

Track Watch

JULY 2025



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OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00AM - 4:00PM (CLOSED JULY 2ND)

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8:00 AM - 3:00PM

OUR VISION

MILLARVILLE RACING AND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IS DEDICATED TO BUILDING COMMUNITY SPIRIT.

OUR MISSION

MILLARVILLE RACING AND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY PROVIDES AUTHENTIC FAMILY EXPERIENCES AND EXCEPTIONAL FACILITIES WHICH CELEBRATE OUR AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE, INSPIRING A SENSE OF BELONGING FOR THE COMMUNITY.

Track Watch

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We would love to hear from you, please reach out:

mras.feedback@mras-track.com

President's Message

As summer settles in, the Millarville Racing & Ag Society grounds are buzzing with excitement. Momentum is building for a full compliment of unforgettable events in 2025. This season has already brought an incredible variety of activity. From cycling events, to a national archery tournament, equine clinics, dog agility events, movie filming, and community group functions. Each of these events brings a new audience, fresh energy, and a sense of shared pride in what we offer.

Summer Markets are now underway and a beautiful reflection of community spirit, local talent, and the magic that happens when people come together in our shared space. We are grateful to everyone who continues to support the markets, whether shopping volunteering organizing or simply showing up to be a part of the day.

We are right in the heart of preparing for one of the highlights of our calendar: The Canada Day 120th Anniversary of the Millarville Races. There can not be enough Thank you's passed along to the race organizing committee, volunteers, support staff, stakeholders and visitors. It's a chance to come together in celebration, not only of our country but of our shared rural community spirit. We hope to see you all at the Races!

Behind the scenes our maintenance projects, and arena construction are well underway. A huge thank you to our staff, contractors, and volunteer teams that move these projects forward.

The entire racetrack continues to look better each week, thanks in no small part to Patty Webb and the Millarville Horticulture group, whose hard work and beautiful flowers, make the grounds shine.

We are happy to welcome 4 wonderful summer students this year, to assist in both maintenance as well as in the office. You will see Jessie, Luke, Hartley & Drea around with bright smiles and welcoming young energy. Please stop them for a visit and introduce yourself when you see them out and about.

What a season it is shaping up to be!

Together we are not just keeping tradition alive, but we are building a legacy for the future. On behalf of the Board of directors thank you for being a part of it all!

Natasha Phillipson

President MRAS

2025 MRAS STAFF

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MRAS STAFF INSIGHTS AND ADVENTURES

Welcome to our new Track Watch feature! Each month, we'll share articles written by our MRAS staff to help you get to know us and stay updated on our adventures. We'll kick off with introductions and move on to department adventures. We're excited to share our stories, photos, and updates with you!



My name is Drea Zawislak, and I am the new office summer student here at Millarville. Currently, I am a student attending the University of Calgary, taking a Natural Sciences degree. After I complete my undergraduate degree my intentions are to go to the Veterinary School of Medicine. I have grown up around animals my entire life and personally own a horse myself who continues to teach me new things everyday. When I'm not at work you can catch me out riding my horse, going on adventures with my friends or spending a relaxing day at home with my family. I am very excited to be working here in the office this summer and I can not wait to continue seeing everyone's beautiful faces.



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Be a Part of History in the Making!

Want to experience the magic from the inside? Come volunteer and help make this extraordinary day unforgettable! We're still looking for enthusiastic gate greeters, energetic program runners, lively program sellers, and more awesome roles to fill.

★ Here's what you'll get:

- ✓ Free access to all the fun and festivities
- ✓ A delicious free lunch
- ✓ An exclusive commemorative t-shirt
- ✓ And an unforgettable day filled with laughs, community spirit, and so much fun!

Grab your spot and join the celebration—we can't do it without you!

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER HERE

Or go to: <https://mras.getcommunal.com/volunteer-opportunities/1075>



MILLARVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

millarvillehistoricalsociety.ca

An excerpt from the Races program 58 years ago...

On Canada's centennial year, when much of the country's history is being recounted, it seems appropriate to reach back into the past of the foothills area southwest of Calgary in order to trace the development of one of the most unique and colorful rural events in Western Canada - the time-honored Millarville Races.

This annual race meet, now in its 62nd year, was first held on June 23, 1905, before Alberta had become a province. For the people of the Millarville community and nearby towns, and for many Calgarians, attending the Millarville Races on Dominion day of each year has become a tradition.

Millarville - A Picture of the Community.

The Millarville Races and the Millarville community are so closely linked that the story of the Race Meet would be lacking without an account of the people and surroundings of which it was born.



**CELEBRATING
CANADA'S CENTENNIAL**



Strangers attending the races for the first time have been puzzled by following signs marked with the word "Millarville" and an arrow pointing the way and finding at the end of their journey no major town or village. Having arrived at the race track, they find themselves more or less in the middle of the Millarville community. On the eastern side of the area, three miles east of the race track, is the old log Millarville Church, Anglican, built in 1895 and still very much in use. On two Sunday mornings of each month, it resounds with the voices of archdeacon W. O. Gant and his congregation.

Three miles west of the track is Laycraft's General Store containing the post office, backed by Millarville Motors and Supply Company, Millarville Sheep Creek School and a few homes. Bill Lee's service station, "Bill's Corner," marks the point where the visitor turns east off of highway 22 on his way to the races.

Ranching and farming were the first means of livelihood, followed later by the lumber and oil industries. The world-famous Turner Valley Oil Field, originally containing 1,114,454,000 barrels of oil in addition to large reserves of gas, was discovered in 1914. This field extends northward into the Millarville area, which experienced a great deal of activity during the drilling of development wells. The Kendall Mill, several miles west of Millarville School, is busy the year around producing both planned and rough spruce lumber.



E. J. "Sam" Kieran, known as "the Boss," at his home - Glendale Ranch - which still stands on the mail route road southwest of Midnapore. This photograph was taken on July 2, 1927, when he was presented with the trophy, shown on the left, by the Millarville Race Club as a token of appreciation. He was president of the club from its inception in 1905 until his death in 1938.

Numerous ranches scattered through the district continue to produce some of Canada's finest cattle which have won top awards at such prestigious events as the Toronto Royal Winter Fair. The breeds raised in the district are: Hereford, Angus, Charolais, Shorthorn, Polled Hereford and Holstein. And so in reality Millarville is not a concentration of people and buildings, but a widespread community comprised of ranches, farms, a church, a school, the racetrack and fairgrounds, community halls, and a few businesses, all of which are laced together by the north fork of the Sheep River (Three Point Creek) which traces a route through it from east to west.

