



# A Horse is a Horse, of course!

*Equus* is the scientific term used for modern-day equines (horses). There are more than 300 breeds of horses and ponies around the world! While many people think a pony is a small horse, horses and ponies are different, although related and quite similar. The main distinction between a horse and a pony is height. Ponies and horses also have different bone and muscle structures. Ponies tend to be stocky with shorter legs, wider chests, and heavier bones. Simply put, a horse is always a horse, and a pony is always a pony.

Modern-day equines are classified into four different groups that are based on their size. The four groups are miniatures, ponies, lightweight horses and heavyweight horses (draft horses). Miniature horses are the smallest of the entire horse family and cannot exceed 34 inches when fully grown. Ponies must stand less than 58 inches high when fully grown and weigh less than 800 pounds. Lightweight horses have thin legs, small bones, and weigh less than 1,300 pounds. Heavyweight horses have thick, sturdy legs, large bones, and weigh more than 2,000 pounds.



Miniature horse  
< 34"



Pony  
< 58"  
< 800 lb.



Lightweight horse  
Thin legs, small bones  
< 1300 lb.



Heavyweight horse  
Sturdy legs, large bones  
> 2000 lb.

## Horse Talk

- **Colt:** a young male horse.
- **Dressage:** a skilled style of training and riding.
- **Equine:** any member of the *Equus* genus, or group of animals with hooves, slender legs, and a mane including horses, ponies, mules, donkeys, and zebras.
- **Farrier:** a professional who trims horse hooves and changes horseshoes.
- **Filly:** a young female horse.
- **Foal:** a baby horse.
- **Gait:** the horse's motion of walking, stepping, or running.
- **Gelding:** a male horse that is not used for breeding.
- **Hand:** an ancient unit of measurement now standardized at four (4) inches.
- **Herd:** a group of horses.
- **Herbivore:** an animal that feeds on plants.
- **Hippology:** the study of horses. Also, a contest for young horse lovers to test their knowledge of horses.
- **Mare:** a female horse.
- **Mount:** to get into the saddle of a horse by putting a foot in a stirrup and lifting the other leg over the saddle.
- **Mustang:** wild horse of the Western plains. "Mustang" means ownerless.
- **Stallion:** a male horse used for breeding.
- **Tack:** the equipment used to ride and care for a horse (bridle, saddles, etc.).

## So, you want to own a horse?

Horse ownership is not an easy decision. Horses require a great deal of time and attention, as well as expenses not associated with other hobbies. These animals need care and attention on a regular basis. Horses require housing as well as plenty of room to move and exercise. Horses require regular grooming and medical care. Horses also eat a lot! A general rule of thumb is horses require about 2 percent of their bodyweight in food every day. This means a 1,000-pound horse needs 20 pounds of food per day. Horses are herbivores and prefer a diet of fresh grasses and hay (dried grass). They can also be fed barley, oats, flaked corn, dry sugar beets, and hay pellets. Most of these animals prefer to eat a little bit at a time throughout the day. Horses drink 10-12 gallons of water per day. It is important to consider all these items before entering horse ownership.

## Why do horses wear shoes?

Horse hooves are like our fingernails or toenails. When horses work or travel on hard roads, they need protection on their feet. Horses naturally spend 80% of their lives standing up, so they need to have their hooves trimmed every 4-6 weeks.

Professionals that trim horses' hooves are called farriers. Farriers use tools like nippers, rasps, and anvils to trim horses' hooves and to shape the horses' shoes. Horseshoes can be made of iron, plastic, or aluminum. The type of shoe depends on the type of job a horse is doing.

Shoeing a horse is only one part of the grooming. Horses need to be groomed daily. Grooming not only keeps the skin and hair clean, it also helps tone muscles. Specialized combs and brushes, such as a curry comb, mane and tail comb and hoof pick, assist in grooming.



## A horse of a DIFFERENT COLOR.

Although there are many variations in colors of horses and ponies, most are a shade of brown or gray and have dark skin. Some horses and ponies change color as they age. Most white ponies were originally gray but have become pale in color as they age. Completely black horses are rare.

