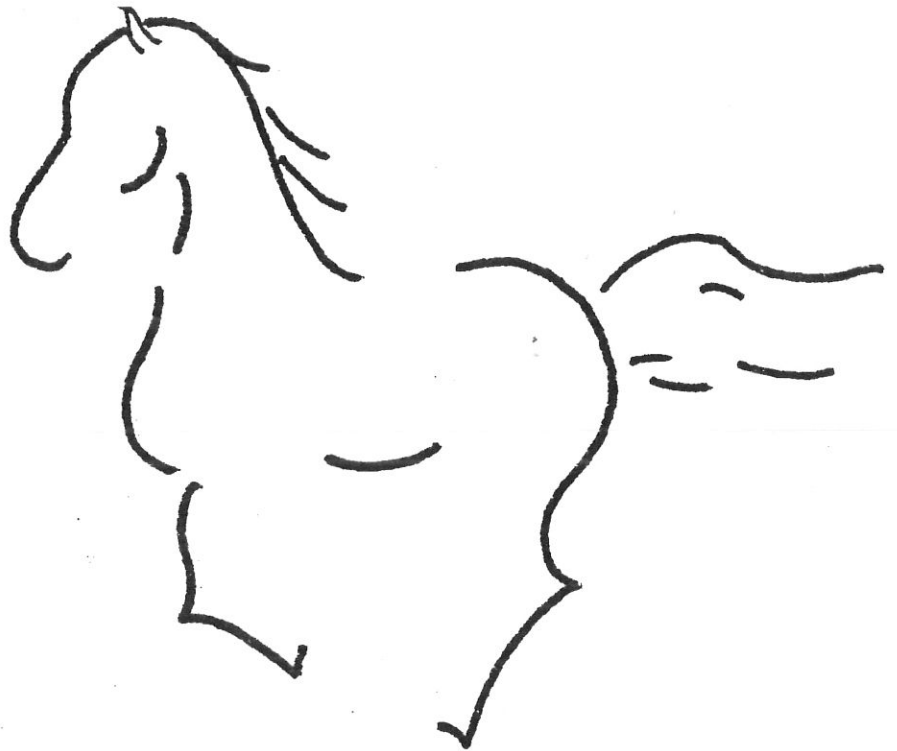


**developing  
YOUTH**



***through  
HORSELESS HORSE  
projects***

Ray J. Antoniewicz  
Nancy Kissel

## **4-H HORSELESS PROJECT**

### ***Leader's Guide***

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To provide an educational and interesting learning experience for youth who are interested in horses but do not have access to them or to the people who are knowledgeable about horses. The project is designed to accommodate youth who have this interest in horses but know little or nothing about them. This group usually includes urban and rural youth of all social and economic levels.

The project should afford such youth to have varying amounts of horse contact and to learn basic elementary information about horses. As a leader you should keep in mind that a goal in this project is youth development and that the horse is the tool you will use to accomplish this.

#### **YOUR ROLE AS A LEADER**

The following traits would be helpful to a horseless horse project leader:

1. Have some knowledge of horses. (It is not necessary to be an expert to be a good leader. Many outside resources are available to assist you. It will be part of your role to coordinate these rather than do all the teaching yourself.
2. Enjoy working with young people.
3. Have an awareness of the resource people and materials available in your area. A listing of possible resource materials is listed in a different section of this guide.
4. Ability to help members have fun while they learn.

It might be important to realize how much some horseless youngsters really do love horses and how thrilled they can become in learning about them and when being near them. Become involved with them and encourage family participation whenever possible, i.e. tours, clinics, etc.

#### **ORGANIZING A HORSELESS GROUP**

##### **Means of Approach:**

**Interest in Horses** - The concern, or particular desire for either direct or indirect association with horses is the passport for reaching a number of youth.

**Group Activity** - Youth will participate in activities with other youth of similar ages and interest because of a fondness for companionship.

##### **Potential Sources of Youth Groups:**

**Schools** - In most instances, schools will welcome youth programs with an educational goal that are not offered within the school.

**Community Centers** - New programs and activities of potential interest to the youthful users of these facilities are generally well received.

