Aisling will be 4 this spring and is just over 15hh. She will start her with some more flat work and simple dressage to get her ready for small jumps and lots of trail time. I will have more time this summer for trail rides on Avoca and Meghan. Jess will come down and help out. She and my grandkids will eventually have a young one to start and Meghan for riding. Spring is a busy time of year with new calves being born and firewood orders being filled—200 cords at least.

Looking forward to the summer show and seeing pony friends.

Susan Goodhouse
Rolling Meadows Farm, Vermont

DryBrook Farm News...

NEDA, the New England Dressage Association recently invited DryBrook Farm’s stallion, Bailey’s Irish Dream to participate in the Futurity Stallion Auction. Only three pony stallions in the Association were invited to participate. Dreamer has been a NEDA finalist in 2011 & 2012. As a futurity stallion, all of his registered foals for the next three years are eligible for NEDA cash awards. Dreamer is offered for stud to Region 1 members at special pricing booking by April 30th, term of contract two years. $500.00 plus collection fees

Pat Shields
DryBrook Farm
Windy Hollow News...

I picked the best winter ever to send Millie south if I do say so myself. It has not gone exactly as planned but c’est la vie. I didn’t want to send Millie to Wellington for a multitude of reasons so elected to send her to Ocala to a trainer friend of a friend had ridden with last year and had been very pleased. All initial communications were great, I sent another friend to check out the farm where she would be boarded and all seemed excellent. My plans to ride her through the month of December weren’t going well with the ice in Vermont that month so when the chance to ship her a bit early came, I jumped at it.

Millie arrived in Ocala December 19th and all seemed well. Unfortunately she had a tying up episode on December 26th and I was now in the position of the owner from afar (not a position I’m used to as a veterinarian). Fortunately my first trip south was planned for the first week of January so I was able to get there quickly to rehabilitate Millie and fire the trainer who did not handle the situation professionally.

Before I arrived in Ocala, a young woman named Jenna Detandt began managing the barn where Millie lived. One day she was talking to her roommate about the cute Connemara at the barn. It turns out the roommate was Elliott Blackmon (the daughter of the ACPS treasurer Cathy Blackmon) who knew Millie well from her Florida experience three years ago. Jenna had just graduated from college, and finished a working student position with an upper level dressage rider in Wellington. She had now moved back to Ocala to try to start her own business. So, many phone calls later and with Cathy Blackmon’s help, I had a team I trusted to help me with Millie. By the end of my 12 days in January Millie was ready to begin work under saddle again. So and I had Jenna ride 5 days a week and Elliott came to jump 2 days a week—given her muscle disease I was reluctant to give her any days off.

I returned home to Vermont for two weeks (that silly work thing) and then was back in Florida for 12 more days the second week of February. Gladly, I found my combination of 24-year-old riders was working out well and began lessons with their college instructor Judy Downer (r judge, grand prix rider and head of the riding program at Central Florida University). So, not exactly my Florida dream experience but so nice to get south every few weeks!!

I returned home again on February 17 leaving my team of Jenna and Elliott in charge of Millie. A week later I received a call from a very excited Jenna who told me she just
had the most amazing ride on Millie. She had run through Fourth Level Test 1 and "could she please show her next weekend at the Ocala Spring Recognized Dressage show?" How could I say "no!" So, with my blessings—apparently my nervousness 1000 miles away did not transmit to the team. Millie's Fourth level debut and won their class with a 62.027%! Amazing! Sadly my videographer can’t seem to get the video uploaded so I can only imagine how beautiful it was. Apparently, after the test, Millie was swarmed by onlookers who wanted to pet the fancy pony and the pony was happy to check all their pockets for peppermints!!

I returned to Florida the week of March 19th and finally had my intensive riding experience since Millie went to live at Judy’s barn for the ten days I was there.

Millie has now made the trip to Cathy’s house in NC and (as I write this) will meet them there April 4th and drive her the rest of the way home to Vermont. I am reluctant to put her on a trailer for 24 hours given her muscle disease so I will drive her home with only six hours a day on the trailer. I am more than excited for my trip and now know all the training is there, I just need to learn how to access it. So, hopefully Millie and I will debut at Fourth Level this year! Pony Power!!

Amy Plavin, DVM
Windy Hollow Farm, Vermont

FOR SALE: DryBrook Hello Dolly - 5 year old purebred, elegant mare in a small package of 12.2. Professionally trained by Amish gentleman, Dolly is a lovely mover with an excellent mind. Road safe and show worthy. Dolly is by Tullymor’s Mt. Thunder x Jillian’s Magahony Surprise. Asking $7,500. Contact: Pat Shields at drybrookfarm@yahoo.com

FOR SALE: 17" Schleese JES dressage saddle in very good condition. The panels are short for someone 5’4’’ tall. This saddle does not fit my Connemara. $1750. Contact: Bette Fredrickson@conknet.com or 603 456-3068

HAY! Everyone would LOVE to hear about your new foal!

Send your baby pictures into the Bits & Pieces (designpoint@mac.com) and we will publish them in our next issue. Don’t forget to include the your name, farm name and the name of the foal, sire and dam.

An t-ualach is mó
ar an chapall is míne.
"The willing horse gets the most work."