Millarville extends for miles across the eastern edge of Alberta's peaceful and scenic Foothills belt southwest of Calgary.

Settlement of the Millarville Area

Settlement of the area was initiated in 1885 by Joe Fisher, Sr. Mr. Fisher was the first man to ship cattle from the East to Calgary on the Canadian Pacific Railway. He sold his first herd here in 1883 and returned to the East for another. His second shipment arrived in Calgary in 1885. Encountering difficulty in completing the sale of the herd, Joe decided to winter them in the foothills southwest of Calgary. He and his companions built a stone-lined dugout, still in existence, along the banks of what is now Fisher Creek, west of Millarville School. Joe Fisher and his herd must have wintered well, for he decided to homestead here in the following summer, 1886.

Two other men in search of homesteads arrived that same summer. Malcolm T. Millar, fresh from five years spent with the North West Mounted Police, now the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, selected a site a short distance west of the present race track, near what is now the Laycraft General Store.

The second man, Alfred P. Welsh, chose a site on the flats about a half mile north of the race track where he built his Ardmore Ranch. With all of the original building now gone except the old log barn, the ranch is identified today by the cluster of neat red and white buildings visible from the race track. It is owned by the Cross family, descendants of A. E. Cross, one of the "Big Four" who originated the Calgary Stampede.

Other ranches began to form around the nucleus of Fisher, Millar and Welsh. The Deane-Freeman family settled along the creek a few miles east of the race track. John Quirk built his ranch on the west side of the Millarville district, and his "Q" brand, after which the Kew Post Office was named, became widely known.

Cattle carrying the "9999" brand of the Negro rancher John Ware roamed the country along the western edge of the district where, today, Ware Creek and Nigger John Ridge are his memorials.

Others who added to the early growth of the community were the Scotsmen John and James Turner, after whom Turner Valley was named, Joe Waite, George Bell, E. D. Adams, Norman Willans, W. H. King, Dublin Rogers and many more.

On April 7, 1892, a post office was opened in Malcolm Millar's ranch house. From that date forward the post office and the community it served became Millarville.

The majority of the early settlers came from the British Isles and France. The British way of life was transplanted here, and with it the interest in sports and a love of fine horses. For many years of its early life, Millarville was one of the main sports centres of Western Canada. Horse racing, polo, cricket, rugby, tennis and hockey were pursued with great enthusiasm in the early days, with teams competing frequently against Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and major towns farther away. Early reports record a rugby match between "Country" and Calgary. Many of the Country team members were Millarville residents. Calgary was beaten 2--0. The Reverend Webb-Peploe, the first minister of the Millarville Church, officiated at this early meet and at many others.

The Role of the Horse

Of the great variety of sports played in the community, two seemed to rise to prominence. These were horse racing and polo. They are testimony of the high regard for the horse held by the first residents of the district, for the horse was not only a necessity in those days, but a means of recreation. Racing and polo were sports in which the owners could prove the worth of their horses while enjoying the thrill of competing on them.



The Malcolm T. Millar Ranch, taken about 1915. The lean-to on the side of the house served as a store and was the first Millarville Post Office. The early ranchers gathered to play hockey on the rink located between the corral and house. Courtesy Glenbow Foundation.



Malcolm T. Millar, after whom Millarville was named, shown about 1912 on his favorite horse "Punch". Courtesy Glenbow Foundation.

The early polo matches were played at Monea, Justin Deane-Freeman's Ranch located a mile south of the Millarville Church. It is now the Winston Parker Ranch. Other matches were played at P. Welsh's Ardmore Ranch.

A 1903 newspaper account tells of a Calgary Polo Club team, with two Millarville residents, which made a good showing in the east, being beaten in the finals by Rochester. R. H. Middleton, one of the Millarville players, took full advantage of the trip, selling twenty polo ponies to easterners.

In 1909, the Millarville Polo team, called the Monea polo team, was comprised of W. E. C. Hulme, Leonard Melladew, A. Barrett and Justin Deane-Feeman, and Montreal was noted on their formidable list of competitors. A polo pony race was on the card each year of the early Millarville Races.

An interesting sidelight is that one of Justin Deane-Freeman and Norman Willans' descendants, Barney Willans, was until very recently one of the best players on the modern Calgary Polo Club team.

This sport continues to be played in the area, at the Calgary Polo Club, located a few miles north of Okotoks. The raising of polo ponies continues on the oldtown stock farm and at the Bar Pipe Ranch, among others.

It is clear that much of the interest of the community, recently and in the past, focuses on the horse.

The Origin of the Race Meet

It was in this sporting, horse-conscious setting that the Millarville race meet was born. It was undoubtedly modelled after race meets which the early settlers recalled from their past in the British Isles... A little bit of the old country and old ways brought to life in a new setting.

The formative meeting of the Race Club was held at the old Avoning Ranch on June 3rd, 1905. Tom Phillips is credited with having had the idea for the race meet. The names of those present are now legend in this district. E. J. "Sam" Kieran, fondly referred to as "the boss", was elected president, an office which he was to hold until his death in 1938. Charles H. Kerr was chosen secretary treasurer, with Hover Wolley-Dod as judge and Frank Paterson as starter. The remainder of the racing enthusiasts present were H. H. Barnes, W. H. Cochrane, D. Dixon, Justin Deane-Freeman, W. E. C. Hulme, R. De Malherbe, H. F. Nickols, Fred Senior, Dick Von Strallendorff, A. P. Welsh, and others which the records refer to as Pike, Bagg, Edwards, Ford, Grant and Hitchcock.

One of these people, Raymond de Malherbe, offered the use of his land as a site for the race track.



The early residents of the area had a high regard for the horse and for the sports with which it was associated, polo and racing. Shown is the 1909 Monea Polo Team. Left to right are W. E. C. Hulme, A. Barrett, Justin Deane-Freeman, who owned Monea Ranch, and Leonard Melladew. These men also helped direct the early race meets. This team competed against Montreal. Courtesy Glenbow Foundation.

The scenic location which was chosen nestles within the confines of a large bend made by the creek. The beauty of this place, the presence of the creek and of the large cottonwood trees, the expanse of level ground and the central location in the community no doubt influenced those who selected the site.

De Malherbe, whose generosity made the race track site available to the Race Club for 35 years on a rent-free basis, was at one time the French consul in Shanghai. He came to the district as a middle-aged man, staying at first at the ranch of Malcolm Millar who at the time made a business of instructing the newly-arrived in the ways of farming and ranching in this country.

