

Vita

The author was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1966. She grew up in the suburbs of Chesapeake, Virginia, attending St. Paul's Elementary and High School in Portsmouth. She and her family then moved to rural Warrenton, Virginia where she began working on a horse breeding and training farm and as a veterinary technician. She also began horse judging through 4-H, and eventually competed successfully with the Virginia State Horse Judging Team, winning several national competitions. She graduated from Fauquier High School in 1984. Her parents now live in Walkerton in eastern Virginia.

She went on to attend Virginia Tech, and worked part-time in the Forage Testing Lab, was an active member of the Block and Bridle Club, and competed successfully in horse judging at the collegiate level. She received her B.S. degree in Animal Science, with a minor in Biology, in 1988. She then went to the University of Kentucky where she worked as a technician in the UK Medical Center's Alzheimer research lab before becoming a full-time graduate student in Equine Reproductive Physiology in the Animal Science department. She received her M.S. in 1991 under Dr. Keith Schillo.

She worked as an Extension Agent in Kentucky and Virginia for 5 years before returning to graduate school at Virginia Tech. In the spring of 1998 she began working full-time on a Ph.D. degree in Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences.