



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE JERSEY FRESH INTERNATIONAL THREE-DAY EVENT

In 1962, the United States Equestrian Team extended the use of its then-new training center at Hamilton Farm in Gladstone by organizing a three-day event that attracted 15 starters.

Several years later, a group of horse trial enthusiasts living and training in the Somerset Hills area gathered at a party, also attended by Jim and Gayle Wofford, and talk turned to the need for well-run competitions for younger horses. Three-day events had been models for higher-level competitions, but good courses and well-built fences rarely filtered down to the Preliminary and Intermediate levels of the sport.

In 1968, thanks to the generous support of Mr. and Mrs. Elliot Haller and behind the driving force of their son Roger, the Hallers' Hoopstick Farm in Bedminster became the home of the Essex Horse Trials. The first event was held in the fall of that year, where only two levels of competition were offered: Training and Preliminary in a one-day horse trials format.

In 1971 and 1972, the Somerset Hills Pony Club carried on the one-day competition during a gap in the history of the Essex Horse Trials.

In 1973, the event was last run on a fall schedule; the competition date was then moved to the spring starting in 1974.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the event continued to grow, attracting both American and international competitors. The Essex Horse Trials expanded to a three-day format and eventually moved to the USET's Hamilton Farm property, where the Roads and Tracks phase was held on the scenic dirt roads surrounding the area and the Steeplechase phase in a large field nearby. Essex became a major international event with the best-of-the-best competing for positions on U.S. teams for both Olympic Games and World Championships.

1998 marked the 30th anniversary of the Essex Horse Trials. However, even as that milestone was celebrated, the future of the event was highly uncertain. Much of the land at Hamilton Farm had been sold into development and was being transformed into a golf course, bordered by luxury residences.

In 1999, the Essex Horse Trials did not take place and the organizers applied for a one-year protection of their mid-May date. The hope was to renew the competition in 2000 with a revised course and improved footing, but the event was never resurrected.

[Continued]



EVENTING THROUGH THE YEARS IN THE GARDEN STATE, Continued

In 2003, Debbie Adams and her family approached the Trustees of the Horse Park of New Jersey to discuss the possibility of a CCI two-star event at the facility. Debbie, whose parents were very active on the New Jersey Equine Advisory Board, literally put the entire event together and it was a huge success – marking the return of international-level, three-day eventing to the Garden State and the inauguration of the first international equestrian competition at the Horse Park.

Through 2005, Debbie and her husband managed the event, which came to be known as “Jersey Fresh” due to early support from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. That year, a CCI three-star division was added to the competition.

Now celebrating its 15th anniversary, the Jersey Fresh International Three-Day Event and the Horse Park of New Jersey highlight the state’s strong equestrian traditions by hosting– a destination competition for U.S. eventing with both CCI and CIC three- and two star divisions attracting over 100 entrants each year. JFI has served as a Selection Trials for several Olympic Games, as well as for World Equestrian and Pan American Games. From the beginning, the Event has been supported by hundreds of volunteers, and, in 2017, will be held from May 10th - 14th.