

Reining in Resources: Leveraging Digital Platforms to Expand Equine Education

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Introduction

Prior to 2024, MU Extension lacked a centralized location for equine educational resources, leaving guidesheets, videos, webinars, and program information spread across multiple digital platforms. To better serve global horse owners and equine professionals, a comprehensive digital hub was developed by combining the MU Extension Equine website and the MU Equine YouTube playlist. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, Missouri has 75,250 horses and ponies; with 2.4 million nationwide, this digital hub broadens MU Extension’s ability to support equine owners well beyond Missouri.

Objectives

- Create a centralized digital home for all MU Extension equine resources.
- Increase accessibility to research-based information for horse owners, producers, and equine professionals worldwide.
- Enhance visibility and reach of equine programming, including the Horsemen’s Webinar Series.
- Improve efficiency in content development and distribution to ensure horse owners receive timely, consistent, and high-quality resources.

Platform Content

The MU Extension Equine digital platforms bring together a comprehensive collection of educational resources designed to support horse owners, producers, and equine professionals. The website and YouTube playlist offer research-based guidance, practical demonstrations, and timely program information in an accessible, easy-to-navigate format.

Webpage contents:

- Research-based equine guidesheets
- Calendar of upcoming workshops, clinics, and outreach events
- Contact information for MU Extension specialists
- Connections to MU Extension programs, publications, and statewide initiatives
- Centralized access to timely equine news, updates, and program announcements

YouTube playlist contents:

- Recordings from the quarterly Horsemen’s Webinar Series
- Instructional videos paired with MU Extension publications
- Access to additional agricultural videos through MU Extension’s main YouTube channel

Methods

To identify opportunities for improvement, the project team conducted a thorough review of existing MU Extension equine materials, digital assets, and user access challenges. This assessment revealed fragmentation across platforms and inconsistent visibility of key resources such as guidesheets, videos, and webinar recordings. To address these gaps, the team developed an integrated digital strategy focused on accessibility, consistency, and long-term sustainability of equine education resources. The following methods were used to build and maintain the centralized equine education hub:

- Consolidated all existing MU Extension equine guidesheets, webinars, and videos into a single organized digital platform.
- Created and standardized new instructional video content and workflows to improve consistency of webinar recordings.
- Developed a user-friendly equine website with clear categories, intuitive navigation, and mobile-optimized design.
- Established ongoing update procedures that allow specialists to efficiently add new materials and ensure long-term accuracy.

Impacts and Outcomes

The new equine digital hub is already producing measurable results and is positioned to deliver long-term benefits for MU Extension’s equine program. Since its launch in Fall 2024, engagement data shows strong use from five countries, demonstrating improved access to MU Extension’s research-based materials. Figures 1 and 2 summarize geographic reach and platform interactions, highlighting early impacts of creating a single accessible resource.

