

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IMPACT OF EQUINE ACTIVITIES ON YOUTH RESEARCH PUBLISHED

The American Youth Horse Council has partnered with Pennsylvania State University to conduct research that quantifies what we already know – Kids + Horses = Magic! One of the strategic goals of the American Youth Horse Council (AYHC) is to validate the measurable impact of equine activities on youth development. There have been few scientific studies conducted that measure the impact of horse activities on horsemanship and life skills development. AYHC and Penn State teamed up with the National High School Rodeo Association, 4-H, Pony Club and the American Quarter Horse Youth Association to conduct this important research.

The Impact of Equine Activities Survey contained questions related to horsemanship skills, life skills and demographic characteristics. Content and validity of the survey was validated by a panel of experts and by conducting a field test. A sample of 982 youth between the ages of 12 and 18 active in the above youth equine organizations was selected. Responding youth indicated that they "most of the time" to "always" performed horsemanship skills in the area of handling, safety, riding, nutrition and health management. Similarly, respondents indicated that they "often" exhibited life skills relative to decision making, communicating, goal setting, problem solving and critical thinking. A significant positive relationship was found between total horsemanship skills development and life skills development. This information should be very valuable for youth leaders when developing curriculum, planning activities, and seeking funding and resources.

A scientific paper authored by Penn State Grad Student Crystal Smith was published in the February 2008 Professional Animal Scientist Periodical.

Copies of the full research report are available through the AYHC office at 719-594-9778.

First established in the early 1970's, the American Youth Horse Council was founded by breed organizations and extension specialists to provide a nucleus of support to all the youth horse industry and particularly adult leaders. Today AYHC, a 501 C 3 non-profit, is the umbrella organization providing encouragement, communication, leadership & resources to serve and promote the youth horse industry. AYHC strives to support the youth horse industry with factual and quality educational materials and to engage the participation of all breeds and disciplines within the industry while seeking to illustrate the value of the human-horse experience. Members include adult leaders, student leaders, families, educational institutions, associations and corporation.

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