### What do the colors mean?

**Bay:** dark brown with black, mane, tail and legs.



**Chestnut or Sorrel:** red-gold all over (same color or lighter for mane and tail).



**Dapple Gray:** gray and black hair forming clear rings.



**Pinto:** black (or brown) and white areas all over.

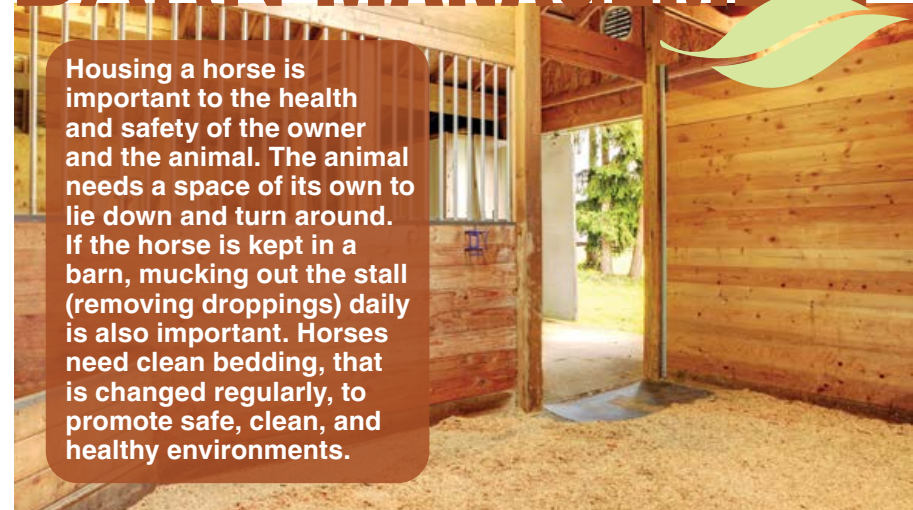


**Palomino:** golden with a pale often white, mane and tail.



## BARN MANAGEMENT

Housing a horse is important to the health and safety of the owner and the animal. The animal needs a space of its own to lie down and turn around. If the horse is kept in a barn, mucking out the stall (removing droppings) daily is also important. Horses need clean bedding, that is changed regularly, to promote safe, clean, and healthy environments.



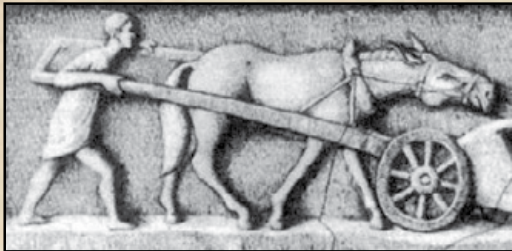


# “History was written on the back of a horse”

Historians say that the first tamed horses were used for riding and pulling carts and were a fixture of many ancient civilizations. The use of horses enabled faster communication, travel, as well as alliances in war situations. Horses also helped transform agriculture.

As settlers came to America, they depended on horses for transportation, to pull heavy

wagons, and to help clear the land and plow the fields. Often horses were the only link between rural settlements and towns. Even after the rail systems were developed, horses were the most popular means of transportation. Our early street cars and fire engines were horse-powered. Before the popularity of motorized vehicles, nearly every American used horses in many daily



## Horses and Farming

Until the tractor was developed in the early 1900s, the horse and mule were the only means of power on the family farm. The draft horses and mules supplied the power to pull farm implements over every acre of soil planted. Before the tractor, a farmer would have to keep as many as six teams of horses for farm labor. That meant spending an hour each morning just to feed and harness the horses before going to work in the fields. It took another hour at the end of the day to put the horses away for the evening.

It wasn't until the mid 1930s that tractors were reliable enough to replace mules and horses as a labor source. It was this second generation of tractors, along with other machines and farm equipment, which helped pull American agriculture through the Great Depression and transform it into the most efficient and productive industry the country had ever seen.