Upon completion of this course, de Malherbe obtained his own holdings which he named "Sheep Creek Horse Ranch". It was referred to by local people simply as "the Frenchman's Place". He promptly imported quality thoroughbreds, half-breeds and polo ponies, and began the business of raising horses in earnest. Walter Phillips managed the ranch and Armand de Bernis, Louis Durand and Colonel Trochu, after whom Trochu, Alberta, was named, spent a good deal of time here training horses. De Malherbe moved away after a few years, and his interests passed onto de Bernis and Durand. Armand de Bernis' interests were sold to F. E. B. Gourlay. This land is opposite the Millarville Track and is now the Graham Ranch, which, in the tradition of the original ranch, continues to breed and train fine horses.

Louis Durand's interests included the land where the race track is situated. In 1940, after the 35-year rent-free period had expired, the Race Club agreed to purchase this land. Locating Durand became a problem, but he was finally found in French Indo-China. The war was on at this time, and the transaction to buy the land was completed only hours before negotiations with the country were terminated.

The old de Malherbe house was located on what is now highway 22, about three-quarters of a mile north of Bill's Corner. It was destroyed in the early 1960s, and the site is now occupied by the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Glaister, Sr.

In order to finance the first Race Meet, a subscription list was circulated and \$105 was raised. Ten races were run at the first meet, and owners of the winning horses were J. R. Kieran, Cecil Douglass, Campbell Aird, A. C. Langdale, Jack Dempsey and C. B. Tway. The ten-race card continued through 1908, with E. J. Kieran's "Amber" winning consistently, as well as entries made by the Von Strallendorff brothers.

Local residents as well as crowds from long distances came in holiday attire in demobats, wagons or mounted on their own horses. Those from far away stayed with friends in the immediate area the night before the race or camped near the track.



A group of Millarville residents taken in the early 1900's. From left to right, standing, are Justin Deane-Freeman, Bill Moseley, Herbert "Specky" Anderson; seated are Mrs. Deane-Freeman, Cecil Douglass, Norman Willan's, and Miss Ilsey (later Mrs. Harvey Ward). The men shown here played a vital part in the early Millarville Races. Courtesy of The Glenbow Museum.

An Indian Race was featured at the early meets, and the Indians were admitted free. They began to arrive days before the races, pitching their tents on the grounds and forming a small Indian village.

The original track was situated in a different position from the present one, lying in an east-west direction. At the first meet the track was marked out on the ground; the following year an inside rail was constructed, followed later by an outside rail, and the track became a fixed mark upon the landscape. Many years later the creek flooded and washed out one end of the track, necessitating a change to the present location.

The budding Race Meet seems to have blossomed in 1908. The Okotoks band was engaged by G. C. Douglass to add color to the meet, and Mrs. E. L. Taylor donated the first trophy which initiated the running of the Taylor Challenge Cup. The Calgary jewelry firm of Mettenthal and Pengelly donated a second trophy. A steeplechase was also run for the first time at this meet. It was routed over a two-mile course which included ten jumps and drew a field of eight entries. It was won by George Lee's "Pincher."

The 1908 race card was expanded to include 13 races, starting at 10:30 a.m. and continuing until 6:00 p.m. when a bucking contest was held. Some of the races run were the open polo pony race, open hurdle, district horse race, district pony race, boy's race, ladies' race, cowboy race, open horse race, Galloway race, steeplechase, Indian race and the race which concluded most of the early meets, the consolation race.

In 1909 the executive of the club was E. J. Kieran, continuing as president, assisted by secretary-treasurer James Aird and vice-president W. H. Cochrane. Cochrane's ranch was located immediately west of the Millarville Church and is now the ranch of Mr. and Mrs. George Bull. Cochrane was an avid supporter of the race meet from its inception through the early years and won many of the races. Strallendorff and Cochrane's "Baronet" and Cochrane's "Why Not" were top horses at the 1909 meet, with A. S. Cannon's "Bobby" and "Lady Retort" showing well through the day.

In 1910 secretary-treasurer Montie I. Fraser recorded a 12-race card which, beginning in this year, was to be held under the "national hunt club rules of Great Britain and Ireland." A. S. Cannon's horses again took a major share of the prizes. E. J. Kieran's "Busy Body" won two of the races in this meet and W. H. Cochrane's famous "Eunice" began the first of a long career of wins by capturing the district pony race. In this year Murray Hendrie's "Grey Cloud" was also introduced to the Millarville racing scene. The speed and endurance of this horse was shown at the Millarville Races of that year, when he won the mile and a half open horse race at 12:30 p.m., showed in the mile and a half open horse race at 1:30 p.m., and won the mile district horse race at 3:00.

1911 also marked the construction of a 30-stall shed row with an office at one end, the first sizable building on the grounds. Stalls were rented for \$1.00 per day on race days in order to repay the \$250 which the club spent on construction.

A fall Race Meet was held this year, too, and at it the first pari-mutuel betting at the races was organized. The pari-mutuels returned \$13.50 to the club at that meet, according to the early records.

In the 1912 meet, the eyes of most of the jockeys were filled with the dust of Hendrie's "Grey Cloud" and Cochrane's "Eunice." These horses won the four major races on the 10-race card.

During these early years, the nearby towns of Okotoks and Black Diamond also held race meets, with horses from the Millarville area placing at or near the top. These race meets were eventually discontinued, but the welcome attendance and support of the people from these communities at the Millarville races has continued to the present time.

Again, in some of Calgary's earliest race meets, such as the Dominion Exhibition and the Alberta Provincial Exhibition in 1912, Millarville horses figured prominently against international competition. Landale's "Surprise," Fraser's "Emma K," Guyle Niess' "Mazdah" were winners. At the Calgary Industrial Exhibition 5-day race meet in 1912, W. H. Cochrane's "Eunice" won two of the seven races on the first day's card, winning at the same meet again in 1913.

The June 25th, 1914, programme for the Millarville Races was covered with advertisements of newly formed oil companies promoting the sale of stocks for the drilling of wells in the recently discovered Turner Valley Oil Field. Typical of these was the following: "Canadian Eagle Oil Fields, Ltd. Capital: \$750,000 par value \$1.00, company owns 3520 acres adjoining Monarch Well, our well site has been selected by Mr. Cunningham-Craig. Prices will advance without notice. Buy now!"

For reasons which are not too clear, the 13-race card of 1913 diminished to seven races in 1914. No doubt the flurry of oil well drilling activity in the Turner Valley area drew much attention and support away from the race meet. E. J. Kieran's "Amber" and "Amora" and Dick von Strallendorff's "Prospect" were the outstanding horses at the 1914 meet. This was the first meet at Millarville to be run under the rules of the Canadian Racing Association.

