



Kids n' Horses News

Happy New Year!!

Howdy to all the 4-H Horse Project members in Kansas!

This is the February, 2019 edition of the Kids n' Horses Newsletter to help keep you informed about 4-H Horse events happening around the state; AND give you a little educational information too!

Be sure to re-enroll in 4-H in your county and update your 4-H Horse ID Certificate. You can complete and submit your 4-H Horse ID Certificate for the 2018-19 4-H year anytime now, but the sooner the better. Reminder: This form should be printed on 1 piece of paper with the photo of the horse attached.

The Kansas 4-H Horse Show Rule book is posted online at <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/S133.pdf> !! Be sure to make yourself familiar with it before you attend 4-H shows; especially the KSF 4-H Horse Show. This rule book will be used at District & State 4-H Horse Shows. There are several rule changes; please read it carefully. To get a copy, contact your local Extension Office or the Kansas 4-H Horse Show Rule Book.

If you would like to submit an article or have a horse event you would like to publicize, please e-mail that information to Jean at jhuntley@ksu.edu.

Happy trails and safe riding!

Dates to Remember:

May 1	4-H Horse Identification papers MUST BE SIGNED by County Agent
Feb 22	State 4-H Horse Judging Contest, Equifest/Topeka Entries due Feb 1 st to State 4-H Office
June 27	South Central 4-H District Horse Show, Hutchinson Entry deadline June 10
June 27	South West 4-H District Horse Show, Dodge City Entry deadline June 15
June 27	South East 4-H District Horse Show, Parsons Entry deadline June 15
June 27	North East 4-H District Horse Show, Topeka Entry deadline June 1
July 1	North Central 4-H District Horse Show, Salina Entry deadline June 1
July 3	North West 4-H District Horse Show, Oakley Entry deadline TBD
TBD	East Central 4-H District Horse Show, Lawrence Entry deadline TBD



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Two Tips for Better Communication With Your Horse

Improve your horse-training skills by becoming a more effective communicator with your horse.

Horseman Curt Pate is a well-known and trusted clinician and trainer. Here, he shares two important tips for improving communication with your horse.

1. Never think "predator-prey relationship" "Predator-prey" has become a buzzword among many clinicians, and it's true that horses are prey animals. But we as humans have a choice to act like predators or not.

Have you ever seen someone in a round pen chasing a horse around with a flag or throwing ropes? That person is showing the horse he's a predator, and really, he's just teaching the horse distrust, because there is pressure there the horse wants to get away from.

A horse like that, when the going gets tough, he's going to think about leaving - escaping the pressure - rather than getting through the situation with you.

So instead of putting on an excessive amount of pressure, I think we can give the horse a lot more confidence if he sees humans as a safe place. He doesn't have to think of us as predators who are going to frighten him.

2. Teach your horse to accept pressure. Groundwork and, especially, round pen work can come in here. We can teach the horse to move forward off pressure, but there always has to be somewhere to go to get relief, or else we become predators and he gets suspicious of us. The idea is to teach the horse to accept a certain amount of pressure - and respond to it appropriately - without feeling threatened.

What you want to do is apply pressure in small-enough amounts where the horse can think his way out of it. For example, if you want a horse to move off in the round pen, step toward him behind his withers and then adjust your

positioning, speed, etc., to get the response you want.

The goal when working with a horse is to achieve mental and physical balance. Curt Pate expands on this in *Training Your Horse for a Better Relationship*. The e-book is a must-have for every horseman's library.

The opposite of that would be to throw a rope at a horse to get him to move off. The horse would move off, but it would be just a reaction, and he wouldn't have thought about what he was doing. He wouldn't have learned anything. But by stepping toward him and allowing him to think about what you want, the horse will quickly start reacting to smaller and smaller amounts of pressure.

In short: Try to avoid thinking of you and your horse in terms of "predator-prey." Your horses can learn to accept pressure - if you teach them properly

Source: America's Horse August 14, 2018

An Overweight Horse: No Joking Matter

We horse owners have our ways of laughing things off. "My horse isn't fat, he's fluffy." Or, "My horse is in shape...Round is a shape." I'll admit that one of my own geldings has been described as just "big-boned."

Those things sound better, after all, than the words "morbidly obese." Veterinarian Dr. Lydia Gray says that many horse owners have on "skinny goggles," which cause an inability to see - or a refusal to admit - that there is a problem in the pasture. But as the saying goes, you certainly can kill a horse with kindness. An overweight horse has to cope with increased stress on his heart and lungs; more strain on his hooves, joints and soft tissues; fatigue; and, in the summer months, less-efficient body cooling. As an added menace, laminitis can also rear its ugly, life-threatening head.

Recognizing an Overweight Horse

So how do you know when your horse needs to trim down? Let's review the Henneke body condition scoring system. This objective system allows the ranking of horses from 1 to 9, based on the amount of fat present in certain body parts.

Horses that are 7s, 8s and 9s are considered fleshy, fat and extremely fat, respectively, with telltale signs being a crease down the back and increasing amounts of fat over the ribs, at the tailhead, along the withers and behind the shoulder. A thickened neck is also an indicator.