# PONY EXPRESS!



## THE CENTRAL OVERLAND CALIFORNIA AND PIKE'S PEAK Express Company.

THIS COMPANY ARE NOW  
operating a Tri-Weekly Line of Express  
and Passenger Coaches from  
St. Joseph to Denver City, Thru, SIX  
DAYS.

Will be in the City of St. Joseph, a Daily Line of  
Coaches to be started from said place (Passage excepted).

### PONY EXPRESS.

On Friday, the 11th of April, at 7 o'clock A. M., a Pony  
Express will leave St. Joseph, the 1st, and terminus of the  
Overland and St. Joseph Railroad, for New Francisco, and  
weekly thereafter at the same hour, passing through Fort  
Kearney, Lawrence and Bridge, Great Falls, Lake City, Camp  
Pike, Union City, the Western River, Wilson, Placerville  
and Sacramento City. Passage from all of the above  
places and Western River will be received up to the  
hour of the departure of the Coach from St. Joseph, and  
will be forwarded from Union City by the Placerville and  
St. Joseph Telegraph Company in all cases in California  
and Oregon.

TIME FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC,  
EIGHT DAYS.—Letters by the Coach will be delivered  
to San Francisco from St. Joseph in TEN DAYS.

Letters, for Chicago, Washington, Portland, Vancouver  
Island, British Columbia, San Francisco, Seattle, Wash-  
ton, Portland, Salem, Oregon, and the Lower River, will be  
delivered at San Francisco.

Under authority of the Postmaster General, letters are  
forwarded by this Company to Denver City.

### FAST FREIGHT LINE.

On the first day of May, a Fast Freight Line will be es-  
tablished from Lawrence City and St. Joseph to Denver  
City, for the transportation of general merchandise. Time,  
FIFTEEN DAYS.

For full particulars, or for Tickets, and Freight Estimates,  
apply to:

New York Office: J. B. SAMPSON, Vice President; St.  
Joseph-Lake City, Agent; St. Louis-SAN FRANCISCO, A.  
ALLEN, Commission Merchant; St. N. Street, Agent;  
Chicago-St. J. STATEDEND, Agent.

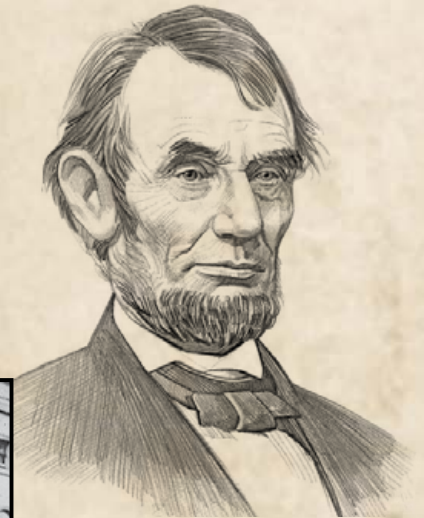
Office Lawrence City, Kansas, March, 1861.

St. J. M. KOSSELL, President.

John W. BARNES, Secretary.

The Pony Express was a mail delivery system that ran from April 1860 to October 1861. Young men rode their horses at top speeds to deliver mail. At that time, mail took up to three weeks to travel from Missouri to California, so the public needed a better system. In the 18 months that the Pony Express was used, 183 different men delivered mail. Each rider covered 75 miles a day and they switched horses every 10 to 15 miles. Between 400 and 500 horses were used in the Pony Express system. The Pony Express was a business and closed after the opening of the transcontinental telegraph. Telegraphs could be sent much faster and with less expense.

**FACT:** The fastest Pony Express ride was 7 days, 17 hours and was carrying President Lincoln's inaugural address.







# HORSEPOWER

The term “*horsepower*” was coined by the English engineer James Watt to mean how much work is done by an engine. Horsepower is a measure of force. Watt estimated the force of a horse, working eight hours a day, to be at 33,000 foot-pounds of pressure a minute. Watt concluded after his experiment that a one-horsepower engine could pull about 50% more weight in a single day than a horse. Continued improvement of mechanical devices has further eliminated our reliance on horses for work.

