



Project Title: Heritability of Equine Hair Whorls

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Presentation Type: Poster and Creative Works Showcase

Session Name: Biological and Agricultural Sciences

Abstract: Hair whorls (trichoglyphs) have long been correlated with trends in animals' behavior, temperament, response to stimulus, and preferred laterality. Recent studies in these areas have lent some scientific backing to horseman's legends, but relatively little work has been done on the inheritance of whorls through generations. I will be observing and documenting hair whorls on most of the horses at the WK Kellogg Arabian Horse Center, and requesting whorl information from the owners of contributing stallions. Trends in these data, such as commonalities in whorl direction, size and placement through a genetic lineage, will provide evidence on the hypothesis that these traits can be genetically inherited. Eventually, these data might help us identify the genes associated with particular hair whorl patterns, and thus the associated motor and personality traits.