

Equine Behaviour and Horsemanship

Dr. Sid Gustafson

Horses are not always the easiest animals to get along with.

When horses misbehave, people often wonder what they are thinking; they want to know why horses behave the way they do. Dr. Sid Gustafson helps people understand how horses perceive their world through his equine behaviour teachings. Being able to understand these behavioural issues, gives handlers a head start to fixing the problem.



"It's animal wastage! A lot of unwanted animals are unwanted because of behavioural issues," says Gustafson. He sees studying behaviour as an important way to prevent problems before they arise.

His work teaches the human-animal bond and helps handlers better understand how horses perceive their surroundings. The horse's physical and mental capabilities as well as traits all affect the way horses react to the world around them.

By understanding how horses perceive their world, handlers can better understand how their actions affect the horse and its behaviour. Handlers can change the way they work with horses to cater more to the horses' unique set of capabilities. The better the handler understands how the horse perceives their world, the better the harmony between the two.

"I could see that it was overlooked and I had been raised seeing that there were different, better ways of doing things," says Gustafson of his choice to focus on equine behaviour. "It was a journey into how to do things better."

A lifelong horse person, Gustafson "had the good fortune of being raised by horses." He followed his father's footsteps and studied veterinary medicine. After several years in private practice, Dr. Gustafson decided to focus on equine behaviour.

A published writer of fiction and non-fiction, as well as a contributor to the NY Times Thoroughbred racing column "The Rail", Gustafson teaches equine behaviour at the University of Guelph. He continues his veterinary work as a behavioural consultant. He also acts as "an advocate for the horse" in his role as a veterinary official at multiple racetracks in Montana, California and Finger Lakes Racetrack in upstate New York.

Dr. Sid Gustafson will speak about "Equine Behaviour and Horsemanship" at Canada's Outdoor Equine Expo at the Arkell Research Station on Friday, June 4th at 2:45 pm and then Saturday, Sunday and Monday (June 5th to 7th) at 11:00 am and 3:30 pm in Arena #1.

