



General Horse Information Agents Need To Know

Celeste Crisman, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Laura Siegle, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Bonnie Tillotson, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Cornelia Estep, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Debbie Agnew, VCE 4-H Volunteer

Julie Williamson, VCE 4-H Volunteer

Kinds of Horses

- Draft- Heavier type breeds generally characterized as work/plow horses.
- Horse- Regular type breeds that are generally seen as your everyday riding horses.
- Ponies- A smaller horse. Has to be 14.2 hands or under.
- Miniature Horse - A scaled down horse, 38 inches tall or under.

Basic Materials

- Saddle- the person sits in it when riding. 2 main styles – English and Western and many variations of the two.
- Bridle and bit- is on the horses head when riding to aid in control.
- Saddle Pad/Blanket- goes under the saddle.
- Halter- what is on the horses head when leading it from the ground.
- Lead rope- what the person holds while handling the horse from the ground. It is connected to the halter.

Basic Safety Attire

- Helmet is to be worn at all times when mounted. Must be ASTM/SEI certified.
- Closed toed shoe or boot is to be worn at all times when around a horse.
- Boots or shoes with an adequate size heel should be worn when riding.
- Long pants should be worn at all times when mounted.

General Safety around horses

- Never stand directly in front or behind a horse. (In horses blind spot)
- When leading the horse you want to be just behind the head and beside the throat latch area.
- Always let a horse know when you are approaching.
- Don't run and/or scream when around a horse.
- Never loop lead rope or reins around your hand when leading.
- Always lead and saddle/bridle from the left side when possible.
- When calling fire and rescue squads to respond to an emergency, let them know to not use the lights and sirens when entering the premises.

Measurement of height, weight, and Body Condition Score.

- Horses are measured at the withers in hands. One hand is equal to 4 inches. Ex: A horse that is 15 hands is 60 inches tall at the top of the withers.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ettprRpg2jA>

- The use of a weight tape is the most common way to measure a horse's weight at home. Measurement is taken around the heart girth.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpqw1vZnC4s>

Photo of measurement location. <http://equestrianoutreach.com/EOWebArtFolder/Eq%20Info%20-%20Illustrations/HorseWeightTape.gif>

- The Body Condition Score (BCS) is a scoring system from 1-9. A score of 4 – 6 is desirable with 5 being the ideal in most cases. Anything below that is considered too thin, and above that is considered too heavy.

<http://www.gerlltd.org/Education/Equine%20Body%20Condition%20Score%20Presentation.pdf>

- Parts of a Horse –

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/4h7933/\\$FILE/g_partsofhorse.pdf](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/4h7933/$FILE/g_partsofhorse.pdf)

Basic Disciplines

- The tack, equipment, movement/gaits of the horse is what makes each discipline different.
- The 4-H program offers these disciplines in the show ring. Hunter (over fences and pleasure); Western; Reining; Saddleseat; Gaited; Gymkhana (games or speed events); Dressage; Driving; Mini's (in hand and driving); Drill Team; and Ranch Horse.

State show: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/topics/4h-youth/horse/events/state-horse-show/>

State fair: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/topics/4h-youth/horse/events/state-fair-horse-show/>

What are some attributes of a healthy horse?

- The eyes are bright and clear.
- Should have a shiny hair coat that will shed out when it warms up.
- The horse should have an acceptable body condition score for its age, discipline and stage of life.
- Temperature should be around 100.5 degrees.
- Respiration rate should be 8-16 breaths per minute.
- The pulse rate should be 35-45 beats per minute.

Good sites for trustworthy, science based information on all aspects of horse care, handling, housing and use

- Covers everything and also has great short courses and on-line seminars for horse producers and enthusiasts.

<http://articles.extension.org/horses>

- Horse Care Guideline Information

<http://www.aaep.org/info/guidelines>

- Over 20 pages of articles on a variety of topics and in various languages

http://www.aaep.org/slug.php?slug=horse-health&info_id=45&page=1

- This link tells you about the various vaccinations horses can be given and why they are given.

<http://www.aaep.org/custdocs/AdultVaccinationChart.pdf>