While James Watt coined the term horsepower, the unit of measurement for power (the rate of doing work or transferring heat) is known as the Watt in honor of him.



# The Power of a Horse

Horses are great for working and running. They have strong teeth, sharp ears, keen eyes, and a good sense of smell. A horse has larger eyes than any other land animal except the ostrich. A horse can look forward with one eye and backward with the other eye. They have wide nostrils to help them breathe easily and long, muscular legs that give them strength to pull loads and run at fast speeds.



## Horse Racing

Known as the sport of kings, horse racing dates back to 4500 BC in central Asia. Horse racing continues today and in Illinois over 9,000 jobs and \$766 million is added to our state's economy from this industry.





# Horses Now

If modern-day farmers had to rely on horsepower to produce food, our nation would need 20 times the number of horses alive today, and five times the number of farm workers. In the 1920s two men and eight horses were required to farm 160 acres. Today, farmers can farm thousands of acres due to the efficiency of machines.

Horses are still important in agriculture, particularly in the Western United States. Horses are used on cattle ranches for roping and branding cattle, and for carrying cowboys through rough country to help round up herds of cattle.



Horses are also used in non-agricultural settings. In large cities like Chicago, horses are used by police to patrol busy areas, which are often overrun with traffic. Horses also provide therapeutic riding for adults and children with disabilities. The contact with the horse and the horse's movement help the disabled gain better flexibility and balance.

In most settings, the modern horse is found riding trails or showing in arenas. Many people ride horses for pleasure. There are several different types of horse competitions. These competitions range from rodeos, polo matches, trail classes, to horse racing. Horse breeds and training is specific to each activity. Certain breeds are known for specific traits and physical abilities. For example, the Thoroughbred is a breed used widely in horse racing due to their speed. There are over 300 different breeds of horses today.

Today, horses used both for work and pleasure are well-cared for by their owners. They are well-fed, well-rested, and regarded as gentle companions and helpers.



# Horses in Illinois

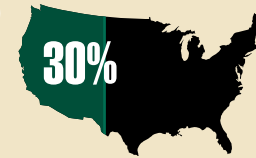
There are approximately 7 million horses in the United States. Nearly 64,000 horse owners in Illinois own over 150,000 horses. This makes Illinois the 18th largest state in horse population. Texas, California, Florida, Oklahoma, and Kentucky lead the nation in the number of horses per state.



**64,000**  
Horse Owners



**150,000**  
Horses



**30%**

Over 30% of U.S. households contain horse enthusiasts. This means roughly 1.6 million Illinois households have horse owners, workers, riders, or those that are excited about horses.

Roughly 645,000 acres of land in Illinois are used for horse-related purposes. This includes recreational use as well as therapy, racing, and trail riding.



Over 25,000 people work in careers directly connected to horses in Illinois. This includes jobs related to horse racing, competition, therapy, and recreation. Overall, the horse industry in Illinois adds over \$2 billion to our economy every year.



