

## Equine world in the USA from a central American Graduate Student

By Hugo A. Moran

Everyone in the world has a hobby or something to do during free time or something to spend the time on... But when talking about horses it is an entirely different world full of new adventures every day.

My name is Hugo Moran, I am from El Salvador, a tiny little country in Central America, where horse activities are not so common for many reasons. I am here in the states doing an internship at Gone Away Farms international, an operating horse breeding and training farm located in the beautiful town of Covington, Georgia. Gone Away Farms specializes in breeding colored sport horses and ponies for a wide variety of disciplines including dressage, show jumping and eventing.

I came to the states the first time in 2013 to do a short-term internship as part of graduation requirements for a bachelor degree in Agribusiness Administration of Zamorano University located in Honduras through the MAST Program (Minnesota Agricultural Student Trainee program) in horse management and training. This year I came back to do a complete year through the same program, to do another internship as a trainee at the same farm with horses and get deeper into the equine world as I got more interested in the topic as my horse lover spirit began to rise.

Zamorano is an international Agriculture university that offers natural, infrastructure, human resources and a proven system of learning by doing, that qualify students from all over the world. The Pan American Agricultural School, better known as Zamorano, was founded in 1942 in the valley of Yeguaré in Honduras. For more information visit [www.zamorano.edu](http://www.zamorano.edu)

MAST Program is an international educational exchange program that provides opportunities of internships in agriculture, horticulture, and related fields through the University of Minnesota. For more information visit <http://mast.cfans.umn.edu/>



Coming to the states has been a big blessing not only for travel but also to live a real cultural experience due to many cultures merged in the country, and where equine is a big area of daily life, where I have had the opportunity to work and meet with professional horse trainers and riders from all over the world and understand that dressage, eventing, or jumping It's not a hobby it's a lifestyle.

Mr. Rob Fowler and Dr. Jean Fowler my sponsors, hosts and advisors, here in Georgia are part of my successful learning by doing experience that I am sure I am going to be glad to share all the knowledge in my home country. Also there is many people who have helped me all this time to make possible where I am now and all that together has become some of the steps I want to achieve in life.

As just my 23 years in this world I want to get together with people who really want to change the world, people who really think out of the box and want to change the poor world we are living in today. I want to travel and change the world, not only just giving food for the hungry people but also to make the poor people work and have a better living condition, because no matter how poor you are the real money is in the brain as the container of the knowledge God gave the day he create man, and I am sure that there is a future with a better world where everybody can live in peace with food, water, friends and a family to love and care for.

A phrase I have heard here in the states while working with the horses is that a horse's job is to drain your bank account and fill your heart. Let's say I agree 50% percent and not agree 50% percent, because even though sometimes horse stuff is expensive when you have the passion, you love what you do and it's really worthy. The United States is full of horse lovers and that makes me think about how a horse can make a person happy and even change a person's life.

In the months of internship it's been a big challenge because horses some will test you, some will teach you new things and some horses will bring out the best in you and make you a better person, and that's been one of my goals in the internship, to learn about horses as much as possible, because is a whole world of daily learning and experiences.

I truly believe there should be more programs in the states for Latin American Students to come and learn about horses as I am doing and enjoying. Every single step in horse care and management is really important and as a good student I always have a notebook with me to write every single detail I consider important. I have had the opportunity to see horse diseases and how the experts (vet and farm owner) diagnose diseases and I have been part of how to treat them.

Keeping the horse foot protected and healthy is really important I have been involved in all hoof care and lameness at the farm together with the horse first aid to handle equine emergencies at all times. It's really important to understand and to know which injuries can be treated by the owner of the horse and which need a vet's attention.



Every single activity that is performed at the farm makes it possible for the horses to go to the horse trials and be winners. Vaccinations and dentistry are part of those activities that needs to be in the calendar. Horses need vaccinations and dental care just as humans do. I have seen the importance to put a calendar in the barn and mark where the dentist needs to come and make charts for every vaccinations.

Horses need to stay healthy and for that a good nutrition and daily care of horses is very important. To give the horses the correct amount of food with the necessary minerals and vitamins, to get the better hay and alfalfa, and the times a horse needs to be fed its part of what I have learned, it's called nutritional needs in horses. But also there is more than the food you put in a bucket.... Clean water is really important and if possible to wash the bucket where the water is. Give the horses a bath, pull their main, to check for possible unusual problems such as scratches or swollen areas is basic in a horse farm.

One of the areas I have enjoyed more has been the mare and new born foals care. It's been quite interesting because I had the opportunity to see a mare in labor at 3:00 am and how the basic activities in the first hours of the new foal are crucial. Then it's come the first day, the first month, second month... and the new foals is growing up, this area is where I finish an entire notebook!!!!.



The training with the horses, yearlings and new foals has been also amazing to get to know that you need to teach a horse how to follow the mother, how to get into the wash stall, give the first bath. The next step in my learning has been to make the babies and yearlings ready for the inspections. I have been working with the owner and farm manager to ready the new foals and yearlings for the Oldenburg and RPSI

inspections and the activities such as teaching them the commands walk, trot, reverse, stop it's been quite a journey.

It looks like a lot of work but its not, being in the internship has been so fantastic just by grooming the horses you get to know the personality of the horse, the sounds horses make, what they like, what they don't like. Horses get to love you and sometimes I see that horses and human create a kind of a connection that when you give your horse to another person to ride, it's not the same. Definitely I am taking back to my home country a big experience with unforgettable moments. Sometimes I have said I can't keep going but everyone has something they love to do and enjoy and horses are giving me the opportunity to learn from such a fantastic creatures they are, take riding lessons and go to horse trials, be friends with other horse lovers, share my knowledge with others students, make the horses part of my life, and I have learned that not everyone can understand the language of a horse, not everyone can understand the connection between the horse and rider and not everyone has the dedication for horses. Riders are not simple persons and horses are not just animals and to understand this world... You need to be part of it and love what you do. A phrase that has helped me all this years and keeps helping.

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