



Kids n' Horses News

Summer Breezes and My Horse Project

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

Hope this letter finds you well and your life is looking somewhat normal; although it may be a new normal. Once again, included in this newsletter is some information about how things have changed for your 4-H Horse Project. If you have questions, contact your local Extension Office.

I hope you got your 4-H Horse Identification Certificates completed and signed by your local Extension agents by the May 1st deadline.

Don't forget, there is a **new Kansas 4-H Horse Show Rule Book**. Check the back cover of your rule book to make sure it is the most current; it should say: S133 Revised January 2020. Be sure to download it or have your local Extension Office order it for you. It can be found at: <https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects/animals/horse.html> under General Horse Resources. There are several rule changes you need to be aware of and this will be the rule book used at District 4-H Horse Shows and the KSF State 4-H Horse Show.

There is a TON of information about the Horse project at: <https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects/animals/horse.html> Check it out and bookmark that page for future reference.

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:

Sept 17-19 State 4-H Horse Show, Kansas State Fair, Hutchinson
(entries due Aug 1)



K-STATE
Research and Extension

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Essential Etiquette for Trail Rides

'Mrs. Trail Manners' tells you what you need to know to have a pleasant cross-country ride—and be invited back.

Do you know the many unspoken rules of etiquette for riding cross-country? If you want to be invited back—or even allowed on the property in the first place—you'd best be well-educated about these standards and expectations.

As a lifelong trail rider, I can assure you most of these rules only require common sense or courtesy, including consideration for the land on which you're riding (plus for the landowner, public or private) and respect for other land users, including members of your own riding group.

Most of us consider ourselves considerate, yet there are common etiquette mistakes I often see made on trail rides. Here I'll discuss those omissions of etiquette and offer tips to avoid them.

Mrs. Trail Manners Says: Know the Lay of the Land and the Owner

Will you be riding on public or private land? Do you need permission to ride there or to cross it? Some riders wrongly assume that they're riding on public land. Not all private land is marked, especially on some of the larger ranches in the West. Determine ahead of time if your route will cross private land, and get permission from the landowner. Some property owners don't mind riders traveling through their ranch pastures or rangelands. When you make contact, the owner might suggest where they'd allow you to ride and point out areas where they don't want horseback traffic. But some landowners simply don't tolerate trespassers.

Mrs. Trail Manners Says: Don't Forget the Gate

Don't be tempted to leave a gate open, even if you plan to come back the same way later in the day. Leave all gates how you find them. Even on public land, cattle might graze certain allotments or range pastures; if you leave a gate open, they can go into the wrong pasture and cause problems for their owners. Even if you don't see cattle when you ride through, some may come around the hill or out of the timber and find the open gate.

In other instances, you might find a gate left open; in that case, do you leave it open or close it? It might've been left open for a reason—for example, so cattle can drift into the next pasture or have access to water. But if it was left open by an inconsiderate rider, bicyclist, or off-road-vehicle user, you don't want to take the blame for their mistake. This is when it pays to

know about the land ownership and specific use, and whether gates should be left open or closed. If you speak to the range manager, the rancher, or the owner before your ride, you'll know which gates should be left shut.

Mrs. Trail Manners Says: Minimize Your Impact

Imagine a scenario: Your horse's hooves tear up wet grass. Or you slide down a sandy hill and leave a furrow in the ground. Or, worst of all, you take a shortcut that damages land you weren't supposed to be on in the first place. Making a trail or furrow where there was none or tearing out vegetation on fragile soils can lead to erosion—not to mention the cancellation of your invitation to ride on the land.

In all instances, do all you can to prevent adverse impact, especially in fragile areas. Concern for the land should influence every decision you make on the trail. On an existing trail, you'll have fewer decisions to make. But on open land, you'll need to be more mindful.

If you're riding on existing trails, my best advice is simple: Stay on the trails. Ride single-file in the middle of the path, and don't detour around puddles, snowbanks, or other obstacles if you can go through them. Instead, stay on the trail to avoid creating wider or parallel trails. Don't take shortcuts or cut across the switchbacks; this tramples and tears out more plants and creates additional trails that could be more prone to erosion.

