



A Need for Breeds

Students will explore breeds to understand that throughout history, people have selectively bred horses to serve certain purposes and needs on the land.



Welcome students to the farm with an enthusiastic greeting and farm safety statement.

Use a circle-up to review the rules and start the farm tour. Distribute a set of 3" x 5" index cards labeled with four to six horse breeds found on your farm and/or found in the region historically. Below the name of each breed have a phrase or word written to describe the use of that breed. Make enough cards for each breed set so that all students will receive a card.

Ask students to silently act out the phrase or word that describes their breed and gather with students who are acting alike. These are the working groups for the day!

Belgian Draft

Pulls large and heavy loads

Hackney

High stepping carriage horse

American Quarter Horse

Racing and Ranching

Shetland

Quick trotting carriage pony



Take students on a tour of the farm that includes visits with horses, tack, and equipment associated with breeds found on the farm. Give each breed team a clipboard, paper, pencils, horse-hued crayons, or markers. Assign each group the task of designing a breed poster that highlights interesting facts and stories you share with the class that pertain to breeds on the farm. Be sure to have plenty of interesting information to share with all students so that they can fill a page!



Share the group posters by inviting a spokesperson from each team to tell what they have learned about their breed while on the tour.

Emphasize that breeds have been developed by people over a long period of time to serve certain purposes in transportation, industry, farming, military use, recreation, and sport. Careful breeding ensures that important traits in temperament and physical ability develop a breed that can perform a task reliably for generations.

Depending on the breeds featured on your farm have volunteers take student groups to equine educators who represent their respective breeds. Be sure volunteers review rules for approaching and being around the horses.

Volunteers may demonstrate how different tack is used according to breed and purpose. Students may lift, adjust, and assist the volunteer with putting on a halter, saddle blanket, saddle, etc. Compare breeds.

How are body sizes different and important? How does hoof size and shape allow the breed to perform its task? Explore and explain the hoof and shoes. Demonstrate proper hoof care. Allow students to assist.

If time allows, have groups switch to another equine educator and volunteer for a brief comparison visit. This way, students understand how traits and characteristics between breeds determine their best use and task performance.



Elaborate

Assemble students at a picnic area with tables or indoors where work space is available for group work.

How long has it been since Maryland's horse power was replaced with gas-powered machines? During the age of horse-powered economies many different breeds served many different needs!

Each team receives a tub of clay or play dough to build their own 3-D team breed. The smallest of all the class breeds should stand 8 inches at the withers, so groups will work with each other to determine their model horse's size in relation to the others. Observe equine educators for ideas on structure, muscles and proportions. Use sticks or wire for internal support if needed. More than one model can be built per team so they have a herd.

Celebrate breeds with an equine art show! Each team will select a representative to display at their table and answer any questions. Be sure to take the volunteers and equine educators on the gallery walk as well!



Evaluate

Gather all groups together in a hay bale circle and review the day. Bring the equine educators and volunteer handlers into the circle so the students can thank them - but think first - how can we thank our equine educators in a way that is polite, calm, and non-threatening? How do you thank an animal for its service?

Do animals show gratitude? Invite students to share stories about how we thank animals and how animals thank us. Invite students to come again. Show your gratitude with a special invitation to an event, a coupon for lessons, or to join a club that meets on your farm.

Home-Made Play Dough!

This is a great activity for summer camp kids so you can make a large quantity to use throughout the year with school students! If the dough is kept in a cool place in a plastic bag or sealed bucket, it will last the school year.

We recommend the cooked version that Martha Stewart demonstrates here:
<http://www.marthastewart.com/265236/making-play-dough-with-kids>

This recipe makes 3 1/2 cups of dough, enough for two or three horse models.

Tools and Materials

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 1/2 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 cups cold water
Food coloring
Wooden board
Plastic bag or container

1. In a medium saucepan, mix together the flour, salt, vegetable oil, cream of tartar, and water.
2. Cook uncovered over medium heat, about 5 minutes. Stir constantly until the dough is the consistency of mashed potatoes.
3. Divide the dough into four equal portions.
4. Add approximately 6 to 8 drops of food coloring to each portion and knead the color into the dough to distribute it evenly. Kneading the color into the dough is the fun part -- kids will love it.
5. If you store the play dough in a plastic bag or airtight container, it will stay nice and soft and last for years.