

Utah 4-H Helmet Policy for Horse Programs

The Utah 4-H Horse Program is designed for youth with an interest in horses and horse events. Youth will be provided with experience to help develop leadership, citizenship, self-esteem, social, and horsemanship skills. This program is for youth in grades 3rd-12th and at least 8 years of age as of October 1st. The 4-H Horse Program includes programs for both those youth who own/have access to horses and those who do not, but still want to learn about the science of equine care and management. In 2011, a helmet policy was put in place for youth participating in the Western horse program. The four H's in the 4-H program stand for head, heart, hands and health. Utah State University Extension 4-H aims to protect 4-Hers heads and improve their health through this policy.

It is the official position of Utah State University Extension **that all youth riders participating in Utah 4-H sponsored events should wear an American Standard for Testing Materials (ASTM) or Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) certified helmet.** This includes any youth riding during club practices and activities, at show events in or out of the show ring, and other events where youth are representing Utah 4-H in any way. Studies have shown that a properly fitted and certified helmet can drastically reduce the incidence of serious injury and harm to horseback riders.

If 4-H volunteers or show management do not follow this policy, they may be personally liable in the event of an injury. Activities using 4-H insurance may find their coverage void if these best practices are not followed.

The 4-H Program aims to be proactive in protecting 4-H youth and encourages all riders to wear a helmet every ride, every time. We ask club leaders and parents to model these best practices and encourage their youth to wear their helmets. We have over 10,000 youth involved in Utah 4-H horse programs, and it's important to model best practices and keep our youth safe.

More information can be found at the following links:

Helmets, Heads, and Health for Horse Enthusiasts -

<https://utah4h.org/files/Projects/agriculture/Horse/Helmet/Helmet-fact-sheet.pdf>

Helmets Save Lives PowerPoint –

<https://utah4h.org/files/Projects/agriculture/Horse/Helmet/Helmet-and-4-H.pps>

Locations to Purchase Helmets –

<https://utah4h.org/files/Projects/agriculture/Horse/Helmet/HelmetPurchaseLocations.pdf>