The 1915 Races were the last to be held prior to a two-year pause during World War I, and apparently this meet was the last at which the bucking contest was held. By 1918, enough of Millarville's able-bodied men had returned to resume the races, with the profits being donated to the Red Cross.

The Years Between the Wars

The Races came upon difficult years immediately following the war. In his late years, E. J. Kieran related that "the race meet would have folded up had it not been for the help of the people of Calgary."

Through the 1920's the races became firmly reestablished; in fact, they became one of the social highlights of each summer, both for local residents and for Calgarians who donned their dust jackets and thoroughly enjoyed the bumpy motor tour to the Millarville Track.

A. J. Cawthorne's strong, legible hand records a 9-race card for 1930, with the notes listing E. J. Kieran continued as a winner with "May Witch" and "By Chance," along with N. Campbell's "Rainy Day" and "Babe," Francis Sinclair-Smith's "Mona" and Clem Gardner's "Stranger" and "Wildfire." Senator Pat Burns was made an honorary president of the Race Club.

By 1932 the number of races increased to eleven, with the names of Campbell, Gardner and Sinclair-Smith again figuring prominently among the owners of winning horses, joined by Trevor Willans and A. Robertson. The 1933 notes show that the sports events drew much interest. The sports events still continue to add variety to the Race Meet even in those days. Among the many events listed were the flat races, the three-legged race, shot-put, sack-race, crab race and tug-o'-war.



Down the home stretch. The Millarville Races in the 1920's. Courtesy of The Glenbow Museum.

The number of races on the card through the 1930's ranged between nine and eleven; receipts and expenditures each year balanced, usually, near the \$1,000 mark. In 1934 the Ardmore Ranch Stake, named after A. P. Welsh's Ranch was added to the card.

The year 1938 marked the end of an era in the history of the Millarville Races, for it was on this year that E. J. "Sam" Kieran, "the Boss," passed from the scene he loved so much. His remarkably long tenure as president - from 1905, when the first race meet was held, until 1938 - is no doubt a dominant reason that the race meet persisted

through the years. The Kieran Memorial Cup Race, named in his honor, was run in the first year following his death and has persisted to the present day.

World War II forced another interruption in the continuity of the races. The 1941 meet was the last one held prior to the rationing of gasoline, which prevented large crowds from attending the meet and forced its cancellation during the early war years.

The Role of Women in the Race Meet

In 1941 one of the continuously featured races of the meet, the ladies' race, was discontinued because of the lack of lady jockeys. The officials ruled, however, that women could now compete against men as jockeys. The role of women in this Race Meet cannot be ignored. Mixed races were a first for Millarville in the circuit of recognized Canadian Race Meets. Two women who are still prominent on the Western Canadian race scene were also prominent in the early Millarville Races. Mrs. John Black of Calgary competed in the races in the 1920's, in the ladies' race or in certain "owner's up" races where the horse was ridden by its owner regardless of sex. Mrs. Black, who is still actively breeding and raising thoroughbreds, has recently raced the well-known horses "Nutana" and "Glen's Rebel."

Mrs. G. C. "Penny" Ridge, now secretary of the Alberta Thoroughbred Horse Association, rode at Millarville until about 1941. Still involved in racing, she is now represented on the western circuit by her well-known "Easter Echo."

Through the years many other women have ridden in the races and have done well. A few who stand out on this list are Iris Glass, Vi Thomas, Ann Buxton, Lavona Lahd Dixon and Barbara Eresman. Lavona Dixon won the Kieran Cup in 1964 and 1965 on "Sonny." Needing only one more win to retain the cup permanently, she was beaten in 1966 by 14-year-old Gwynn Edwards on "Bev's Prince."

Barbara Eresman has ridden in more races at Millarville than any other woman in recent years. The 1966 Race Meet, where Barbara rode in each of the eight races, serves as an illustration of this statement.

The Years Following World War II

February 11, 1945 marked the incorporation of the Millarville Racing Club under the Societies Act, at which time its name was changed to the Millarville Racing and Sports Association.

During the mid-1940's other buildings began to spring up on the race grounds. The first section of the present grandstand was built by local residents, with the second section added in later years by a contractor. The first section of the stands contained pari-mutuel windows along the back.

This was followed by the construction of the Race Track Hall in 1948, by local residents, and still later by the present barns, the pari-mutuel building and the agricultural exhibition building.

In May of 1947, an amendment was enacted to the criminal code stating that in order to be eligible to conduct pari-mutuel betting on horse races, an association must have conducted a race meeting with pari-mutuel betting under the supervision of an officer appointed by the Minister of Agriculture between January 1, 1938, and May 19, 1947. Although the Millarville Association had conducted pari-mutuel betting since 1911, application had never been made to the Minister of Agriculture, and therefore the betting had taken place somewhat outside of prescribed federal regulations. The government pointed this out to the association in September of 1949. At this time the association was threatened with extinction, but the difficulties were overcome. In 1951, 40 years after pari-mutuel betting began at the Millarville track, the mutuels were at last conducted under government regulations and the Millarville Races were officially recognized on the Department of Agriculture's list of Canada's leading race centres.

An 8-race card has persisted, with a few exceptions, since the resumption of the races following World War II. One exception was the 1947 meet which featured nine races, the "extra" race being a cart race, with a team of horses pulling the "chariots" and their standing drivers around the track in a swirl of dust.

The 1950's and 1960's witnessed a steady growth of the race meet in attendance, betting and prize money offered, under the able presidency of H. G. Macklin. By 1959 the attendance had reached 7,000, with betting totalling \$22,194; in 1964, 8,000 people were at the meet, betting \$23,098.

In 1952 grass was planted on the track and Millarville was listed as the only turf track in Canada. The environs of the track were apparently too harsh for the grass, and the track reverted to dirt. This year a new surfacing of tanbark and loam should improve the quality of the track considerably.

A welcome addition to the Race Meet in the early 1960's was the fine eight-stall starting gate, called the Hayden-Wyatt gate. It was patterned after the one used on the Calgary Track and was constructed at Longview by Homer Hayden and Jim Wyatt. It is owned jointly by the Millarville Association and the High River Agricultural Society.

A point worthy of mention, too, is that the Millarville Race Meet has the distinction of having held the first pari-mutuel quarter horse races in Canada. Quarter horse races are featured on today's card, and this fast, sturdy breed adds much color to the meet.

Although the Race Meet this year is listed as the 62nd, interruptions have occurred, but these were caused only by war or weather. Along with each of the two world wars, both of which forced temporary cancellations of the meet, flooding has on occasion made Race Day a tragedy. An early flood washed out one end of the track, forcing a change in its location.