In pristine, open country without trails, do all you can to minimize evidence of your trek through it. To avoid creating a trail, don't travel single-file except where necessary, such as through dense timber and when navigating challenging obstacles with few options. Consider the terrain's durability when picking your way through it, and stay on dry, firm ground if possible. Avoid fragile terrain, such as steep slopes with scant vegetation, wet meadows, or marshy ground that might show evidence of group travel for a longer period of time. Going up and down steep hills, each rider should pick a route and travel in switchback fashion so the horses' feet won't slide or dig in so deeply. If you do see evidence of tracks emerging, avoid those tracks to allow the vegetation to regrow. In most situations, if all riders spread out and disperse the impact, there'll be no lasting evidence of your travel.

Mrs. Trail Manners Says: Mindfully Choose Rest Stops

A lush meadow where your horses can graze might look perfect for your lunch stop, or maybe a wooded area with places to tie your horses seems optimal for a leg-stretch. But, if you're going to pause

along the ride, choose a spot where you'll leave the least impact rather than the place with the most picturesque setting. Choose a rest site with durable (not fragile) soil and footing, and where your horses won't trample the vegetation. For a short break, hold the horses rather than tying them to trees. If you're on a well-traveled trail and there are other users (hikers, bikers, riders), pull off the main trail so they won't be forced to go around you. Whether you're on an established trail or open space, scatter any manure piles before you leave after a rest stop.

Mrs. Trail Manners Says: Leave No Litter

This is a no-brainer: Pick up your trash. It might not seem like a big deal if you drop a gum wrapper, pop can, or the plastic from a granola bar as you ride along, but this garbage often isn't biodegradable and will stay in the environment a long time. Besides the aesthetic impact (you probably don't appreciate seeing litter from previous travelers), there could be other repercussions. A small critter trying to eat the remaining crumbs in the granola-bar wrapper could ingest part of the plastic. On rangeland, a curious calf may ingest a plastic bag or wrapper, resulting in a fatal GI-tract blockage. Tuck all your trash in a jacket pocket or saddlebag, and take it home with you for proper disposal.

Mrs. Trail Manners Says: Tie Carefully

On long rides, you might want to stop for a long lunch, to fish in a pond, or to explore the area. If you must tie your horse to a tree, choose a live one at least 8 inches in diameter—a sturdy, well-rooted tree that your horse can't pull over, bend, or break. For your horse's safety, find a tree with no sharp branches at eye level.

To respect the trees, use a tree-saver strap rather than a rope that can dig into the bark. The straps, made from 2-inch-wide seatbelt webbing with steel rings, are easy to carry in a saddlebag. They're often used for securing highlines between two trees (so you can tie the horses to the highline instead of to trees). If you don't have something to protect the trunk, wrap the lead rope around it twice before tying to spread the strain if a horse pulls back. Make sure to carry a lead rope long enough for this kind of tying.

Mrs. Trail Manners Says: Be Polite!

It pays to be courteous so other trail users—bicyclists, hikers, dog walkers—won't resent you. Offer the right of way to other riders, bikers, or hikers. If it's too difficult to move your horse off a narrow trail when meeting hikers, politely ask them to step off on the downhill side (less apt to make your horse nervous than if they're above you).

Besides personal manners, practice good manure manners, too. If possible, keep your horse

moving as he defecates so he won't be leaving a big pile. Spread-out "road apples" dry quickly and aren't as offensive as a large, wet pile. If you trailered to a riding site, clean up any manure left by your horse when you unloaded. Keep heavy-duty garbage bags in your trailer's tack compartment, along with a broom, rake, or shovel. Collect all the manure your horse deposits—when unloading, getting ready to ride, or while waiting to load up again—and take it home. And for heaven's sake, don't kick manure out of your trailer at the trailhead.

Mrs. Trail Manners Says: Think About the Whole Group

Be considerate of other riders in your group, whether they're personal friends or not. Some might not be as experienced as others (thus less able to control their horses in bad situations) or may be riding unseasoned horses. Travel at the best gait/rate of speed for the least experienced horse/rider in the group. Color-coded ribbons in horses' tails alert other riders to horses' potential issues: red for a kicker, green for a green horse or novice rider, blue for stallions, etc. Consideration for other horses' and riders' needs goes a long way toward enabling an enjoyable ride.