And remember that this isn't a sliding scale. Brutal honesty is essential here, because regardless of your horse's age, discipline or bloodlines, fat is still fat, and these upper-end scores are the sign of a problem.

Dr. Gray says that periodically scoring your horse's body condition score is of utmost importance, so that you can see if your weight-loss strategies are working and adjust them as necessary as your horse transitions back to a healthy score of 5.

What's the Cause?

Well, as Dr. Gray points out, there are some problems with modern horse-keeping – much like the problems with modern human-keeping.

Sedentary lifestyles aren't doing anyone any favors, after all. Diet and exercise – too much of one and not enough of the other – can be a culprit.

Genetics also can play a role. Think of wild horses and how they evolved to subsist on virtually nothing. Donkeys and English ponies are other examples, Dr. Gray says, of the equine "thrifty gene" that allows for the conservation of calories, the ability to survive in frigid temperatures and the extraction of nutrition from things like scrub-brush.

Can Quarter Horses inherit the thrifty gene? Absolutely, Dr. Gray says. They can also fall victim to a disease process called equine metabolic syndrome, which is especially dangerous because of its link to laminitis. Not all overweight horses, however, have EMS, and for the purpose of the main story, we'll focus on those who do not.

Adjusting Your Horse's Diet

When you're dealing with an easy keeper, it's essential that you start with some cold, hard numbers.

You'll need to estimate as closely as possible how much your horse weighs by using either a weight tape or a weight calculator.

These options might not be 100 percent accurate, but if the same person is measuring the horse over a period of time – so that the measurements are consistent – you'll get a good sense of weight loss or gain.

And, you'll need to know what your hay weighs. Dr. Gray weighs her hay by the bale and by the flake, so she knows exactly how much "Newman," her easy keeper, is getting.

The third number you'll need is the one to your veterinarian's office. Any time you start making changes that affect your horse's health, it's essential to get an expert on board.

We'll offer guidelines here, but those are no substitute for the advice of your veterinarian who has seen your horse in person. He or she will also be able to determine if equine metabolic syndrome is a possibility.

So, the guidelines? The general rule of thumb is to feed horses 2 percent of their body weight in forage each day. For an average 1,000-pound horse, that would be 20 pounds of hay per day.

Start by calculating how much hay your horse is getting now, and then gradually – over the course of a few weeks – adjust that amount to 1.5 percent of his body weight. For our example horse, that would mean he'd eventually get 15 pounds a day.

The type of hay is important, too, and it's best to find one with a low level of sugars and starches. Soaking hay may also be helpful, as Dr. Gray says that 30 minutes in warm water or 60 minutes in cold water removes some of these simple carbohydrates but not other nutrients.

We learned that small-hole hay nets are great for hard keepers, because they keep the horse interested in his hay but not able to make a mess of it. Dr. Gray also strongly recommends them for easy keepers, because they'll slow down the horse's hay consumption. The normal-sized hay nets are suitable for stalls and paddocks, and

there are even super-sized ones that fit over a full bale of hay.

And we know that turnout is good for a horse's mind and body, but lush, green grass doesn't fit with the diet plan. Dr. Gray says that grazing muzzles allow horses to enjoy the best of both worlds.

Balancing Your Horse's Diet

Some horse owners might be tempted to feed their overweight horses just hay – and perhaps a lower-quality hay, at that – in an attempt to promote weight loss. But that strategy might cause unintended consequences.

"We've found that having the right ratio of minerals can help horses' metabolism and help them maintain a correct weight," Dr. Gray says. "When you deprive them of basic nutrition, sometimes that makes the problem worse."

Microminerals such as copper, manganese, zinc, selenium and iodine are essential to metabolism, so it's essential to provide a complete and balanced diet that meets the horse's minimum requirements.

Dr. Gray explains horse feed as a pyramid. At the top are vitamin-mineral supplements that are low in volume, with feeding rates as little as one ounce.

The next step down on the pyramid is a ration balancer. These offer vitamins, minerals and protein and are designed to be fed at slightly higher rates, a pound or two a day.

Ration balancers are useful for horses who need to feel like they're getting a little something – maybe every other horse in the barn gets grain, and they don't want to be skipped. And they're also good for horses who may be getting lower-quality hay and need the protein boost.

Dr. Gray uses a ration balancer for her easy keeper, as it offers a little more "stuff" for the horse other supplements to be mixed into.

Next on the pyramid would be fortified grains. "That's when you begin to add calories that these overweight horses don't need," Dr. Gray says.

These grains also provide vitamins, minerals and protein – but only at adequate levels when they're fed as directed on the bag. The

recommended feeding rate might hover in the five-pound range.

"So people who are saying, 'I know my horse is fat, and I'm just giving him a handful of sweet feed morning and night.' ... that may be a carrier for supplements, but it's not enough volume or weight to provide adequate vitamins and minerals," Dr. Gray says.

The bottom level of the food pyramid would be complete feeds, which offer vitamins, minerals, calories and roughage at the recommended levels of approximately 15 pounds a day.