In 1963 another flood occurred which cut through the road on either side of the bridge at the entrance to the grounds and caused the meet to be cancelled. Much of the track was under water and some stalls in the barns were a foot deep in it. The grounds on race day, 1963, were indeed a forlorn sight, accented by the empty and unused starting gate which stood alone in mud and water at the end of the flooded track. The races were rescheduled on August 24th of that year, when they featured the second go-round of the \$7,000 Canadian Cutting Horse Futurity in addition to the regular race card. But the damage had been done, and the crowd attending the meet dwindled to 2,000 – an all-time low in the days of the motor car. Betting dropped from \$21,000 in 1962 to \$9,000 at the postponed 1963 meet.

The Millarville Races Today

The continuity and stability of the Millarville Races over the past 62 years is in large measure due to the hard and persistent work of the directors, guided by the few presidents which the association has had since its inception. From 1905 through 1965, a period of 60 years, the presidency was held by only four men. The first, E. J. Kieran, held the office from 1905 until his death in 1938, when it was placed in the hands of his son J. R. Kieran, who directed the meet for the next ten years. Charles Nelson succeeded him in 1948 and 1949, bringing to a close the 43-year reign of the Keirans. Hugh Macklin, now past-president of the Association, held the office from 1950 through 1965, and the growth and success of the meet through these years is testimony in part to his hard work and leadership, and to the support which has been given by local residents. The presidency is now in the capable hands of Don Cross.

Recognizing that a few people carry an unusually heavy load of the work and responsibility for staging the races, it is clear also that the meet could not be a success without the unselfish efforts of local residents too numerous to list. Race Day at Millarville is truly a community effort.

The current race card offers a variety of races, and any breed of horse can run in at least two races throughout the day. The prize money has increased from \$105 offered in 1905, to the present total of more than \$17,000. In two races eighty percent of the purse is added to the listed prize money.

A glance at the Canada Department of Agriculture's latest edition of "Pari-mutuel Betting on Races for Running Horses" would produce a smile of pride and satisfaction from any resident of the Millarville area. In this publication Millarville is listed with the relatively few officially recognized racing centres, some of which are new.

Bonnets – Montreal, Northlands Park – Edmonton, Exhibition Park – Vancouver, and Victoria Park – Calgary. Many millions of dollars are bet at these tracks, contrasting with Millarville's record \$25,494 established in 1966.



The label "unique" has often been applied to the Millarville Races, and truly it is a unique meet. Although it is listed in the great racing bibles and statistical records of the sport of kings, it differs from other race meets on the list in the following ways: the race meet has no salaried officials, only \$2.00 win and place bets are allowed, the tote board consists of chalk and a blackboard listing only approximate odds, women can compete against men as jockeys.

Only war and the weather have interrupted the Millarville Races since 1905. Shown above is an example of the latter, which forced a postponement of the races in 1963. This is the Hayden-Wyatt starting gate, standing in mud and water at the end of the track near the creek. Courtesy of The Calgary Herald.

A horse is allowed to run in more than one race during the day, jockeys mix with the crowds, weigh-ins are on a bathroom scale and there have been no photo finishes or saliva tests.

The race grounds at Millarville continue to be slowly but steadily improved. A new judges stand; expansion of the grandstands and pari-mutuel building are being contemplated. A photo finish will be implemented at the 1968 meet.

The breeding and raising of fine horses continue in the district, and with it the appeal of racing has remained firm in the district. Once each year the track and grounds burst forth with the color and activity of the races. Men and horses such as W. H. Cochrane and "Eunice," E. J. Kieran with "May Witch" and "Busy Body," Buckskin Charlie Wilkinson and "Yorkshire Lad," Norman Willan's and "Novice," A. S. Cannon and "Lady Retort," Clem Gardner and "Wildfire," Neil Campbell and "Rainy Day," Francis Sinclair-Smith and "Mona" and a list longer than your arm, spanning 62 years, have served to brand the southern Alberta Foothills belt with the tradition of the Millarville Races.



Lining up for the start, this photo of the races in the late 1920's shows Neil Campbell on "Dizzy" at the left, Jack Jeffries, Jack Kipling 3rd from left. "Buckskin Charlie" Wilkinson is shown 2nd from right

The assistance of the Glenbow Foundation, the Calgary Herald and Mrs. W. H. Trigg, as well as Mrs. Millie Parker, Hugh Macklin, Mr. And Mrs. David Glaister, Sr., and others of the Millarville area are gratefully acknowledged.

Read more historical articles on [Facebook - Millarville Historical Society](#) or email us millarvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com if you have photos, information, or questions.

Check out our newly formatted website: millarvillehistoricalsociety.ca

A Tribute to Barb Godwin, also known as Granny Goose, sadly passed away May 25, 2025

Barb epitomized volunteerism. She was an exceptionally hard-working individual who spent a lifetime working with youth in different parts of the world - serving her community and country. Her attitude was always, "One must give back to one's community", and Barb consistently modelled for her family and community how important it is to volunteer.



For more than fifty years, Barb called Millarville AB her home and she continued to help youth respectfully in various capacities. She helped special needs kids as a volunteer with Foothills Association to Aid the Handicapped by leading kids on horseback around in a fenced area, positively reassuring them. Barb and her dog volunteered at Turner Valley Elementary School for Listening Tails, a special reading program where students gain reading skills and confidence by reading out loud to therapy dogs. Students were able to read to Barb's dog, Gypsy, and reading became more fun as they interacted with Barb, her dog, and read too. Barb supported the Millarville Christ Church Ladies' Guild for many years making sandwiches for funerals, cleaning gravestones before Flower Festival and removing flowers after the festival. Barb was always ready to help wherever needed, with her special smile.

In 2002, Barb was awarded Millarville Racing and Agriculture Society (MRAS) Life Member status for her long-standing volunteerism. Barb was a Priddis & Millarville Fair Manager for almost two decades, an exhibitor, supporter, and volunteered for numerous work days for many years. She contributed articles for "Going to the Fair". In 2018, Barb was awarded Outstanding Contributor/Exhibitor of the Priddis & Millarville Fair for her exceptional contributions at MRAS.

Barb mentored many young kids locally, demonstrating the importance of our country atmosphere, encouraging youth to enter fair exhibits, and

sharing her love of our community. Barb's acts of generosity, her leadership with youth, and passion for community building have been true acts of public service! For this, Barb was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2023.

She was a passionate, dedicated Historical Committee Manager for more than two decades, organizing historic files, cleaning MRAS trophies and updating historical photos & records. Barb continued to be a strong advocate for the Millarville Racing and Agricultural Society, readily sharing her pride and knowledge of the history of this area, and highlighting its importance to our community.

