

# IMPACT



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## Teens Get On Track With Horses

### *The Situation*

Horse projects are among the most popular 4-H projects in Idaho. Many youth involved in equine activities are not in a 4-H program. The state teen conference planners wanted to increase teen participation, both 4-H and non 4-H, at the annual conference. A horse focus area was added to appeal to a teen audience and to both genders. The Idaho Teen Conference was held in Moscow, June 10-15, 2002 and one of the new educational opportunities offered this year for the first time was the "Horse Track."

### *Our Response*

Thirty-two youth registered for the horse track that included a series of workshops and activities that started Tuesday morning and continued through Friday morning. The horse track topics included: horse judging and selection; Washington State University Veterinary Hospital tour; equine dentistry; equine reproduction; tack selection & terms; hoof care; Appaloosa Horse Club tour; and a skill-a-thon. The objective of the horse track was to increase and update the teens' knowledge of horses and to introduce them to career opportunities in the horse industry.

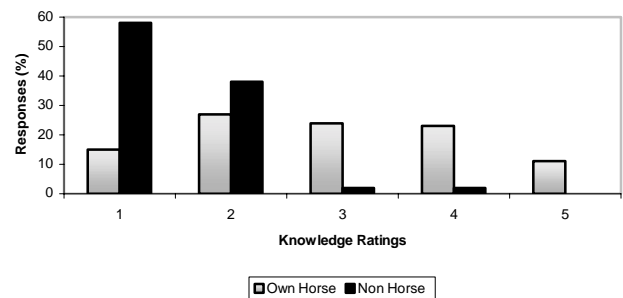
A participant survey was used at the beginning and end of the horse track. Responses were coded so individual changes in knowledge could be determined. The participant information showed that 83 percent of the youth owned a horse and 68 percent of those who owned a horse had more than one. The most popular activities were 4-H, trail

riding, rodeo and horse shows. When it came to career choices, 64 percent of those who owned a horse were considering a career in the horse industry and 40 percent of those who did not own a horse were considering a career in the horse industry.

### *Program Outcomes*

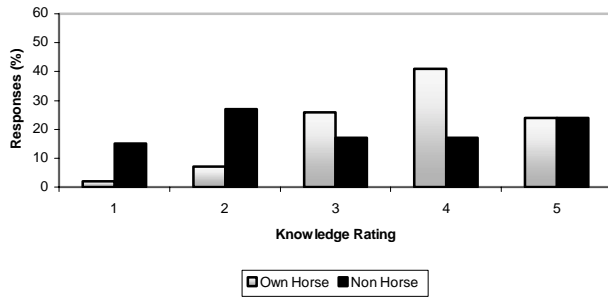
The survey showed that the teens increased their horse knowledge as a result of their participation in the 2002 Teen Conference Horse Track.

Group Knowledge Ratings at the START of Horse Track



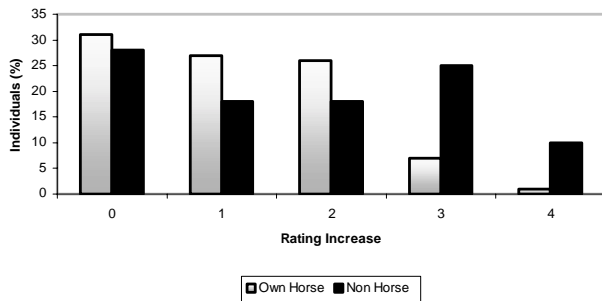
**Figure 1.** Knowledge ratings are from 1 – 5. (1 = know nothing, 2 = fair, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent)

**Group Knowledge Ratings at the FINISH of Horse Track**



**Figure 2.** Knowledge ratings.

**Individual Increase in Knowledge**



**Figure 3.** Individual changes in knowledge rating.

A few of the youth had decreased knowledge ratings. That may indicate they thought they knew more than they actually did at the beginning of the conference. It is interesting to note that the knowledge ratings at the end of the conference were the same for teens who owned horses and teens who did not. Individually, the non-horse owners showed the largest increase in knowledge.

The topic that had the overall largest increase in knowledge was equine dentistry followed by reproduction and hoof care. There was also increased knowledge about breed types and weed identification, which were covered as part of the skill-a-thon stations.

### ***The Future***

Several of the youth expressed interest in having a week-long state horse track or camp where they could bring a horse and participate in riding and training clinics. Many counties do not offer horse camps due to limited resources and facilities. Those counties that do offer horse camp programs consistently get high participation rates and some even have waiting lists because the demand is higher than they can accommodate.

### ***For More Information***

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