

4-H Story "High Hides"

Hi! My name is Jaime Flores and I would like to tell you about my year in 4-H. First, I'll tell you a bit about myself. I'm 11 years old and will be going into 6th grade in the fall at Alhambra's traditional school. I live in Lawton on a small farm with my Mom, Dad, and a whole lot of animals! This is my second year as a junior and it has been quite exciting. This year my projects are horse, sheep, photography, wet science, and safety. I was in horse and sheep last year and chose to add the other three projects because they are related to and help me with my two main projects.

My main project is horse. I am a member of the Lawton Pathfinders 4-H Horse Club. Our group is small, with only 5 to 7 members each year. I like being in a small group because the members are closer and support each other more than in a larger group. Also, with fewer members we are usually able to do more field trips and traveling activities. Our club has regular meetings where we usually have an educational program. We also have workshops on different areas of horsemanship, to learn new skills or improve old ones. It's not all work and no play though, as we have a lot of different recreational activities during the year, such as a Corn Maze Party, a Christmas Party, bowling, swimming, goofy golfing and those types of things. Our club tries to go on at least one field trip each year. This year we went to Surf Paradise Racetrack, where we learned about many different careers in the horse racing industry. From

Club this year I held the office of secretary and added Treasurers duties near the end of the year when the old Treasurers dropped out of the club. I also was in charge of the fund raising committee.

This year in horse has definitely been a learning experience! In the fall my Mom's 30 year old horse Holly died. At about the same time, we were looking for a new horse for me, because my old horse Cinder, a black Welsh cross pony, was already 30 years old and needed less stress in her life. I had also outgrown her and knew last year that I would not be able to compete on her this year. We have one other horse, Decker, a black Quarter Horse gelding, but he needs more work before he's ready for me. Not long after my Mom's horse died, we found a pony that would be a good match for me. Her name is Lillian and she is a red roan Pony of the Americas. She is much larger than Cinder and also much younger. When we bought her, she was supposed to be 7 years old, but as it turned out she was only 5! She's a very good pony, who learns quickly, but she has had very little experience doing much of anything. We entered only one 4-H gymkhana this year and we didn't do very well. I tried to take her faster on the patterns than she was ready for and it didn't work out so well. I have learned my lesson and now know that I have to take things more slowly and wait until she's ready for the speed. It was disappointing not being able to place in gymkhana events after doing so good last year. I had still planned to go to County Finals for practice, but ended up not going. One of

our club members had a horse that had a bad trailer experience and wouldn't load. The girl had worked really hard to get her horse to load so that she could compete in her last County Finals, but at the last minute the trailer she needed to haul him in wasn't going to be available, so she couldn't go. She was so upset that her friend and I, who were going together, decided not to go, so she wouldn't feel any worse than she already did! I'm glad we did that. There will be other County Finals for me, but this was her last one as she is going to college in the fall and probably won't have time to continue 4-H.

This year I learned about some major bones in a horse's skeleton and about some of the major systems in the horse, such as the horse's circulatory and nervous systems. I also did a demonstration on horse body language and how they use it to communicate. The title I chose for my demonstration was "Horse 101" and gave this demonstration at the County 4-H Communications Day and received perfect score! I am planning on giving it again at the County Horse Contest in July, along with competing in Hippology and Quiz Bowl.

My sheep club is very small because it only consists of one person -- me! I've been showing sheep at sheep shows all my life with my Mom and Grandma, so I have a lot of experience with sheep. My mom gave me my first flock of sheep for my 8th birthday. I raise and show Natural Colored sheep.

This year I showed my breeder and market sheep at Arizona State Fair, Arizona National Livestock Show, and Maricopa

County Fair. At the Maricopa County Fair, my breeder ram won Supreme Champion ram, and my two breeder ewes won Grand and Reserve Champion. In a market, I had two ewe lambs to show this year at the Maricopa County Fair because the Arizona National Livestock Show changed their market classes to all wethers or neutered lambs. Since I didn't have any wethers, only ewes, my larger lamb, that I had hoped to show and sell there had to be held back for County Fair. My market lambs did better this year, and I auctioned the bigger lamb for \$6.25 per pound. The money I made this year paid for my sheep project for the whole year and part of my horse project expenses!

This year in sheep I have learned more about their care and gotten better at showing. I am still working on improving my wool spinning skills. I was more involved in lambing this year. Most of my ewes picked the middle of the night to lamb. You have to be a real dedicated shepherd to get out of bed at 3:00 A.M! It is important to be there for the births though, because the lambs can die if they don't get air right away. The first set of lambs born this year come so fast that their mothers didn't have time to clean them up, and we would have lost at least one, maybe even both of them if we had not been there.

In photography this year I learned about different types of cameras and about film speeds. I also learned how

to compose a picture. During Christmas break, I went to the new Phoenix Fire Station at Sky Harbor Airport and took pictures of planes taking off and landing with a digital camera. I got some good pictures and a chance to ride in a foam truck onto the runway! They even let me spray water! I took other pictures around the house with disposable cameras, trying different types of shots. My Mom has a really neat 35mm camera, with a lot of different lenses that would be fun to use, but she makes me use the cheap cameras instead!

In vet science, I learned more about animal health, especially about horses and sheep. I developed an animal health program for my horses and sheep that includes a vaccination schedule and deworming schedule. I learned that it is better to keep your animals healthy, than to try to treat the disease later. I watched two demonstrations given by other club members on vet science topics. One was about internal parasites, which is an important health issue. The other was on colic, which is a common horse disease.

In safety, I learned ways to keep my horses safe in their pens, when working with them at home, and while out riding. I also learned things to help keep me safe when working around them. Most of the things are common sense stuff, such as no rough housing around horses, looking for items that horses can be injured on, and paying attention to your horse when you are riding or working around him. I learned that most people get hurt around animals from not paying attention to what they and the animal are doing. I use the

safety information about horses for the sheep as well.

Next year, I hope to do all the same projects that I did this year. I plan to work with my new horse over the summer and by next year I hope we can be more competitive. I have 5 new baby lambs that I will be working with over the summer to prepare for the show season that begins in the fall. I plan to use my photography skills, vet science skills, and safety skills over the summer as well. My club will have parties of course, and I can't wait for that! 4-H has been a very important part of my life up to now and I'm sure it will continue to be.

That's it for this 4-H year... tune to this same channel next year for the next episode!