To commemorate Canada's birthday in 2017, Barb spearheaded the initiative that the Millarville Historical Committee should plant 150 trees at the Racetrack. So the Historical Committee dug young spruce trees from ditches and with the help of Millarville Community School students these were planted at the Racetrack. Sadly, it turned out to be a very hot dry summer and only a few survived.

Barb leaves behind a huge legacy to her rural roots: dedicated volunteerism, detailed historical records of local events, and unlimited time to her community that she loved so dearly. Always with a huge smile and two thumbs up!

We miss her so very much!

Submitted by Lorretta Stabler - Millarville Historical Society President

Flower Festival 2025



Christ Church, Millarville
July 12 & 13, 2025

Tea and scones served at Church House
Sat., July 12 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Cost: \$10.00, kids 6 & under: \$5.00

Join us in worship at Christ Church
Sunday, July 13, 2025 10:30 am.

Thanks to Flower Festival supporters:

Sobey's Okotoks, Staples Okotoks, Millarville Racing & Agricultural Society
Millarville Horticultural Society, Ed Shepherd, Sharon Fountain.





If you haven't looked yet, be sure to peruse the Fair Book [Click here to see it](#) to get a good feel for all the country fun being offered on August 16 & 17 (Gymkhana on August 15 in the afternoon). Print copies are available in the MRAS office while supply lasts.

This is a great opportunity to try out exhibiting your skills – ride your horse, show your Beef Cattle, Dairy Goat, Rabbit, Sheep or Poultry, enter in one or more classes in Arts & Handicrafts, Fibre Arts, Flowers, Home Cooking & Baking, Photography, Vegetables & Fruit, Woodworking. Enter a competition in Tractor Pull, Honey, Salt Lick, or Sheep or Horse Costume. Register online with <https://www.assistexpo.ca/priddis-millarville-fair> anytime between now and the deadline of August 6, 2025.



Interested in volunteering at the Fair – we have all kinds of jobs, big and small, 2 to many hours of commitment – there is always room for fun-loving people. Let us know you are interested by [clicking here](#).

See you at the Fair!

The detailed schedules for each Fair day should be finalized by mid-July. Check the [MRAS website](#), Facebook or Instagram for the big reveal.





The Kids Only Shoppe elves are taking a summer hiatus from work bees to create time for other pursuits. In each **NEWSLETTER**, one or more of our elves share their story as part of our volunteer spotlight. A quick read will give you a good idea of the variety of people drawn to the KOS and why they continue to be part of our mission.

Our current inventory of products ready for the November market is shown in the newsletter. Overall inventory is strong but our young shoppers want choice so we are always on the hunt for new ideas. If you have a project idea, make up some samples and share photos with us via email at kos@mras-track.com. As always, we encourage all creative folks to continue crafting as your leisure. There will be a call for collecting all the made-at-home projects in late September. We take final inventory, price and sort in October to be market ready.

If you are thinking at far ahead, our market days are Saturday and Sunday, November 8, 9, 15 and 16. We will be looking for help during the market for wrappers, cashiers and shopping helpers.

Many thanks to all those who drop off donations anonymously. You are appreciated!





MRAS EQUINE FACILITIES

Questions about the MRAS Equine Facilities email: grounds@mras-track.com.

For memberships email: office@mras-track.com

Hello Equine Members,

The MRAS riding rules, and sign-up sheet have been developed to help our members have a safe and enjoyable time riding while also maintaining our building in good condition.

Riding Rules: These have been created and agreed upon to ensure everyone using the facility remains safe and that our facility can be kept in great condition. Please continue to follow the rules and encourage your fellow riders to follow the rules. Click [HERE](https://www.millarvilleracetrack.com/equine/) for the rules or go to: <https://www.millarvilleracetrack.com/equine/>.

Booking Sheet: Please use the booking sheet when you plan to ride and honor your time. This practice is in place to ensure fair usage of the facility and helps the maintenance team plan when they can be in the arena for maintenance.

Manure: Please continue to clean up after your horses. We know the vast majority of you are excellent at this, but it continues to be a problem.

****LEAVE IT BETTER THAN HOW YOU FOUND IT****

Please respect all riders and clean up after every ride. Sweep the mats, put things back where they belong, dispose of your horse's manure from the arena and parking lot using the forks and transport it to the BLUE BINS (not the garbage can).

Help us take pride in our arena and its use by following the rules that we have in place,

Thank you!

UPCOMING EQUINE ACTIVITIES:

The volunteer members of the MRAS Equine Committee are working hard to bring a variety of clinics and activities to the MRAS riding membership and equine community. Please check the website regularly to see what is available at: www.millarvilleracetrack.com-Equine tab under Upcoming Events.

JULY KIDS & ADULT RIDING LESSON SERIES

With Danielle Bartlett 🐾

Wednesday & Thursday morning: July 2 & 3
9:30am to 1:30pm

Lessons are approximately 1 hour in length. Ride times will be assigned once registrations are all in. Kids and adults do not ride in the same groups. Kids ride in the earlier time slots. Maximum 4 riders per group.

Danielle is a certified Equestrian Canada Instructor and holds a Licenced Coach Certification with Equestrian Canada. She has an excellent ability to communicate with youth and adults. She excels at teaching all levels of riders to reach their goals, those at a higher level refining their skills or those still learning more basic skills.

Kids should be at least 6 years old and riding independently, unassisted and can stop their horse.

All horses must be well mannered in a group of horses.

Cost - Current MRAS Riding Members \$130.00 for 2 lessons
Non - MRAS Riding Members \$150 for 2 lessons

To register or for more information please contact lynnbrunton@gmail.com. There is limited space for each level.

THE RIDER'S BODY: A Physiotherapy Approach to Biomechanics in the Saddle

with Keira Forsyth, B Diamond Physio / Ride Right Clinics

Ride Right Clinic – Saturday, July 12
Rodeo Infield Arena, MRAS Grounds (Indoor arena if weather requires)

This small-group mounted clinic focuses on optimizing rider performance through in-saddle assessment and correction. It's designed for riders of all levels and disciplines who want to improve their balance, symmetry, and effectiveness in the tack.

Cost: MRAS Current Riding Members \$125.00, priority until Sunday, May 25th

Non-Members \$140.00

All pricing includes GST

Email mras.equine@gmail.com to register.

Payment details will be shared after registration confirmation

Receipts for physiotherapy will be emailed directly by the clinician following MRAS admin processing.