**Multihousing Units** - Most multifamily housing developments are occupied by families seeking programs and activities for younger residents.

**Special Interest Groups** - Any place where youth might visit for any reason could be a potential source of interaction for a common subject matter interest.

#### **Program Potentials:**

**Development of Youth** - Just as the normal 4-H Horse & Pony Project serves as a means of Youth Development, so too can the "horseless horse" project.

**Leadership** - Older horseless project members can assume leadership roles or responsibilities with new members or newly formed groups.

**Health** - The horse can be employed as a means for human health education by explaining horse health and how it is comparable to the human individual's health.

**Nutrition** - The horse and man have a need for the same nutrients, but in different amounts and from varying sources.

**Exposure to 4-H Programs** - Participation in one 4-H Program can easily lead to involvement in other related and non-related programs. Other project areas might include:

- A. Photography
- B. Leathercraft
- C. Drawing & Painting
- D. Woodworking
- E. Veterinary Science

The "horseless horse" project can take two approaches depending on the duration of the project. Since the project has evolved into a special-interest group (i.e., a group that is formed around one idea - the horse), the group could be disbanded after the interest area has been explored in several meetings. The short-term project approach of six to eight weeks in length does not permit a very in-depth study of the horse, but it does have merit in a project group that meets following normal elementary school class hours. The short-term project of weekly meetings has been more successful in the late fall and early spring seasons. At these times of the year, there is less competition due to weather conditions and school-related activities.

The long term, continuing project approach does allow for greater study of the horse and its related areas. This could necessitate evening meetings in a physical environment completely new to the youth participating in the project. A change into a new meeting facility that youth associate only with the "horseless horse" project can be an advantage. There is less likelihood

of their being distracted by a school-related environment. The continuing project requires a greater time commitment of the youth and leader involved.

## **PROJECT MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES**

Perhaps no other project offers as much diversity of subject matter as the horseless project. Some ideas are offered here, however, there are many other program ideas available. Each area of our state has its own excellent resource persons and its own educational aids.

A first meeting format has been developed and outlined. This could be a fine way to get the group started.

### **First Meeting**

Registration - Members complete the 4-H Enrollment Form

Introductions - Leaders introduce themselves, and tell something about their interests, hobbies, etc. including their horse background. Members, likewise, should be asked to say their name, age and any horse experiences they may have had. This is important so that the leader understands whether or not he/she is working with a very novice group or whether some youth already have a well-rounded knowledge of horses. Older youth who are knowledgeable might be asked to help the leader at the meeting.

Slide Series - "JUST HORSES" available from Extension Library Services. This slide set exposes members to the vast world of horses and includes horses of many sizes, many colors, and involved in many activities. This set also helps develop an awareness of the many ways we use horses. The script is uninvolved and basic.

Handout - A handout funsheet, "Just Horses" is available. A short period of time can be allotted to answering the questions after which the leader can lead a short discussion with members volunteering their answers. Almost any answer would be acceptable.

Idea Sharing - Future Programs - Members should be urged to present their ideas for future horseless club activities. Leaders should be positive in their approach to receiving ideas. The shy youngster will probably not speak out again if a negative attitude is shown towards his idea. Even though an idea may be inconceivable, perhaps an alternate activity can be substituted in its place and that youngster will still feel that the activity was a result of his original idea.

### **Second and Subsequent Meetings**

The leader probably has developed a sense of direction from members ideas at the first meeting. Included with this guide is a listing of visuals available from the Extension Library Services. A packet of funsheets and worksheets is available for horseless leaders along with a check list for easy ordering.

A random listing of subsequent meeting topics follows. These can be used in any order desirable or mixed into the club's own program ideas. Horseless groups sometimes alternate classroom type meetings with clinics or outdoor meetings using real horses.

