

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 6, 2005

2 Pages Total

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MANURE AND MUD OVERWHELM LOCAL LIVESTOCK OWNERS AND THREATEN WATER QUALITY

AREA ORGANIZATIONS JOIN FORCES TO BRING LIVESTOCK OWNERS AND BOARDING FACILITIES A WORKSHOP SERIES FOCUSED ON RESPONSIBLE MANURE AND MUD MANAGEMENT.

Nutrients, pathogens and sediments from livestock facilities are pollutants of concern in the major watersheds of Santa Cruz County. Just a few of the critical uses this pollution impacts include drinking water, recreation, fisheries health and flora and fauna habitat. Better management of manure and drainage on properties that house livestock can lessen these pollutants.

Two of the key challenges to all area livestock owners and boarding facilities are mud and manure. With last winter's wet weather and an unseasonably wet spring, livestock owners have been up to their knees in mud. In addition, the rising cost of gas is driving the price of manure hauling through the roof. This has led many locals to ask, "What can we do on our property to control the seemingly uncontrollable?" In response to this cry for help Ecology Action along with the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District and the Santa Cruz County Horsemen's Association have joined together to create a workshop series focused on the healthy management of land and livestock.

This three week series will be held Wednesday nights, July 13th, 20th and 27th at ranches throughout the San Lorenzo Valley. The format will be presentations by local experts, followed by site tours and finishing with the chance for attendees to take the floor to present their site challenges. All events will run from 6:00PM til 9:00PM.

Sheila Barry from the University of California Cooperative Extension will open the series with a presentation on Pasture and Paddock Management. Topics will include weed management, how to determine appropriate plant selection, how much pasture is needed per horse and how to keep pastures from turning into paddocks.

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Week two will focus on Manure Management. Christof Bernau of the UCSC Farm and Agroecology program will cover topics such as the science of and benefits to composting as well as provide practical techniques for livestock managers.

Our final workshop will focus on Mud and Drainage Management. Rich Casale of the Natural Resource Conservation Service will provide information on reading the landscape and identifying drainage challenges, possible solutions to muddy paddocks, pastures and paths as well as erosion control techniques.

In addition to the workshop series, the program will be offering cost share grants to livestock owners and boarding facilities to implement projects that improve water quality and will serve as demonstration sites for the region. Information on how to apply to become a demonstration site will be distributed at the workshop series. This program is completely voluntary and non-regulatory.

For more information or to register please contact Jennifer Harrison at Ecology Action, (831) 426-5925 ext. 132 or jharrison@ecoact.org. There is a \$25 charge per family for the series. The cost will cover all workshop materials and a light dinner. Scholarships are available. Funding for this program provided by the State Water Resources Control Board.

LIVESTOCK AND LAND

A workshop series for the healthy management of land and livestock.

July 13, 2005 ♦ Pastures and Paddocks ♦ Glenwood Equestrian Center ♦ Scotts Valley

July 20, 2005 ♦ Manure Madness ♦ Loma Alta Farm ♦ Santa Cruz

July 27, 2005 ♦ Merciless Mud ♦ Stewart Ranch ♦ Ben Lomond

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