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Hoofs 'n Paws

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(Endnotes)

¹ USDA National Agricultural Statistical Services

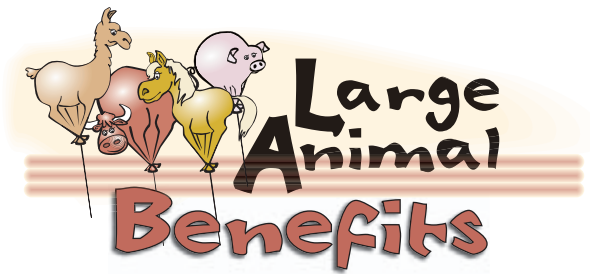
² Equestrian Land Conservation Resource

³ American Horse Council

⁴ Colorado Horse Power

⁵ CSU Cooperative Extension

⁶ The Delta Society



A helpful guide for large animal owners and property owners living next to large animals in Jefferson County

Jefferson County's population continues to grow within the Denver Metropolitan Area. In the past the county was home to many farms and ranches. While the county has become more suburban, many properties continue to allow domesticated large animals, such as horses, cattle, and llamas. The ability to keep animals and its proximity to Denver, attracts many people to Jefferson County. The presence of large animals benefits the county economically, socially, physically and psychologically.

Economic Benefits

- In 2003, the market value of agricultural products sold in Jefferson County totaled \$20.5 million.¹
- Nationally, the horse industry directly produces \$25.3 billion annually in goods and services.²
- The economic impact of Colorado's Equine Industry on the state is \$2.6 billion each year.³
- Each horse requires the support of three or more professionals, including a veterinarian and a farrier.³
- Equine related expenditures during 1998 in Colorado were estimated at \$300 million.⁴
- The value of horse manure as fertilizer is estimated to be \$10 million per year in Colorado.⁵
- In a study by Iowa State University, 14% fewer ewes were lost to predators when llamas were introduced to guard the sheep. This equates to an average annual savings of \$1,253.⁵



Social Benefits

- The Jefferson County Fairgrounds are located in Golden. On site is a 10,400 square foot exhibition hall, small conference rooms, an indoor riding arena, three outdoor riding arenas, and a large picnic area with pavilion. Events include horse shows, National Western events, 4-H events, and Westernaires events. More than 250,000 people enjoy activities at the fairgrounds each year.
- The Westernaires facilities adjoin the fairgrounds on the south. This organization works with young people who want to learn about caring for horses and honing their skill at precision mounted drills. Westernaires members develop intangible qualities such as discipline, teamwork, leadership skills, personal responsibility, and community pride. The organization provides a constructive alternative for today's youth - no drugs, no alcohol, no tobacco.
- 4-H began a century ago as an educational program for the nation's rural youth. Today, 4-H is America's largest out-of-school education program for boys and girls. Youth who participate in 4-H get confidence, compassion and connections with caring adults to make contributions to their communities. Youth learn practical skills through hundreds of projects like cooking, livestock, nutrition, sewing, archery and shooting sports, electricity, science, and many more. 4-H is conducted by the



Cooperative Extension System of the nation's Land-Grant Universities through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments.

Physical benefits

- Research shows that owners of companion animals have lower blood pressure and lower heart rates than non-companion animal owners.⁶
- Care of large animals, including feeding, grooming and riding, provide physical activity.
- Jefferson County's Open Space program has many trails that accommodate mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrians.
- Recreational riding is Colorado's largest equine industry.⁶
- Llamas have been used for centuries as pack animals. They are especially effective in rugged mountainous terrain and can help hikers and hunters carry heavy loads.
- Therapeutic horseback riding teaches children and adults with disabilities to ride a horse. It is a recreational program that has a therapeutic benefit and teaches riding skills. Horses are used because their walk is very similar to ours. When a person balances on a moving horse they feel what a "normal" walk is like. Their muscles begin to learn to balance and work, and sensory pathways in the brain are stimulated that may be neglected or underused because of disabilities or special needs.
- Hippotherapy, from the Greek word "hippos" which means horse, is provided by licensed physical or occupational therapists, as well as speech language pathologists. This is a medical treatment provided by the therapist under a doctor's prescription and is not the same treatment as therapeutic horseback riding. Hippotherapy does not teach riding skills, but rather focuses on the detailed clinical needs of the client. It is the therapist's job in using hippotherapy to match horse and rider as well as the position of the rider, and the movement of the horse, to maximize the benefit.

Psychological Benefits

- Therapeutic riding benefits individuals who face cognitive challenges, such as autism, Down syndrome and brain damage. Learning to ride a horse is a complex process and requires concentration and attention. The activities that many instructors include in therapeutic riding lessons are meant to challenge and aid in cognitive improvement as well as physical improvement.
- Therapeutic riding encourages a sense of independence. For example, an individual confined to a wheelchair may eventually learn to ride a horse independently and compete in equestrian sports.
- The practice of using large animals for emotional therapy is a relatively new and growing field. Horses and llamas are being used in therapeutic intervention. Nursing homes, juvenile detention facilities, and individual therapists are using horses and llamas to strengthen patient's emotional health and relationships.
- In Jefferson County many people keep large animals as companion animals and feel a deep bond with their animals. Studies have shown that this interaction can encourage positive attitudes, decrease stress levels and facilitate social interaction.