Supports  
**25,000**  
jobs

**\$2 Billion**  
Annually



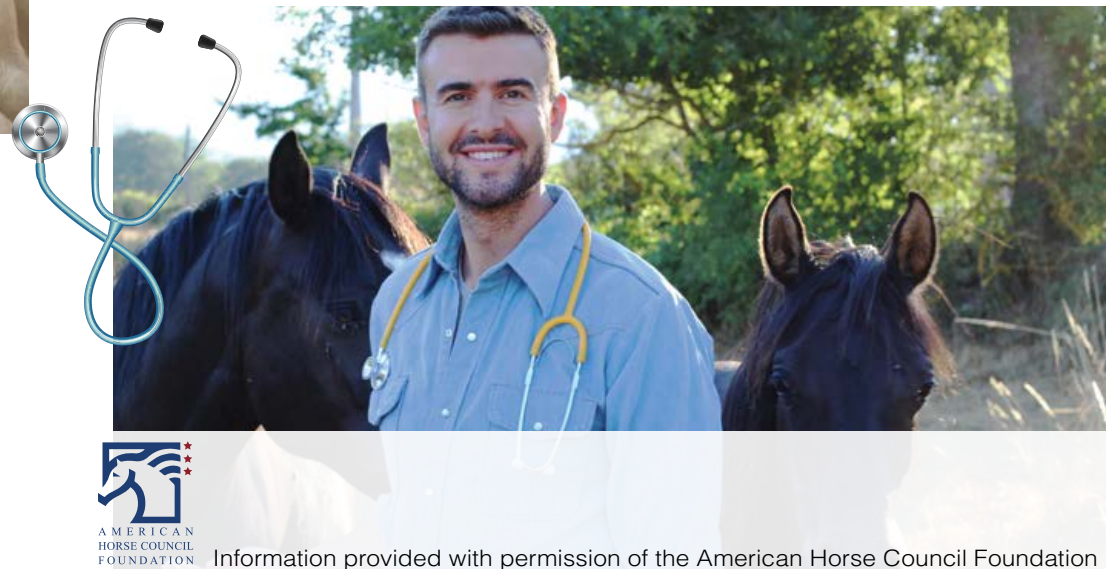
# Horse Competition

Horses are also used for various types of competition. Riders are judged for how well they work with the animal to complete various types of activities. These equestrian events are popular spectator sports and are exciting to watch. Olympic equestrian events include dressage, a highly artistic form of training competition; eventing, a multi-day event combining a number of skills; and show jumping, a competitive sport involving riders, fences and other obstacles judged on a point system. In Illinois, the competitive sector represents over 6000 jobs and an economic impact of over \$630 million to the state.



Illinois is known for having many trails and facilities for riders to enjoy horseback riding. Around 4,800 jobs are linked to recreational riding in Illinois, and horseback riding brings smiles to many faces across the state.

Other occupations related to horses in Illinois include equine therapy, which uses horses to provide therapy to various patients and equine rescue and sanctuaries that work to provide homes to horses in need.



Information provided with permission of the American Horse Council Foundation

# CAREERS



**KEVIN KLINE**  
*Professor of  
Animal Sciences*  
*Extension Specialist*  
*University of Illinois*  
Urbana-Champaign, IL

## Tell us about your job.

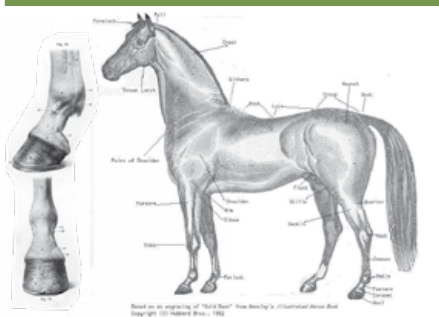
I am a Professor of Animal Sciences at the University of Illinois and specialize in horses. I work with horse owners in the state of Illinois through my UI Extension appointment and help to produce the Illinois Horse Fair with the Horsemen's Council of Illinois as a Board of Directors member. I teach equine courses here at UI, including Horse Management, Equine Science, On-Campus internships including Stallion Management and Foal Watch, and offer an annual Horse Judges Seminar, used to develop a list of judges qualified to judge youth and open horse shows in Illinois. I also do some research into nutrition, reproduction and growth, and development of horses.

## How did you get involved with horses?

I got involved in horses mainly through my grandfather who raised and raced Standardbred horses during and after his years spent farming in West Central Illinois. After coming to the UI, I took all the horse courses offered, and decided to continue my equine studies as a graduate student under the advisement of Dr. Waco Albert, who was the Animal Sciences Equine Professor through the 1970s and early 1980s.

## What is the one thing you think students should know about horses in Illinois?

Horses in Illinois contribute greatly to the agricultural economy of Illinois through horse ownership, equine institutions & profit-making organizations, and tourism spending by participants and spectators in recreational, competitive, and horse racing sectors of the Illinois Horse Industry.



