# MOST REQUESTED PROGRAMS

*Most of these programs can be adapted to fit the time desired by the event organizers, from 1 to 2 hours. All programs can be presented in either a round pen or an arena, except for those identified below as specifically requiring a round pen or an arena. Several, as identified below, can be adapted for presentation in a classroom or auditorium. Each requires minimal equipment, as noted below, and a sound system (with a wireless headset mic) to amplify Van’s voice and ensure he can be heard.*

## Starting on the Trail to Success—First Time Under Saddle

In this demonstration Van helps an untrained colt accept blanket, saddle, and rider for the first time. You might have seen “round pen” demonstrations before, but in this presentation Van will take you way beyond the horse. He encourages listeners to take a long look at themselves. Van uses the horse to educate, motivate, inspire, and entertain. His clever stories and analogies make learning horsemanship from the horse’s perspective seem effortless.

*Space/Venue: round pen (at least 50’) with good footing*

*Equipment/Additional Needs: suitable horse*

## The Three Steps to Stopping

Anyone who knows Van can attest to his dislike of the overuse of bits. Too often folks will reach for a bigger bit to get a bigger stop. In this presentation Van will first discuss the concept of movement and help us understand what motivates a horse to move forward. Once movement is understood, stopping comes naturally and those bigger bits are no longer needed to get the quick and easy stops we want from our horses. Van will teach the three steps to stopping.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: a horse that needs work on its stop*

## Ground Manners and Ground Work

For the weanling, yearling, two year old, or older, the horse’s manners are paramount in safe horsemanship. No matter how much we ride, we still spend more time on the ground with our horses than in the saddle. A good relationship with our horse on the ground will influence its behavior under saddle. Van will demonstrate how and what should be acceptable behavior for our babies as well as our adult horse. Safety is the key issue in his presentation. A safe horse is one that is fun to be around.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: suitable horse*

## Dealing with Obstacles/Spookiness

This is one of Van’s most requested presentations. Whether in the classroom or the arena, this presentation forces us to look deep into ourselves. Because our horses have such keen senses and self-preservation instincts, their fear can be interpreted as a lack of trust and confidence in themselves, their environment, and – most important – their handlers. Van will teach us how to be trustworthy in our horses’ eyes. Van calls this popular presentation “The Concept of Fear, Trust and Confidence.” (Hint: Bring a tissue. This is a real tear-jerker.)

*Equipment/Additional Needs: horse with spookiness issues; any type of obstacles (barrels, tarp, anything “scary” for a horse)*

# MOST REQUESTED PROGRAMS

## Trailer Loading/Unloading and Hauling Safely

Our trailers are better and safer than they have ever been, and our towing vehicles are safer and stronger than ever. However, the horse’s attitude toward loading and hauling has remained the same. Van will explain why our horses hesitate to load, and he’ll teach us how to train the horse to load and unload quietly and safely, and how to haul the horse safely. In this demonstration Van also will discuss all aspects of horse trailers and towing vehicles.

*Space/Venue: arena*

*Equipment/Additional Needs: horse; trailer, preferably open (without a rear tack)*

## Basic Posture-Be a Rider Rather than a Passenger

Our posture in the saddle has a direct impact on our horse’s performance. In this presentation Van teaches proper posture, including where to place our hands, feet, and seat, and how it relates to your health and your horse’s performance.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: prefer to have a couple of riders and horses, but it can be done without them*

## Addressing Any Problem by Reducing to the Ridiculous

If you’ve experienced horses that are head shy, ear shy, or fearful of water crossings, you’ll appreciate Van’s insight on how to overcome these issues. This presentation teaches us to simplify things from the horse’s perspective. Things that may seem miniscule to us may be disconcerting to our horses. Van’s step-by-step approach to solving any problem helps us to overcome adversity and look at problems as opportunities to become better horsemen.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: problem horse of some sort*

## How to Catch the Hard to Catch Horse

Do you hide your halter and offer feed to entice your horse to let you catch him? Do you have to trap or trick your horse to catch him? In this presentation Van will explain why some horses are difficult to catch. He’ll teach how to read the horse’s signs as we approach him, and how to catch our horses anywhere, anytime. In fact, Van will teach us how to train our horses to catch us.