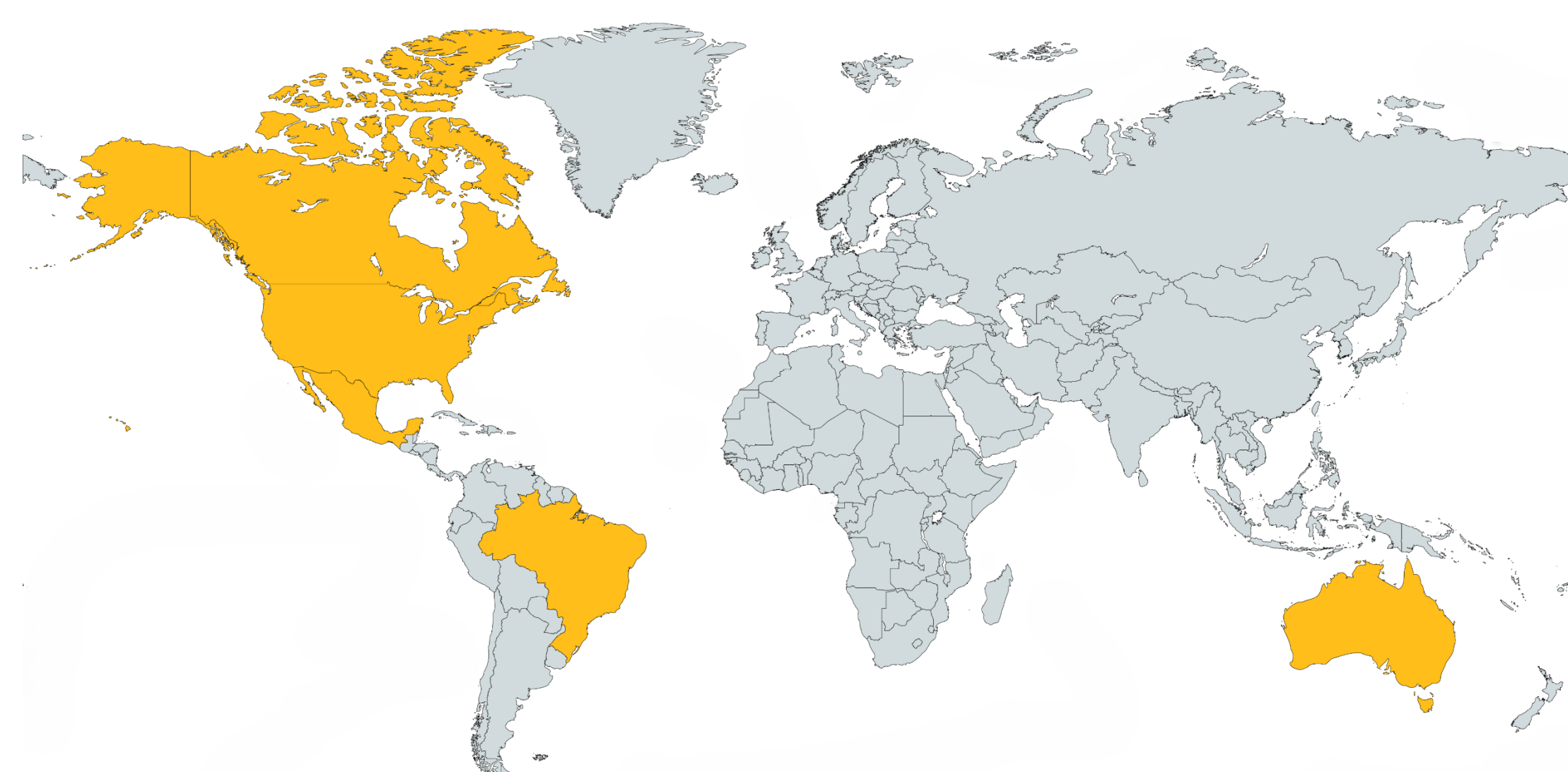


Figure 1. Gold shading indicates countries that accessed the platforms.

Program impacts:

- Expanded access to high-quality, research-based equine education for domestic and international online users supported by more consistent and visible digital programming.
- Improved internal efficiency and collaboration among specialists through shared digital workflows, enhancing the delivery of equine education.

Program outcomes:

- Consolidating guidesheets, videos, and webinars into one streamlined platform makes it easier for users to locate and engage with MU Extension equine resources, resulting in increased traffic across all major content types.
- Increased visibility and use of updated publications, webinar recordings, and instructional videos demonstrate a strong and growing demand for digital equine education.

Reach and Interactions

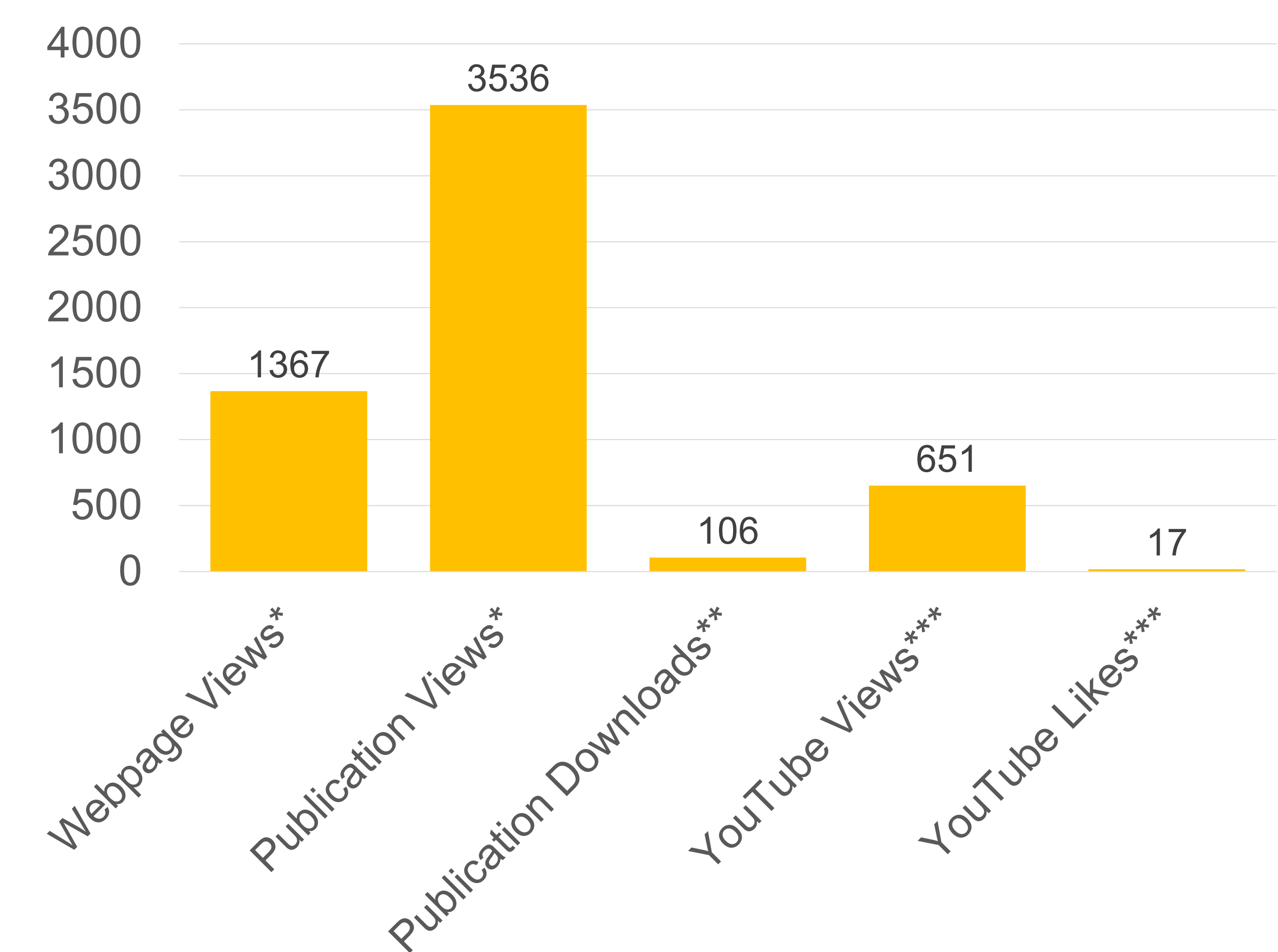


Figure 2. Equine platform engagement metrics.

*Google Analytics data is only available from January 5, 2025 to present.

**Publication views include 106 downloads.

***YouTube data available August 2024 to present.