**KAYLEE KREKEL**  
*Veterinarian and  
Barrel Racer*  
Carthage, IL

## What is the most important thing in caring for horses?

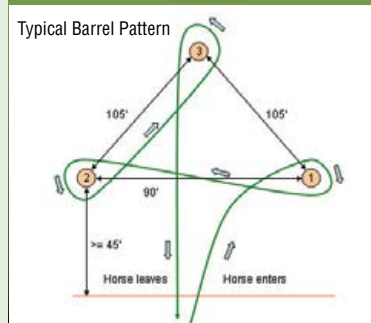
First and foremost, horses must have their basic needs taken care of. Adequate food, water, and shelter are those basic needs. Horses are natural foragers, so they need access to either pasture or hay. Many horses also eat grain and minerals to meet their nutritional requirements if they are being worked heavily or in a stage of life where they require more calories. Horses should always have access to fresh water. Shelter or housing varies and can be anything from a stable with individual stalls to a pasture or fenced enclosure. Ideally, horses should have somewhere they can get to shade in the heat of the summer or block them from heavy winter weather elements. Trees or timber can serve that purpose in a situation where they don't have a barn or shed. Beyond those basic needs, I encourage owners to make sure their hooves are properly cared for, they are treated for parasites, and they receive an annual check up by their veterinarian to maintain overall good health.

## What do you find rewarding about your job in animal care?

One of the most rewarding things about my job in caring for animals is that I am able to be an advocate for the horse. I am able to help owners learn what is in their horse's best interest and work towards keeping my patients happy and healthy.

## How did you get involved in barrel racing?

I grew up riding and horses have been a huge part of my life for as long as I can remember. I remember begging my dad for a barrel racing pony when I was 7 years old, and I got my first real barrel horse named Boogie when I was 9. I was officially hooked and I've been a barrel racer ever since.







The Chicago Police Department Mounted Patrol Unit consists of 32 horses and is staffed by 32 officers. The Mounted Patrol Unit is used in a variety of crowd control situations and presents an additional positive image of the Chicago Police Department.

**There are many different horse breeds in the U.S., North America and around the world. Throughout Illinois you might see some of these breeds.**



**American Paint Horse**



**American Quarter Horse**



**Appaloosa**



**Arabian**



**Thoroughbred**

## Looking for a good book? Try these:

**Leah's Pony** by Elizabeth Fredrich

**Horsepower** by Cris Peterson

**Warhorse** by Michael Morpurgo

**Misty of Chincoteague** by Marguerite Henry

**Wild Horse** by Cris Peterson

**Wild Horse** by Cris Peterson



**You** can estimate how old a horse is by looking at its teeth. As a horse ages, the incisors (front teeth) slope more, and their surface markings change.

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/vet\\_accreditation/downloads/appendix-g-aging-horse.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_accreditation/downloads/appendix-g-aging-horse.pdf)

This issue of Ag Mag has been provided by: Illinois Equine Industry Research and Promotion Board The IAA Foundation.



To learn more about Agriculture visit us at [agintheclashroom.org](http://agintheclashroom.org), or contact your County Farm Bureau® office or Agriculture in the Classroom, Illinois Farm Bureau®, 1701 Towanda Avenue, Bloomington, IL 61701.

**Common Core Standards:** ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1; ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3; ELA-Literacy.RI.4.5; ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7; ELA-Literacy.L.4.3

**Next Generation Science Standards:** Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: 3-LS4-3; Energy: 4-ESS3-1; Structure, Function, and Information Processing: 4-LS1.A; Structure and Properties of Matter: 5-PS1-3; Structure and Properties of Matter: 5-PS1-4

**IL Social Science Standards:** SS.IS.1.3-5; SS.IS.2.3-5; SS.IS.3.3-5; SS.IS.4.3-5; SS.IS.5.3-5; SS.IS.6.3-5; SS.G.3.4; SS.EC.2.4