

Cowgirl Up!

Howdy! My name is Jaime Flora. I'm 12 years old and I am an Honor Roll student at Alhambra Traditional School. I live on a small farm and I have many different kinds of animals that keep me very busy. I belong to the Laveen Pathfinders 4-H Horse Club and the Laveen Lamb Lovers 4-H Sheep Club. At school I belong to the Alhambra Traditional School Choir and this year I also had the honor of belonging to the 6th Grade All-State Choir. Now that I have told you a little bit about myself, I would like to tell you about my 4-H year. This is my third year in 4-H as a Junior and my projects this year are horse, sheep, vet science, photography, and safety. This is my third year in horse and sheep, and my second year in vet science, photography, and safety. I chose to enroll in these three extra projects again because I thought that they were fun last year and that they really help me with my main projects.

My main project this year is horse. My club is small, with only four club members. I like being a member of a small group, because the members seem to be closer and more supportive of each other than in larger groups. As a club, we always help each other, as well as other people. While we help others, we always remember to have a good time. We do trail cleaning, road side cleaning, and shop for gifts for needy children through the Christmas Angels program. We also donate books, toys, and food through various drives. We enjoy helping as many people as we can. At our meetings, we usually have an educational program where we learn about horsemanship, safety, vet science, and photography. We also plan clinics and workshops so that we can learn new skills and improve old ones. We don't always do work though. We try to plan many recreational activities, such as a trip through a corn maze, our annual Christmas party, bowling outings, swimming parties, and goofy golfing. Some of our activities are educational as well as recreational, such as trips to horse shows, horse racetracks, and tours of various horse related businesses. This

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year we plan on going to the new racetrack in Prescott, where we can learn about different careers in the horse racing industry. In the club I held the office of Secretary and I was also in charge of the Fund Raising and the Scrap Book Committees.

This year in 4-H I worked at Boo at the Zoo, where I taught different children how to make cootie catchers. As a reward, those of us who worked were allowed to go through the zoo to admire the animal exhibits. Several days later we were going around our neighborhood, door to door, gathering canned and non-perishable foods for Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat. In February, I went to County Communications Day where I gave a demonstration on arena trail called "Happy Trails To You." I received a blue ribbon and a very high score. I also participated in Quiz Bowl and Hippology, where I placed quite high, particularly for my first time. It was a lot of fun! Our club also had many workshops this year which have been excellent learning experiences. At one workshop we learned about cleaning tack, and then put the knowledge to use by cleaning our tack! We also reviewed our ground handling basics. In clinics, we learned about showmanship at halter, showing rail and performance classes, what leads are and how to get the horse on them, and what arena trail class is and how to train our horses to compete in it.

This year in horse I learned many new things. I improved my horsemanship skills, by developing better balance, working to keep the correct seat, using my hands more softly, and learning techniques that help me better communicate with my horse. I have taken some falls this year and I did not compete in 4-H riding events at all. I have discovered that I need to learn to be more patient as I work with my horses. The things that I have learned about showing have encouraged me to possibly try to compete in that next year. I have learned that I can enjoy my horses and improve my skills without competing in

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the arena. I learned how to tie some new knots this year, and learned about the digestive system of the horse and how it relates to feeding and nutrition.

In the Laveen Lamb Lovers 4-H Sheep Club I have a ton of fun even if there is only one member... me! I show both breeding stock and market lambs at several shows. I have made a lot of friends at these shows. I currently have 15 head of Natural Colored sheep, including 3 little lambs. Next year, I would like to breed and show Oxford sheep as well. I have a friend who may get into sheep next year, which would be fun.

This year I showed my breeder sheep and market lambs at Arizona State Fair, Arizona National Livestock Show, and Maricopa County Fair. At State Fair I showed my breeding stock, where they placed well. At Arizona National, my breeder ewes placed even better. My yearling ewe was awarded Reserve Champion. At Arizona National I showed a market lamb, but wasn't able to sell him at the auction. I was able to sell my market lamb at County Fair for a good price. The money I earned was used to pay for most of my sheep and horse project expenses. At County Fair, I helped a little girl in my market lamb class with her lamb by switching lambs with her, because her lamb was too much for her to handle. I believe that my actions that day probably helped to earn me third place in the herdsman awards. While showing at shows I learned more about different breeds, the qualities of wool, and how to groom sheep well. I also improved my showmanship skills and learned more about how to show. In addition I learned how to shear sheep by practicing on my own sheep. I even learned how to treat some different types of ailments. What I learned this year will definitely help me with my sheep in the future.

This year in vet science I learned about the digestive system of the horse and different types of colic. I also watched a demonstration on the fetal development of the horse. In photography I learned about different camera

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angles and different types of light. At club meetings I learned many ways to keep my animals and myself safe both at home and when traveling. I even dealt with an emergency of my own when my market lamb tore his ear a little around his ear tag and I had to treat it myself!

Next year, in horse, I want to learn more training techniques to use with my horses. I would like to improve my riding and horsemanship skills, and go back into competition again. I sat out riding competition this year, as none of the other members were able to compete, and it's just not as much fun to go to events when you are doing it alone. I will continue to give demonstrations at County Communications Day, as I really enjoy it, and I do quite well at it. I want to participate in Quiz Bowl and Hippology again next year. In sheep, I want to continue to show my Natural Colored sheep, as well as get into another breed, Oxfords! I also want to work with my three new baby lambs. In vet science, I want to learn about the skeletal system of both sheep and horse. In photography, I want to take many more photographs and learn more about cameras. I would also like to experiment more with my photographs and enter some in competitions. In safety I want to continue to use my skills to keep my animals and I safe.

4-H really means a lot to me. 4-H is fun and has taught me lots of new things. 4-H has helped me learn new skills, given me goals to work on, and introduced me to many new friends. I have had many opportunities to do things that most kids who are not in 4-H don't get to do. I feel very fortunate to have all that I do. I can't even imagine my life without 4-H!

Finally, I titled my story for this year "Cowgirl Up!". This is a slogan I learned early in the year, that I remember every time I have a problem with my projects or other things in my life. "Cowgirl Up" means that when you fall off your horse, or face some other problem, that instead of giving up, you dust yourself

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off, put on a smile, and continue to try. I think it's a great motto for both 4-H and other areas of life.

That's it for this year. Tune in again next year...same 4-H time, same 4-H channel!