



# Livestock, Athlete, or Recreation?

Students will explore the history of horses in Maryland to understand how humans have utilized these animals in different ways and how different perspectives for their use reflect values that affect policies and regulations.



Welcome students to the farm with an enthusiastic greeting and farm safety statement. Point out a piece of mechanical equipment ( a tractor, skid loader, truck ) nearby. Ask students what they see and what it may be used for. Accept all answers. Ask students to imagine their great grandparents encountering such a machine a hundred years ago. What might they have thought of it? Accept all answers. Introduce today's visit as a step into history and how our ideas and values about the use of horses has changed over time.



Take students on a farm tour. Have four stations set up around the farm and signed that describe the historic use of horses in Maryland. Stations can include draft animals for farming and industry, athlete animals in racing, transportation animals that carried or moved people and goods, and recreational animals. Tag or sign each station.

Visit a tack room where an old (or new) horse collar is hanging, investigate an old carriage or wagon , invite students to handle silks, boots, and helmets for racing. Have a selection of gear or photos of sporting events set out to shift student thinking about utilitarian uses of horses to recreational sports - horses as athletes.

How has the history of your farm and the history of horses in Maryland intersected over time? Sample station signs for the farm tour with topic headings can be hand made on card stock, framed in picture frames, or artfully made on weathered boards.



## Explain

What makes a horse useful (draft), necessary (transportation), exciting (racing), or beautiful (show or event)?

Observe a horse standing nearby. Review rules about being near horses. Encourage group moderating their own behavior.

On a large dry erase board or chalk board panel, draw the general shape and anatomy of the horse and invite students to follow along in their sketchbooks, journals, or clipboards. Emphasize major muscle groups, skeletal structure, hooves, and position of eyes on the skull. Ask students to infer how the physical attributes of the horse make it an excellent livestock choice for pulling (draft & transportation), running (racing), and a recreational horse (size). Allow time for students to finish and enjoy their work!



## Elaborate

Divide students into four major equine groups named for each of the horse history stations on the tour: Racing, Transportation, Recreational, and Draft/Working. Explain that each group represents an association that oversees the activities of their enthusiasts.

Major equine groups are represented today by *many* associations and societies such as the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the American Driving Society, the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Maryland Draft Horse and Mule Association, and the Maryland Regional Pony Club among others. These associations work to develop and monitor protocols, policies and/or regulations that ensure the safety and health of horses.

Ask groups to list what they think 3-5 priority concerns for animal welfare might be within their interest group. Compare lists across groups. Describe the Maryland Department of Agriculture's policies on horse health regarding shows, competitions, and events (Coggins Test, Self Certification, EIA).

What other priority concerns are held in common?

What priority concerns are unique to each group?

Are there priority concerns that may be *in conflict* with the priorities of another interest group? What concerns may be a priority to one group but *not as important* to another?



Horses have served people in a variety of ways for hundreds of years in Maryland. Today Maryland horse farms are home to many breeds that have played important roles in Maryland history.

In a wrap-up circle, choose one of the station signs from the farm tour. Go quickly around the circle and have students explain how the horses from that user group helped build Maryland history, past and present. Not every student will have something to offer, but assure them that the other signs will come around shortly!

Introduce another sign. Contributors from the first round can “pass” the second round giving students who didn’t contribute for the first round to do so. Continue until all four station cards are covered and every student has contributed to the round-up.