Dr. Gray recommends that easy keepers stay at one of the top two levels of the pyramid – where they'll get nutrients but not calories.

Remember that any diet changes need to be made gradually, over the course of seven to 10 days, to reduce the risk of colic.

Adding Supplements

Sometimes, additional help can be found in a supplement that supports normal metabolism.

Dr. Gray says ingredients that have been found to help metabolism include chromium and magnesium; cinnamon, fenugreek and other herbs such as adaptogens; amino acids like taurine and tyrosine; and biotin.

Many of these supplements are targeted to horses with equine metabolic syndrome but can also be useful – with a veterinarian's guidance – in horses who are simply overweight.

"Sometimes the maintenance serving is appropriate in an overweight horse or one with active insulin resistance," Dr. Gray says, "but as the horse loses weight and his metabolism improves, the ingredients in this supplement are no longer needed at that level. On the other hand, horses that are refractory to diet and exercise may need their supplement levels bumped up during the spring and fall when metabolisms change."

Veterinarian advice is key here. The doc might say, "That product worked fantastically, along with exercise and your other diet changes, so this horse is now a 5; I don't want him any thinner. So whatever you're doing, we need to

back off a little bit and see if we can maintain him at this new weight.”

Dr. Gray says antioxidants might also be helpful to these horses whose bodies are undergoing changes.

Exercising Your Horse

My horse is on turnout, so he’s exercising himself. right? Dr. Gray has just one word for that theory: “Phooey.”

“These easy keepers are that for a reason. Their favorite gait is most likely the halt, where very few calories are burned,” she says.

So you, the horse owner, have to put on your personal trainer hat. Dr. Gray says that 30 minutes of controlled exercise a day is ideal, and it’s even better if you can split it up into two sessions.

But any exercise is better than no exercise, so she encourages horse owners to do the best they can. And make it fun for both horse and human. There’s hand walking, lunging, long-lining, riding, ponying and driving – and even that can be mixed up with ground work, hill work, cavaletti or free jumping.

And, don’t make an abrupt transition from pasture potato to marathon runner. Introduce exercise gradually, starting with some of the lower-impact options.

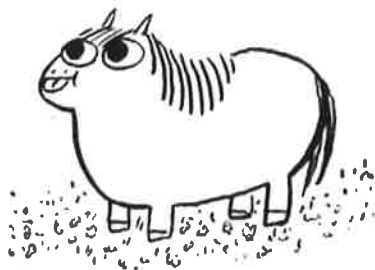
Tracking Your Horse’s Weight

Remember that it’s a multi-pronged approach. Much like with human weight loss, there’s no one easy answer, but by addressing the basics outlined above, your horse can get on a healthier track ... maybe even be the next Equine Biggest Loser!

Chart your horse’s BCS regularly – say on a monthly basis – so you’ll know how your horse is trending and you will be able to develop a long-term management plan with the help of your veterinarian.

And if you have a horse who seems to have a predisposition toward weight gain, take steps early to keep him at a healthy weight.

Adapted from America’s Horse Daily, May 10, 2018



Entering District and State Horse Shows

To be eligible to participate at the district level, members must show at their designated district 4-H horse show and receive a purple or blue ribbon to qualify for the state show in all classes except: there are no district qualifying events for 2-year-old snaffle bit project or 3-year-old project.

At district and state shows, an exhibitor may not show more than one horse in a particular class and may not enter a class two times. No horse can be used in the same class twice, including those classes that offer several options.

At the state show, the 4-H’er must show in exactly the same classes with the same horse in which he or she qualified at district show. There will be no substitutions and no exceptions.

At the district show, substitutions may be made before exhibiting if the horse is identified on or before May 1. (See 2-year-old snaffle bit project and 3-year-old project rules for additional nomination and identification requirements.) Substitutions should be made at check-in or with the show secretary prior to the class. There will be no substitutions at the gate.

Due to the limited space available, a maximum of three horses per exhibitor may be entered and shown at the state 4-H show.

Upon arrival at district and state shows, the exhibitor will present the ID certificate to the district and state show entry and ID clerks for examination before receiving show identification numbers.

Any horse 56 inches (without shoes) and under may show in pony pleasure. A 4-H’er who shows in pony pleasure cannot show in another Western pleasure class. All ponies in question will be measured at the check-in area at all district shows. Their height will be put on the ID papers for the state show.

Entry forms for the district and state shows are made through the member’s local extension office. District entries are made according to the member’s district date, and state entries to the state 4-H office, postmarked on or before August 1. *Source: Kansas 4-H Horse Show Rule Book.*



NEW/USED SHOW CLOTHES & TACK SALE

Fundraiser for the Leavenworth County 4-H Horse Group

When: Saturday March 23rd 9am-2pm

**Location: Leavenworth County Fairgrounds Administration Building
Tonganoxie, Kansas**

Booth spaces: 10 x 10 for \$20

Concessions available for free will donation. Biscuits & Gravy for breakfast and a variety of soups & chili for lunch. Plus homemade baked goods!

Contact Kathrine Shade at lvco4hhorse@yahoo.com or 913-775-0973 for more information or to reserve your booth space.

