

**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
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WILLIAMS COUNTY**

Youth Horsemanship Group To Organize

4-H youth work set its roots back in 1914 with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act and the formation of the Cooperative Extension Service. 4-H clubs and the Extension Service worked hand-in-hand to produce the growing demand for food as the nation entered World War 1. The wartime demands for basic foodstuffs credited a rapid interest in livestock projects such as calves, pigs and dairy among the 500,000+ 4-H members enrolled by 1918.

Since these early years the mission of the 4-H program has expanded to include the promotion of communication skills, leadership, making good decisions and application of science and technology through many more projects and activities which garner the interests of urban youth along with the traditional rural students.

In all regions of the United States horsemanship has become a very popular area of study among youth of all ages. There are a number of reasons for this. For a lot of youth and adults it is easy to develop a passionate love for a horse. Adult leaders see the horse project as a vehicle to promote sportsmanship, trustworthiness character, discipline, responsibility, respect, competitive spirit and good citizenship along with the science of caring for a horse and the skills which create a successful relationship.

In Williams County horsemanship projects have been incorporated into clubs which have other interest areas. Many folks have suggested the formation of a 4-H youth group that will focus solely on equine studies. Just recently a few adults have offered their time and skills so that we may offer more intense horsemanship learning activities. The first organizational meeting will be held on Saturday May 14, 2 pm at the Ernie French Center located in the NDSU Research Station just west of Williston Saddlery.

The adults offering their leadership to this effort will use regular monthly meetings, lesson materials, and local resources as the primary tools for learning. They will also encourage participation in other activities such as horse judging, hippology, public speaking, horse shows and trail riding.

Interested youth and parents are encouraged to contact the Williams County Extension Office 701-577-4595 for more information.

NRCS Policy on Noxious Weed Control

Noxious weeds such as Canada thistle often invade Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sites planted to grasses and legumes. Owners of these sites often find themselves caught between the state law requiring them to control noxious weeds and regulations of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) requiring a legume must be maintained in CRP. The control arises in the choice of herbicides to control Canada thistle and yet not harm the alfalfa which is a broadleaf legume. There simply is none available.

However, in certain situations NRCS has established a policy which gives noxious weed control priority over maintaining legumes in the plant mix. For established plantings, the policy requires no clipping or spraying of entire fields should be done during the primary nesting period (April 15 to August 1) for normal weed control. If noxious weeds are present and the critical period for the weed falls in the primary nesting period, spot treatment of weeds is allowed. If it is not possible to use a herbicide which will maintain the grass and legume mixture, the policy then gives priority to control of noxious weeds.

Along this line I should mention the Williams County Weed Board will cost share (60:40) three gallons of Milestone for any landowner/operator in Williams County. Milestone has proven to be very effective on Canada thistle. Always notify your local USDA Service Center before making any herbicide applications.