

## Bits & Tips

### Equestrian Connect makes life easier for Florida equestrians!

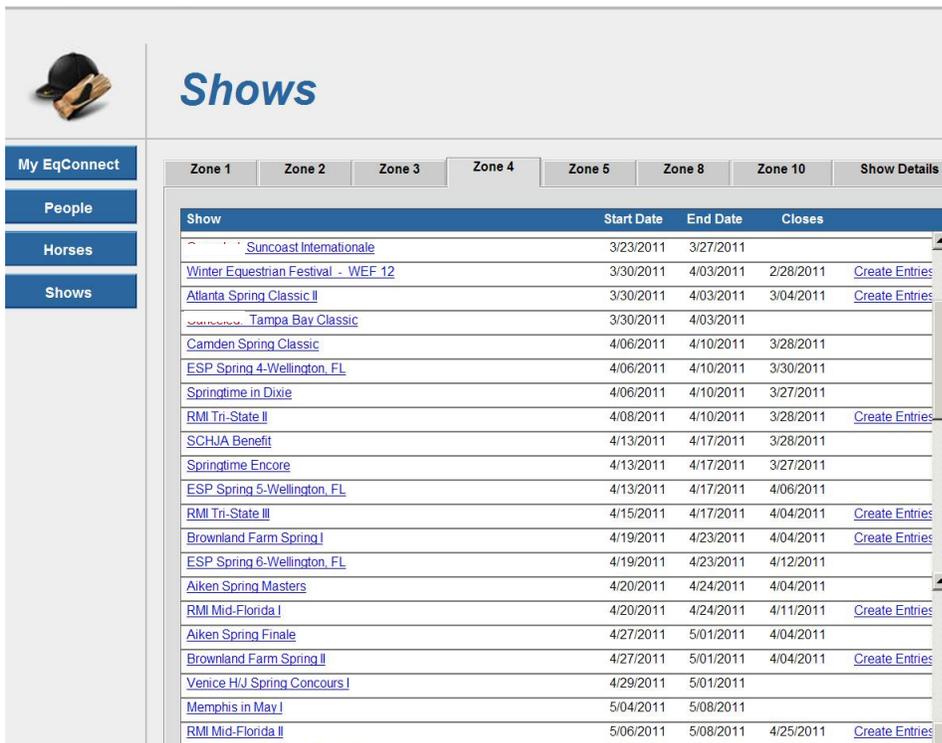
Brooke Watridge is a busy professional. She and her husband, Chad, run Ridgewater Show Stables in Jacksonville, FL. They are regularly on the road, showing 10 – 15 horses. They also have two young children – ages two and four. Time is a premium for her. So she was thrilled to discover an online service that allowed her to save hours doing horse show entries. Watridge found Equestrian Connect on the Ocala HITS website in January, and has been using it ever since.

Equestrian Connect is a web service that allows exhibitors to complete their entry forms online. To use it, you create an account on their website and put your entry data in the system once, and then use it for all horse shows. "It's very easy and fast. You click on the show, then on the horses you're taking, and boom, you're done," stated Watridge. The service posts the actual entry forms from the different horse shows.

Due to horse show requirements for payment and signatures, the forms still have to be printed out and mailed into each show office. This new service represents a huge step in the right direction. Leslie Burr Howard, Olympic Team Gold and Silver Medalist, commented, "It's time for the horse show industry to realize more of the benefits of technology. This is a positive beginning." Howard is a professional based in Connecticut who comes down to Wellington for the 12 week Winter Equestrian Festival.

Equestrian Connect is new to Florida in 2011. It was available in California for the 2010 horse show season and for about 20 east coast shows in the second half of the year. In 2011, the service was made available for the majority of USEF "A" shows in Zone 4, plus zones 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 10. One of the additional benefits of the service is that it posts a list of "A" shows by zone, something that is hard to find elsewhere.

The company was founded by two long time amateur jumper



The screenshot shows the 'Shows' page on the Equestrian Connect website. On the left is a navigation menu with 'My EqConnect', 'People', 'Horses', and 'Shows' (selected). The main content area is a table of shows organized by zones (Zone 1 to Zone 10) and a 'Show Details' column. Each row lists a show name, start and end dates, and a 'Create Entries' link.

