

CBUD-14

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[REDACTED]

My name is [REDACTED] and I have been in 4H for three years. I am showing novice western this year, and it is my first year showing novice. I have been riding for four years and I enjoy riding and working with my horse a lot.

Having a horse has taught me responsibility by teaching me that I have to watch to see that my horse is healthy at all times. There are many things that I have to do to keep my horse healthy.

I have to groom her and clean her hooves every day. When I clean my horse's hooves, I check for rocks and loose shoes since those can cause bruises or corns and then I would not be able to ride my horse because she would be hurt. The farrier also has to come over to trim my horse's hooves for me so that her hooves do not get too long and to reset her shoes so she does not get corns.

I also know that horses need vaccinations. I have never given my horse a shot, but the veterinarian or my 4H advisor can give my horse a shot. By getting a vaccination my horse is protected against diseases so she won't get sick.

I have also learned about my horse's feeding plan. She eats two pounds of sweet feed and three flakes of hay twice a day. If she eats too much, then she can get fat and then it becomes harder for her to work when she's ridden. If she doesn't eat enough, then she will get sick because she is underweight. This year I plan on doing a conditioning record for the competitive trail ride, so I will have to watch my horse's weight because she'll be ridden more to get in shape for the competitive trail ride.

When I ride my horse, I have to walk her a lot to warm up before I do anything else, and then make sure that I cool her down after I ride. This not only helps condition her, but makes her have a fun time while riding. It also keeps her safe because she is stretching before she works. I like to practice reining and western riding, so it is important to do a lot of easy work before doing flying lead changes, slides, and spins. It is also good to go on trail rides for fun because it makes the riding fun for my horse. When riding is fun for my horse, then she will not become cinchy or sour. I also wear a helmet every time I ride even though I ride western. Helmets make riding much safer and I think that is good to be safe.

Having a horse has also taught me that there can be very sad times when you are learning with horses. My first horse was old, and she passed away after two years of riding her. She was a really good horse, and I was really sad when she passed away. My second horse was a young horse, but she is very tall. After fair last year she was limping a lot and the vet had to come out to see what was wrong. The vet said she had very bad arthritis even though she was only five years old. She had to be retired because even though I loved her very much, it was not fair to her to be ridden and shown. My new horse is eight, and because of the experiences I have had I am watching her very close to see that she stays healthy and sound.

Even though I have had a few sad experiences with the horses I have ridden, I still am very happy to ride and be around horses. They are a lot of work, and they have taught me responsibility and make my parents see that I am doing my best to be safe, keep my horse healthy and safe, and still am having fun while doing it. I would like to go to horse

camp this year, because I think that I will have fun learning more about my horse and I will have to take care of my horse myself while I am at camp.