*Space/Venue: round pen*

*Equipment/Additional Needs: hard-to-catch horse*

## Starting Your Horse on Cattle

When Van introduced this presentation to major equine expositions a few years ago, it quickly became a crowd favorite. In this presentation Van reinforces the importance of foundation training as he introduces the horse to cattle. Van discusses horse position, strategy, and reading cattle. Whether you aspire to cut, team pen, rope, or perform in working cow horse, you and your horse will appreciate this demonstration.

*Space/Venue: arena*

*Equipment/Additional Needs: cattle; a horse that hasn’t been started on cattle*

# MOST REQUESTED PROGRAMS

## The Versatile Ranch Horse

This multi-part program is truly art in motion as Van demonstrates his horse’s skills and reflects on all the criteria that are demanded of a versatile ranch horse. Van will emphasize the importance of a ranch horse’s breeding, conformation, and disposition, and he will demonstrate the remarkable skills and discipline of the ranch’s most valuable asset: The Versatile Ranch Horse. Witness this visual poetry as Van, one of America’s most versatile horsemen, demonstrates the ranch horse in ranch riding, ranch trail, ranch reining, ranch cutting, and working ranch horse.

•! **Ranch Riding**-Van demonstrates the simple tools needed for a solid foundation that will insure success for the more advance training.

•! **Ranch Trail**- Learn the basics to training your horse to overcome trail obstacles on the ranch.

•! **Ranch Cutting**-This demonstration takes you through the phases of training and the more advanced movements of ranch reining for showing or cattle work.

•! **Working Ranch Horse**- a ranch horse should be willing and able to work cattle. This demonstration includes cutting, sorting, driving and penning cattle as well as tips on reading cattle.

*Time: at least 1 hour per segment chosen or, if you want it to be more of an overview (and therefore less thorough), can combine Ranch Riding and Ranch Trail into a single session of at least 1 hour, and Ranch Cutting and Working Ranch Horse into a single session of at least 1 hour Space/Venue: arena*

*Equipment/Additional Needs: cattle for the Ranch Cutting and Working Ranch Horse segments; a horse to ride*

## Ranch Roping

There probably is no skill more valuable to the ranch cowboy than the ability to handle a rope. Learn with Van as he teaches some very important aspects of handling a rope. Van will discuss and demonstrate everything from building and throwing a loop to positioning your horse. Whether you are a green-hand beginner or a top-hand experienced roper, you’ll learn the little things that make big differences.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: roping dummy*

**The following programs can be adapted for presentation either in an arena/round pen or in a classroom/auditorium:**

## Understanding Horse Talk

This presentation is all about communication. Here Van helps us “read” horses’ movements and gestures. The horse’s language may seem complicated to most because its simplicity is too often misunderstood. Van is an expert at reading a horse and in teaching others how to interpret horse talk. Van also teaches us how to use our minds, body, and movement to communicate to our horses in ways they can understand.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: if in arena/round pen, a horse*

## Understanding Collection, Flexion, and Suppleness

Collection seems to be one of the most frequently used buzzwords in horsemanship. How many of us really understand it and its benefits with respect to our horse’s performance? Van will help you grasp the definition of collection and will explain its purpose and how to achieve it. Most important, Van will demonstrate how collection enhances and improves your horse’s carriage in every aspect of riding. Whether you trail ride or compete professionally, your horse wants you to learn how to achieve collection.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: sawhorses and long board; can be presented with or without horse and/or rider*

## Creating A Winning Attitude in You and Your Horse

We can learn from our failures, but it is more fun and more productive to learn from our successes. In this presentation you’ll learn the importance of preparing yourself and your horse for success. Van will teach how to simplify your thoughts, your actions, and your horse training toward fun and successful horsemanship. Volunteer crowd participation in this presentation is encouraged.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: can be done with riders, but not required*

## Know Your Tack and Equipment

As a horseman and a clinician Van has traveled the country from coast to coast and has discovered that among horsemen there is at least one common point of confusion: the tack room. Many of our so-called horse problems stem from not using the proper equipment on our horses and/or not knowing how particular pieces of equipment are to be fitted and used. Van will discuss in great detail bits and their indications, how certain bits work, practical fit and application of bits and other headgear. Also discussed in this presentation is proper saddle fit and matching your saddle to your horse, to you, and to your horse-related activity. This is by far one of the most important presentations you’ll ever see. Bring your questions.

*Equipment/Additional Needs: various types of tack—a couple different saddles, headstalls, etc. Usually encourage audience/participants to bring their own tack that they have questions about.*

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For more information, or to discuss options, contact Melanie Hargis.

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