

# CELEBRATE KINGS: *Pride in our people, places and products*

## **All for the love of horses!**

For those who love horses and care about their wellbeing, Scottish immigrant Rachael Argo is definitely someone to know!

Rachael lives in Millville, Kings County, not far from Oaklawn Farm Zoo, and she is a saddler. Since moving here, she has discovered many do not understand what a saddler is or why there is a need to hire one.

Registered with the United Kingdom's (UK) Society of Master Saddlers as a qualified master saddler and a qualified saddle fitter, Rachael's primary concern is the horse's comfort and health through the proper fit of

saddles, bits, bridles, and other equipment.

"I'm mainly concerned with equine welfare because, at the end of the day, that's what counts," says Rachael.

Proper saddle fitting means the weight of the human is spread evenly so the horse is not caused any discomfort. The "tree" or frame of the saddle must conform to the horse's shape.

"Time and training gives you the eye to determine proper fit and comfort. A true horseman knows and respects the horses, and listens to them."

Rachael brought her trade to Nova Scotia through her husband Bruce. When doing work in Dartmouth for the oil industry, he discovered the lure of this province. The couple was already considering a move to a country where they could afford a property suitable for horses. They

came for a vacation and, after discovering the ideal farm for sale in Millville, all thoughts of moving elsewhere disappeared.

"I said I'll move there if I can have an indoor riding arena," says Rachael. "This was the first place we saw and we loved it. It's peaceful here. The horses can relax and be calm."

Before they could truly settle in their new homestead, residency hurdles had to be cleared. "It's no joke," says Rachael. "Going directly through the federal government, it would have taken us four years." But under the Community Identified Stream of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, the Kings Community Economic Development Agency helped Rachael and Bruce successfully immigrate to Kings County in less than a year, along with two horses, two Great Danes, and a cocker spaniel.

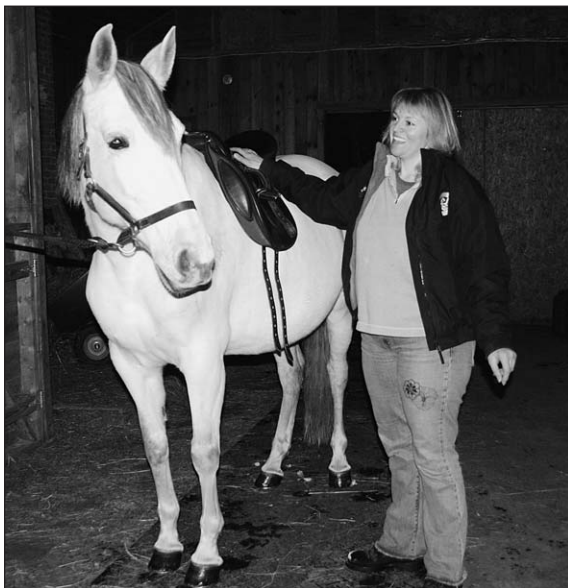
Now celebrating two years as a permanent resident, Rachael's goal is to have saddlery

formally recognized as a trade in Nova Scotia. "I have an apprentice I'm sending to the UK for training. It would be wonderful to have proper training, recognition, and qualification here." She is talking to various government departments to achieve that goal. In the UK, it takes seven years to become a master saddler.

To ensure she has what she needs to properly accomplish her work here, through her business Callan Saddlery ([www.callansaddlery.com](http://www.callansaddlery.com)) Rachael imports and sells saddles from the UK. A greater variety is available there, especially in number of sizes and fits.

"You can't tell if a saddle fits until you try it – put it on the horse, sit on it, ride to see if it works for the horse. I think sometimes it's not as simple as people think it is and yet, in many ways, it's simpler!"

*Photo and story by Marlene Huntley*



*Rachael takes a break from saddling her horse Caprichosa, one of six in the farm's growing family of horses.*



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