1. **Safety** - Several slide sets available from Extension Library. It is advisable to introduce members to good safety habits before your first meeting near live horses.
2. **Common Breeds of Horses** - (Slide set available) A tour of several breeding farms for a subsequent meeting works well.
3. **Nutrition** - Some fine funsheets are available which relate horse nutrition to human nutrition. Samples of grains are interesting to youth and most do not realize the fact that nutritional demands are similar in animals and humans. Children find this topic quite interesting. Many think horses eat only hay and grass.
4. **Grooming Clinic at an Area Stable** - A demonstration of various brushes and grooming equipment can be presented along with an actual grooming demonstration. If the group is not too large they can be split into smaller groups and take turns cleaning several horses. This is an excellent activity to involve youth leaders and older youth from the regular horse project.
5. **Colors and Markings** - Slide set and funsheets (Two age levels available).
6. **Parts of the Horse** - Horse models work well. A live horse can be used at future meeting for an oral test. Funsheets available.
7. **Showmanship at Halter Clinic** - Youth leaders from the regular horse project can be involved in this activity. After members see a demonstration (which should include safety tips), members are given a chance to lead a horse. After some practice, the group is split into small showmanship at halter mini-groups and mock horse show classes are held.
8. **Demonstration by farrier**
9. **Visit a saddle shop.**
10. **Hay ride**
11. **Horse health care** - Slide set "Health Hints for Your Horse" complete with cassette tape excellent resource. Worksheet available. A veterinarian can be asked to speak and answer questions. Stress that he keep things very basic if you have many younger members.
12. **Saddles and bridles** - A show and tell of the different saddles and bridles and their uses. This again is a good way to involve older youth from the regular horse project or even older horseless members if saddles can be provided for them. A demonstration of riding styles using these saddles can follow or be an entirely new program.
13. **Trail ride at a local stable** - If available.
14. **Horse Quiz Bowl** - Competition within the group would be a good way to start. Some horseless members have done very well at district contests.

**15. Judging Team competition**

16. **Adopt a horseless friend** - An opportunity for horseless members to work with a horse project member one on one on a continuing basis. A release form can be signed by both participants.

**17. Attend a rodeo**

18. **Talks - Demonstrations - Book Reports** - Members goals could be to each volunteer for this activity at one meeting. It encourages members to do some extra reading. Topics could be as elementary or advanced as the members ability permits. Another hint if your club has organized meetings is to take roll call by answering with a horse related term. i.e., Breeds, Markings - Uses - Parts of Horse, etc. (Different each meeting)

**19. Attend a Horse Show**

**20. Tour a feed store**

21. **Collect magazines** - Ask horsemen in your area to keep their horse magazines and papers for your members.

**22. Attend a horse auction**

**23. Tour a riding school or camp**

24. **Birth of a foal** - Good films available. Youth are thrilled and fascinated. A tour to a farm with both new foals and pregnant mares is a good follow up.

25. **VOLUNTEER Service** - Older members might be asked to help at the local 4-H show or at any other horse-related activity. Their help might be recruited for registration, recording or the food stand. Let them become involved.

## **EXHIBIT OPPORTUNITIES**

Horseless 4-H members feel that they are more part of the total 4-H program if they can participate in their county fairs. Following is a suggestion of projects that could be done by the members to exhibit at the fair. Premiums and ribbons can be given as in other project areas.

1. Poster depicting history of a breed
2. Horse safety poster
3. Scrapbook containing ten breeds with information about each
4. Poster on diseases and parasites of horses
5. Poster on careers in the horse world
6. Drawings of markings of horses
7. Poster on good horse grooming
8. Any other project related to horses

A fun (no premium) showmanship at halter class for horseless members at the county fair or 4-H show can be held. Horseless members are assigned one on one to a regular horse project member for thirty minutes or an hour prior to the horseless classes. The owner of the horse helps the horseless member to groom the horse. He then helps him to learn to lead the horse and pose it and tells him any other tips he would know. Prizes can be ribbons or small trophies. Usually classes are kept small (5 or 6) so all participants receive a ribbon. Criteria for judging should probably only be how the member actually shows the horse at halter. It is unfair to judge grooming because obviously the horse owner has done all preliminary work with it. The only dress code suggested is hard soled shoes, jeans and a shirt.

Horseless members can also be encouraged to exhibit in the Horsemen's Display at the State 4-H Horse Show.

## **RESOURCES**

Visual aids and printed materials are available through your local Extension office. Besides the large variety of worksheets and funsheets available through your extension office, many breed associations have handouts which they willingly supply to youth groups. Some feed companies also have literature to use as handouts.