



4-H Horse Program and Helmets



If your child participates in the Kent County 4-H Horse Program, here are some things you should know:

The Michigan 4-H Program **requires** helmets:

1. In all gymkhana/speed classes.
2. For all Explorer members, ages 5 through 8 (4-H ages as of January 1 of current year.)
3. For all Hunt Seat Classes on the flat and over fences.



Michigan 4-H rules also state: **There will be no discrimination against protective headgear, even if the style does not match the style of riding.** What this means is that your child can wear a protective riding helmet in any 4-H class, and be considered “properly attired.”

The Kent County 4-H Horse leaders encourage youth members to wear a protective helmet every time they ride. Why should someone wear a helmet? Riding is a wonderful sport, but it does carry an element of risk. The age of the rider, number of years of experience, natural ability and degree of expertise cannot and do not prevent riding accidents. Here are a few things to think about:

- 1) Horseback riding carries a higher injury rate per hour than downhill ski racing, hang-gliding and motorcycle racing.
- 2) Medical Examiner reports show that 60% or more of horse-related death are caused by head injuries. Helmets can reduce this possibility by 70-80%.
- 3) Head injuries are responsible for more than 60% of horse-related deaths.
- 4) Head injuries are the most common reason for horse-related hospital admissions.
- 5) Unlike arms and legs, the brain cannot recover 100% from an injury. A serious head injury can quickly use all of a person's health insurance.

And helmets work! Riders under the age of 21 **formerly** had the highest head injury rate. Expanded use of ASTM/SEI helmets among this age group has shifted the highest head injury rate to those people ages 22-35.



The MSU Extension Office has an excellent video on helmets that every member and parent should watch. The title is “Every Time, Every Ride” and it is available to borrow for free. The Kent County 4-H Horse Leaders Committee encourages every 4-H Horse Club to view this video at a meeting.

Thanks to a special safety program with Troxel Manufacturing, 4-H families may purchase an SEI-ASTM approved helmet for just \$24.00. This is less than what you will pay in a tack store.

To view the video or to purchase a helmet, contact the MSU Extension Office at (616) 336-3265 or email kilpatri@msu.edu.



Only return the bottom portion. Please keep the upper sheet for your reference.

I have read and understand the informational sheet on protective helmets.

Parent/guardian name (please print): _____ Date: _____

Parent/guardian Signature: _____

Name of 4-H member(s): _____

4-H Club Name: _____