

# Equine Welfare Assessment Skills Certification Course

## Authors

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## Problem

- Livestock contribute \$1.59 billion in economic impact in the state of Georgia
- 12.1% or \$192 million is attributed to Georgia's equine industry
- Rise of social license to operate and scrutiny of animal agriculture regarding animal welfare and husbandry practices
- Stakeholders include state agencies, law enforcement 501(c)3 and private equine rescues, veterinarians, and others
- Individuals responding to equine welfare concerns may lack agricultural background or education on acceptable equine welfare and management practices

## Response

- 3-day Equine Welfare Assessment Skills Certification Course piloted in 2024.
- Target audience: law enforcement, state agencies, animal control, equine rescues, veterinarians.
- Topics included: social license to operate, best practices for non-profits, defining equine welfare, behavior and handling of horses, trailer safety and equine transportation, body condition scoring, equine health management and equine nutrition.
- Post-retrospective evaluation completed by participants to assess program impact
- Certificate of completion provided to those who passed a competency exam at the conclusion of the course.

## Response & Demographics

- 35 participants
- 7 states (GA, NC, SC, VA, WV, ME, TX)
- Experience in equine welfare ranged from 1 to 40+ years
- Diverse representation of equine industry stakeholders
  - 3% veterinarians
  - 42.9% Equine Rescue
  - 25.5% State Agencies
    - 28.6% "Other" – primarily animal control



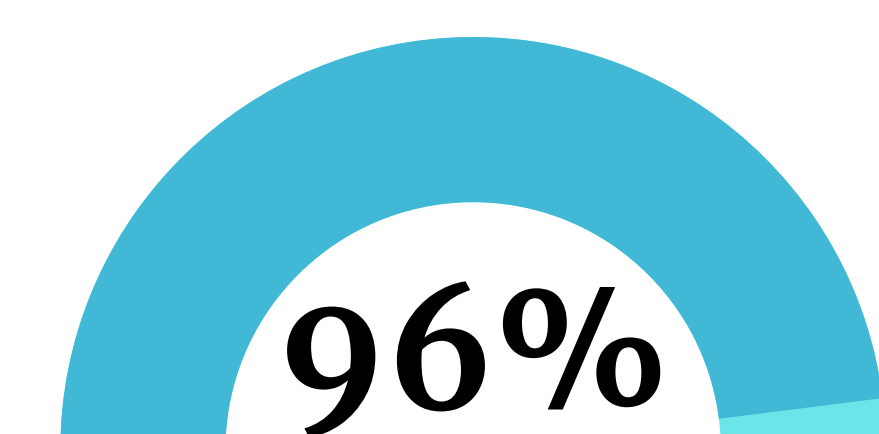
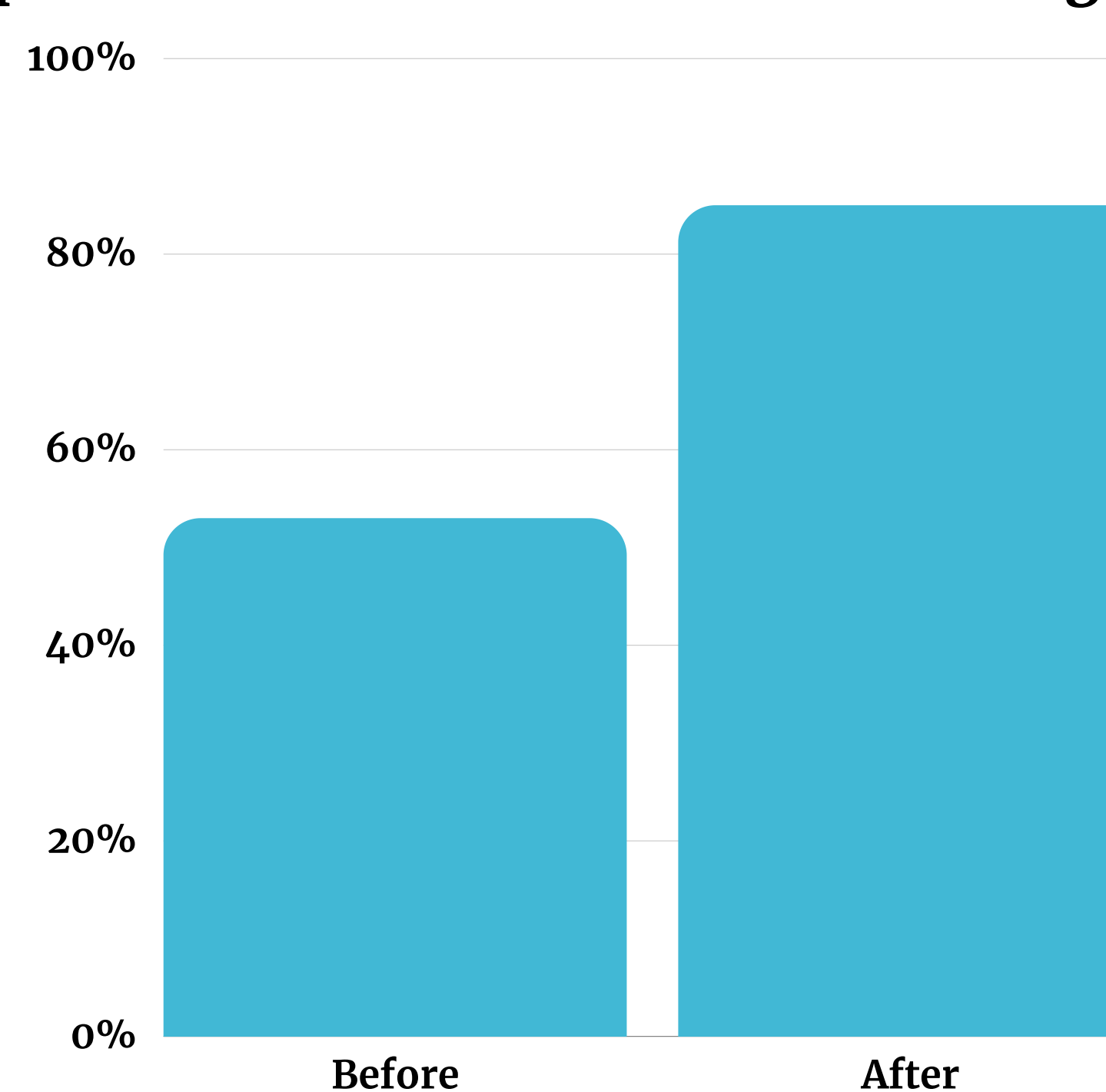
Img. 1: Hands-On Equine Demonstration