PATTERN PRACTICE

Sunday, June 15, 2025

9:30 – 11AM or 11AM – 12:30PM

Come out and have some fun riding patterns in a relaxed and fun environment. Riders will execute one or two patterns depending on the complexity. There may also be some transition rail work.

For best success and fit for this program you need to be comfortable at all gaits including a lope. Horses must be good with a group of horses as you will be required to be in a lineup with other horses.

To register or for more information contact lynnbrunton@gmail.com. Once you are registered payment instructions will be sent.

Cost - MRAS Riding Members \$15 - priority registrations to May 26, 2025

Non-Riding Members \$25

More upcoming dates: July 13 & 27, September 28 & October 19. Registration will open about 30 days prior to each date.

This is a non-refundable program.

EOH (EASE OF HANDLING) OBSTACLES CLINIC

With Kimberly Cox
Saturday, July 19th

Kimberly is a Working Equitation judge and will review with participants how each obstacle is ridden and judged. New to the sport or a veteran, all WE levels are welcome to participate.

Clinic format:

- 1) Course walk (without horse); execution instruction provided
- 2) Practice time on the obstacles; more guidance given, as needed and requested
- 3) Each rider will have a turn to ride the EOH Course
- 4) (Time permitting) Speed Trial

Clinic FULL.

If you have questions, please email
MRAS.equine@gmail.com

4-DAY AUGUST KIDS CAMP

Tuesday, August 5th – Friday, August 8th
9:30am to 12:30pm

This is a perfect place for that horse loving kid to spend summer days with their horse and other horsey kids. There will be a riding lesson with Danielle Bartlett on three of the days. Crafts, games, grooming, ranch riding, patterns, showmanship and more!

Kids must have their own horse. Best suited for kids ages 6 to 12. Children must be riding independently, unassisted and at minimum walk, trot and stop their horses.

Horses must be good in a group of other horses.

Cost – Current MRAS Riding Members \$250.00
Non-Riding Members \$290.00

Any questions and to register please contact lynnbrunton@gmail.com. When registering please specify your child's age. Once you have registered, deposit and payment instructions will be sent. 50% deposit is required upon registration with the balance due 30 days prior to the start date.

FALL LESSONS SERIES

KIDS & ADULT RIDING LESSONS

With Danielle Bartlett 🐾
Friday evenings
Sept. 12, 26, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24

Registration details will be coming out shortly.
Contact lynnbrunton@gmail.com for more information

DRESSAGE LESSONS SERIES

with Kimberly Cox
Wednesday evenings OR Thursday mornings

Sept and Oct dates and registration details coming our shortly.
Contact mras.equine@gmail.com for more information.

Clinic and Lesson Series Cancellation Policy

MRAS cannot guarantee your spot will be filled in the event of cancellation however every attempt will be made to do so. Should your spot be filled, a refund will be issued less a 15% administration fee. If your spot cannot be filled the full amount will be forfeited. Substitutions may be allowed; the Clinic Coordinator must be consulted and approve the substitution. MRAS will have no part in facilitating payments from a substitute.

For more information about the activities and lessons listed and to see what is available, check the website regularly at: www.millarvilleracetrack.com
Equine tab under Upcoming Events.



EQUINE MEMBERSHIPS



2024 – 25 MEMBERSHIP PLANS

ANNUAL*

NOVEMBER – OCTOBER

FAMILY \$475

(ADDITIONAL DEPENDENT \$70)

INDIVIDUAL \$325

All year access to
Indoor Riding
Arena and
Seasonal Outdoor
Rings

SEASONAL*

NOV– APR OR MAY– OCT

FAMILY \$350

(ADDITIONAL DEPENDENT \$50)

INDIVIDUAL \$225

For your
Seasonal Riding
needs.

QUARTERLY*

NOV – JAN; FEB–APR;
MAY–JUL; AUG–OCT

FAMILY \$225

(ADDITIONAL DEPENDENT \$30)

INDIVIDUAL \$150

Try out our
Riding facilities!

*All Equine membership plans
require a General MRAS membership

403-931-3411

WWW.MILLARVILLERACETRACK.COM

2024-2025 MRAS GENERAL MEMBERSHIPS



New Lower Rates !

FAMILY \$50

INDIVIDUAL \$40

SENIOR \$30

STUDENT \$30

BENEFITS OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP:

- Free Admission to *MRAS Hosted Events*
- Access to our indoor arena and seasonal outdoor riding facilities with the purchase of a riding membership
- Event committee participation
- Connection with neighbours, friends and our community



Purchase/Renew your Membership HERE OR

GO TO:

<https://www.millarvilleracetrack.com/membership/>



GARDENING UNDER THE ARCH

<http://millarvillehortclub.com>

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, September to May, at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are held at the Millarville Anglican Church House on Hwy 549.

There are no meetings until Tuesday September 9, 2025. This will be our potluck with a Salute to our Volunteers. Our speaker will be Kathleen from the Foothills County who will talk about weeds in our fields and gardens. We need to know this !

6:30 pm start.

The 2025 Christ Church Millarville Flower Festival is July 12 and 13, Saturday and Sunday. Horticultural club members are encouraged to bring cut flowers to decorate the cemetery and arrangements to decorate the church. Please bring these on Friday July 11 after 6pm.

Tea and scones will be served 11 to 3 on Saturday , \$10.

Sunday worship at 10:30 am . All welcome. Or just come and enjoy the decorated cemetery and church all weekend.

Priddis Millarville Fair

August 16 and 17 , 2025

The deadline for entries is August 6. I am sure you have a spectacular vegetable, flower , horse, beef or art that deserves to be shown off ! If you would like to volunteer at the fair, contact fair@millarvilleracetrack.ca. Even if it is for a couple hours, we appreciate it !

Thank you to Patty Webb and her garden committee that keeps the gardens at MRAS, Oilfield's hospital and Millarville community school looking fresh and amazing.

If you are interested in attending any of our presentations, please contact Louise Patterson Bruns (our new President) at louispattersonbruns@gmail.com or at millarvillehorticulturalclub@gmail.com. Whether you are a novice or expert in landscaping or gardening, join our club; \$15/year for singles or \$20/year for a family. Check us out on [Facebook](#) as well .



MILLARVILLE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Did you Know?

Summer library hours beginning June 30 will be Tuesday 9-12 and Wednesday 10-7:30. The library will be closed Canada Day. Millarville and Priddis

Fair booklets are available at the library.

Reading for just six minutes can reduce stress levels by 68% plus reading can improve your sleep quality!

We have a new artist display adorning the walls of our library. Stop by and check out the beautiful paintings by local artist Shelley Van Reekum.

Would you?