My pet peeve: Don't tailgate, even if your horse is an impatient follower. By the same token, always consider the attitude and reactions of the horse behind you. Will he become impatient or panicky if you speed up? Travel at an even speed rather than in lurches of walk-trot, and don't gallop to catch up with the next horse if you fall behind. The horse behind yours could become insecure or unhappy at being suddenly left behind, which in turn can lead to prancing, bolting, or even bucking. And, if you must pass another horse, alert the rider and pass on the left.

Your best bet for the benefit of the group is to always wait. If you stop at a water trough or along a stream to allow the horses to drink, wait for the other horses to finish before leaving the water source, even if yours finishes first. If you move your horse away, some of the others will want to follow and won't wait around to drink enough. Going through gates, wait until the last rider is through the gate and the person who shut it is back in the saddle before you ride off. Anytime a rider must dismount for any reason, wait for that person to get back on. A nervous horse being left by his buddies can quickly become a safety issue.

Mrs. Trail Manners' Final Thought:

My father's advice to his children for situations in which we were unsure about what to do, or when we might be inclined to choose the easy route instead of the best one, was simply to "do the right thing" in all situations. That's pretty open-ended and leaves the

burden of choice on us, but it also leads us to think about our choices and consider the results of our actions. This applies to just about everything in life, including considerate trail riding. There might not be a specific rule or guideline for every situation you encounter, but if you try to “do the right thing” you’ll probably make a good choice!

Source: Horse & Rider Updated: Mar 20, 2017; Original: Apr 22, 2016

Changes for Kansas State Fair 4-H Horse Show Participations

The State 4-H Office and the Horse Action Team have been working to create a positive experience for 4-Hers during this uncertain time. We are adjusting some requirements to be able to support the 4-H Horse Project. Please know that the circumstances may continue to change, and we will continue to be flexible. Families will receive updates as we move forward. youth who participate in the 4-H Horse project.

These are general guidelines. Please contact your local agent to determine how they will specifically handle each aspect.

Horse Identification Forms:

- 4-H youth should ID every horse they may exhibit at the State 4-H Horse Show. If a horse does not have proper identification papers, submitted by May 1, they will not be eligible.
- Horse ID forms are due to the local unit office with the appropriate signatures on **May 1**.
- Signatures do not have to be originals. Families and agents may complete the forms via email communication using PDFs/JPEG images. Photos must be included.
- A form-fillable version of the Horse ID paper is available through your local office.

District/State Horse Shows:

- All District Horse Shows have been cancelled.
- There will be no District qualification process for 4-Hers to attend the State Show.
- All state exhibitors must complete Level 1 testing. Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 specific horsemanship classes will still require the appropriate certification. (No Change)
- All state exhibitors must exhibit at their county fair to exhibit at the State 4-H Horse Show. This is general participation, not a class for class match as we know county classes can vary from the State 4-H Horse Show.

- Additional information will be released as plans are solidified.

Levels Testing:

- All components of levels testing will be moved to an online format.
- The \$10 fee (\$5 for exam and \$5 for riding) will still apply. This will be sent in with the signed coversheet upon the successful completion of the online test. (No Change)
- To assist with the electronic exchange, a form fillable version of the coversheet will be available for your agent.
- All levels of the exam will be moved to Qualtrics. Contact your agent for the link to the exam.
- Groundwork/riding portion of levels testing will be completed via video conferencing (Zoom, Facetime, etc.) or with a recorded video. Please contact your local agent as soon as possible if you have concerns about being able to meet this criteria.
- A list of evaluators comfortable with this new process will be provided to agents.
- The leadership section will be expanded to include: online club meeting talks/demonstrations, virtual horse judging or clinic, Panorama, etc.
- Youth are able to complete multiple levels in a year, but they must be done in order. (No Change)
- Study materials can be found at <https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects/animals/horse.html> beneath Project Materials.
- It requires a score of 70 to pass the exam and groundwork/riding portions of all levels. (No Change)

Shannon Rogge

Program Coordinator, 4-H Youth Development



K-STATE
Research and Extension