WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?
The 4-H horse and pony project can provide youth with the opportunity to learn about care, selection, management, health, marketing and careers in the equine industry.

» Learn the basic principles of animal science by caring for, working with, keeping records or owning a horse, pony, donkey or mule.
» Explore knowledge of sound management, nutrition, reproduction and selection practices.
» Discover how you can start a career in the equine industry.

THE BIG PICTURE

Starting Out:
» Identify colors, breeds and types of equines.
» Identify parts of the animal.
» Practice safe handling of animals.
» Learn appropriate grooming techniques.
» Practice good sportsmanship.

Learning More:
» Describe the signs of a healthy animal.
» Explore potential careers in the equine industry.
» Join a horse bowl, horse judging or hippology team.
» Take riding lessons.

Expanding Horizons:
» Mentor a newer club member.
» Job shadow a professional in the equine industry.
» Conduct a judging or riding clinic with your club.
» Examine and discuss ethics related to the equine industry.

CURRICULA & RESOURCES

Michigan Resources
» Michigan Equine News: www.equinemake.msue.msu.edu
» Michigan State University Department of Animal Science, Horse Youth Programs: www.ans.msu.edu/ans/horse_youth_programs
» Michigan State University Extension eXtension, Horses: www.eXtension.org/horses
» My Horse University: www.myhorseuniversity.com

National 4-H Curricula
www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/4-h-horse
» Set of 6 Horse Books (08059) includes:
  • Giddy Up and Go (08053)
  • Head, Heart and Hooves (08054)
  • Stable Relationships (08055)
  • Riding the Range (08056)
  • Jumping to New Heights (08057)
  • Helper’s Guide (08058)

Other Resources
» American Quarter Horse Association and the American Youth Horse Council’s Junior Master Horseman: www.juniormasterhorseman.com
FOCUS ON HORSES, PONIES, DONKEYS, & MULES

Science

» Ask questions and formulate potential answers related to biology, nutrition, genetics and physiology, using equines as a model.
» Observe the physiological and behavioral effects of illness on an animal’s body.
» Explore the equine reproductive cycle.

Communication

» Deliver oral reasons as a part of a horse judging team.
» Communicate the importance of responsible horse care to the general public.
» Create and perform a demonstration that explains how to perform a specific skill properly in horse care and management.

Life Skills

» Use critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills to help you make good decisions about project management.
» Keep records on your project expenses and income.
» Practice personal resiliency through successes and challenges in your project.

Citizenship & Leadership

» Develop a public speaking or demonstration entry for the Michigan 4-H Equine Communication Contest.
» Mentor a cloverbud who is new to the Michigan horse and pony project.

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HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

» Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for workshops, activities and events.
» Join a local 4-H club.
» Tour a horse farm. Try the MSU Horse Teaching and Research Center, which is open to the public five days a week (www.msuarabians.com).
» Attend a horse show, and observe the participants and judges and their techniques.
» Write an educational article for production in your local newspaper about an aspect of the equine or livestock industry.
» Participate in a horse bowl, hippology or horse judging contest.
» Job shadow a local veterinarian to learn more about animal health.
» Attend a state-level 4-H horse event such as the State 4-H Horse Show, State 4-H Horse Jamboree or State 4-H Trail Ride.

Visit http://www.ans.msu.edu/ans/youth_extension_programs for many more opportunities.
» Complete a horse project record book to track your experiences in 4-H.
» If you are interested in a college education in animal science or veterinary medicine, visit MSU’s website at www.msu.edu to explore those majors.

Adapted with permission from “4-H Horse and Pony Project,” by Iowa State University Extension, 2011, Iowa 4-H Project Hot Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/projects/

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