Looking for ideas and people to share or teach a Christmas craft or class for adults and/or children this fall and winter. Please speak to Natasha at the Library.

Consider joining the Library Board. It is a 1-2 hour per month commitment and is a great way to get involved and ensure continued success in having a library in our community.

Classes

Drop-in Kids program will run every Wednesday starting on July 9th from 11-4. Please come to the library for fun activities, craft and story time accompanied by a parent or grandparent. Go to the Millarville Community Library Facebook page for details about extra special activities that will be happening at the Kid's program as the summer progresses.

Watch for more information about upcoming fall classes including Facial cupping with Dr. Mandle Gillette on September 25th, an author visit on September 18th and an extra special activity with the Sheep River Library in October!

Bouquet's

A big thank you to the Millarville Horticultural Club for all their hard work and help in cleaning up the library garden. President Louise Bruns provided valuable information to make it look so attractive. Patty Webb, Arlene O, Susan B, Glenda B, Yvonne S were wonderful to work alongside as we freshened up the school garden next to our library. We enjoyed working alongside these knowledgeable people. We thank Jean Whyte for her years of service as our library board chairperson. Welcome to our new chairperson Sheila Hildebrandt.

Need a Read?

"I love to read *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Graham. It is a wholesome happy book detailing the adventures and pastime of the simple, wonderful creatures that live by the river. A perfect summer read."

Kate Grade 8, Millarville

THREE POINT CREEK RANCH HORSE BOARDING

We're minutes from Millarville only 5 minutes from Millarville's indoor riding arena and just a short stroll away from Diamond Valley, Okotoks, and Calgary

Heated Barn Features:

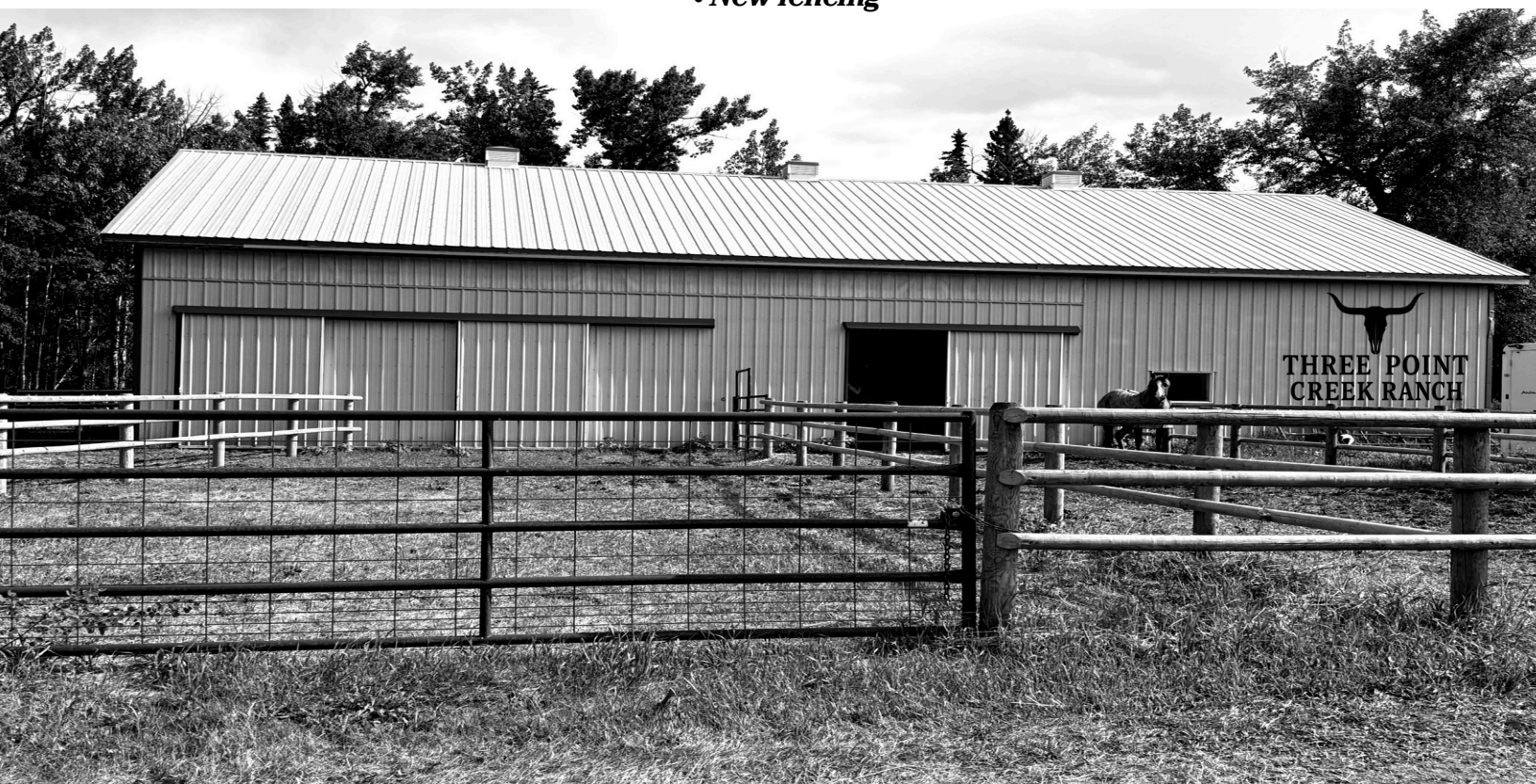
- *Private stalls with fenced areas*
- *Tack storage, water & power*
- *New fencing*

Paddock Features:

- *Fenced paddocks private & non private options*
- *Tack storage & water*
- *New fencing*

Extra Options:

- *Riding corral & round pen*
- *Access - 56 acres mixed terrain*
- *Trailer parking available*



Scan QR code or email threepointcreek ranch@gmail.com



THE LIFE YOU CHANGE MIGHT BE YOURS



MARCH • CREW • DONATE



KidneyMarch

100KM

JOIN US THIS SEPTEMBER

Walk the farthest you have ever walked and raise the most you have ever raised to fight kidney disease and for organ donation. 4 Million Canadians have chronic kidney disease or are at risk. Most people don't even know until it's too late. Together, we will march to make a big difference and have a life-changing impact on all those affected by this devastating disease.



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Thank you to our Sponsors

(click logo to go to website)



ADVERTISE IN THE AWARD-WINNING TRACK WATCH NEWSLETTER



For inquiries and pricing please contact Tylen: office@mras-track.com

*Local Community Events are free of charge. Submission deadline is the 19th of the month for the next month.