Zone	Show	Start Date	End Date	Closes	Details
Zone 1	Suncoast Internationale	3/23/2011	3/27/2011		
Zone 2	Winter Equestrian Festival - WEF 12	3/30/2011	4/03/2011	2/28/2011	<a href="#">Create Entries</a>
Zone 3	Atlanta Spring Classic II	3/30/2011	4/03/2011	3/04/2011	<a href="#">Create Entries</a>
Zone 4	Tampa Bay Classic	3/30/2011	4/03/2011		
Zone 5	Camden Spring Classic	4/06/2011	4/10/2011	3/28/2011	
Zone 8	ESP Spring 4-Wellington, FL	4/06/2011	4/10/2011	3/30/2011	
Zone 10	Springtime in Dixie	4/06/2011	4/10/2011	3/27/2011	
Zone 1	RMI Tn-State II	4/08/2011	4/10/2011	3/28/2011	<a href="#">Create Entries</a>
Zone 2	SCHJA Benefit	4/13/2011	4/17/2011	3/28/2011	
Zone 3	Springtime Encore	4/13/2011	4/17/2011	3/27/2011	
Zone 4	ESP Spring 5-Wellington, FL	4/13/2011	4/17/2011	4/06/2011	
Zone 5	RMI Tn-State III	4/15/2011	4/17/2011	4/04/2011	<a href="#">Create Entries</a>
Zone 6	Brownland Farm Spring I	4/19/2011	4/23/2011	4/04/2011	<a href="#">Create Entries</a>
Zone 7	ESP Spring 6-Wellington, FL	4/19/2011	4/23/2011	4/12/2011	
Zone 8	Aiken Spring Masters	4/20/2011	4/24/2011	4/04/2011	
Zone 9	RMI Mid-Florida I	4/20/2011	4/24/2011	4/11/2011	<a href="#">Create Entries</a>
Zone 10	Aiken Spring Finale	4/27/2011	5/01/2011	4/04/2011	
Zone 1	Brownland Farm Spring II	4/27/2011	5/01/2011	4/04/2011	<a href="#">Create Entries</a>
Zone 2	Venice H/J Spring Concours I	4/29/2011	5/01/2011		
Zone 3	Memphis in May I	5/04/2011	5/08/2011		
Zone 4	RMI Mid-Florida II	5/06/2011	5/08/2011	4/25/2011	<a href="#">Create Entries</a>

riders, Barbara Phillips and Simone Coxe, who live and show in California. Both women did their own horse show entries, and had grown tired of the repetitive task. Barbara has a background in computer science and business, and knew that the internet and cloud based computing provided a perfect solution. Simone and Barbara live in Silicon Valley, known for its technological innovation and entrepreneurship. In that spirit they decided to start the company.

"2010 was the test year for us," commented Phillips. "We needed to make sure we had a system that was easy to use and could scale and that people would not only use it, but pay for it. Once we got that validation, we made it available in additional zones."

Horse show managers in Florida and zone 4 have been receptive. You can find the Equestrian Connect logo on several websites, including Hits Ocala, Rush Management, Progressive Show Jumping, and Equus Events.

Pam Rush was one of the first horse show managers to contact them last fall. Rush commented, "We are always looking for ways to improve our exhibitors' experience. Making entries easier is one of those ways."

Lisa Engel, Sponsorship Director for HITS, Inc. said, "Equestrian Connect had tremendous success with us

last year launching its service. Both the exhibitors and the show secretaries benefited. Exhibitors save time doing entries, and our secretaries get legible forms.

Showing is tough enough, entering should be easy and Equestrian Connect's on-line entry service provides that ease. We are happy to be working with them for Hits Ocala this winter."

The numbers also don't lie. Equestrian Connect posts a schedule of 40 USEF A/AA shows in Florida, and 110 in Zone 4. The service has 300 members in Zone 4, and has produced more than 1000 entries for Florida shows in January and February.

Coxe and Phillips visited Wellington and Ocala in February, and were impressed with the show facilities, and the size of the events.

Last March in California, Equestrian Connect had approximately 300 Zone 10 members. Now they have about 2000, with over 200 trainers using the service – plus a large number of amateurs that do their own entries. Coxe commented, "We feel like we got started on the right track in Florida. We look forward to the business building over the year."

Equestrian Connect is free for an introductory 90 day period. For more information and to see a demo, go to

[www.equestrianconnect.com](http://www.equestrianconnect.com)