## Program Satisfaction

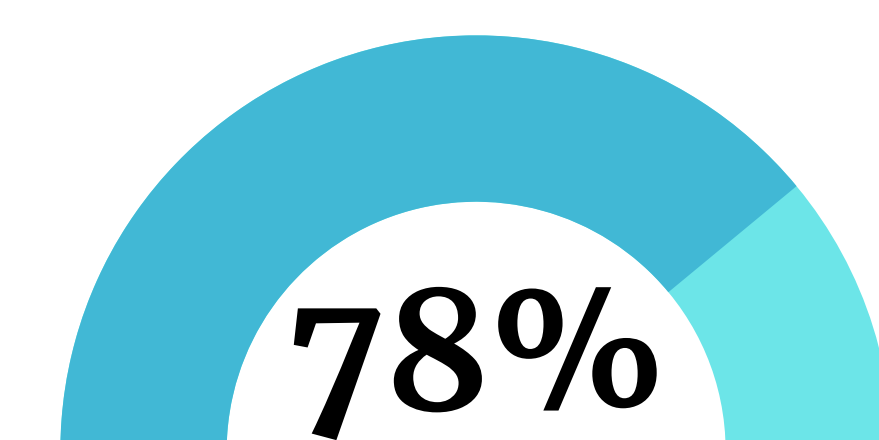
- Overall satisfaction good or excellent (96%)
- Excellent satisfaction with presenters (70%) and take-home materials (71%).

## Program Impact

Fig 2. Percent of Participants Self-Reporting As "Very" or "Extremely Knowledgeable" About Equine Welfare Before & After Attending



of participants felt that attending the program would improve their ability to make informed decisions regarding equine welfare.



of participants felt that attending the program increased their understanding of equine welfare and improved their confidence in making equine management decisions.

## Participant Feedback

"This was an innovative idea and well done for a first event!"

"This was amazing. Thank you so much. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to attend. All the presenters were so kind and passionate not only about equine welfare but also educating others."



Img. 2: 2024 Equine Welfare Assessment Skills Certificate Course Participants



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