

John Booker - Horse Management

- Instinctual Behaviors
 - Social Structure
 - Horses are social animals that can either live on a pasture or in the wild (depending on the location and breed). They typically live in bands (harems) that consist of various types of horses (mares, stallions, young offspring, etc).
 - Reproduction
 - There are three phases of sexual behavior in horses: courtship, mating, and post-mating behavior.
 - Social behaviors of breeding can vary with the different breeds and locations of horses.
 - Mothering
 - Before giving birth, it's common for a mare's behavior to change quite abruptly. For example, hostile horses may seek attention and friendly horses may turn sour.
 - Mothers tend to be very protective of their offspring and will defend it if there seems to be any problems. Handlers/producers should be careful when it comes to mothering mares.
 - There are chances where a mothering mare can reject her offspring if she feels threatened, frightened, etc.
 - Feeding
 - Horses are non-ruminant (also known as "hindgut fermenters").
 - Horses tend to eat a lot of roughage over a long span of time. They will eat small amounts periodically, resulting in them being healthier. Horses tend to eat grass, grain, and hay.
 - Communication
 - Horses tend to communicate with their ears and eyes. Horses will use the two to alert other horses which direction they should be watching, but it can also be used to show a change in behavior.
 - Most humans who typically deal with horses will need to understand the movements of their ears and eyes to understand when something is bothering the animal.
- Learned Behaviors
 - Imprinting
 - Horses tend to imprint the most when during the younger years and/or mothering stages. Foals and mares will imprint on each other during the mothering stage.
 - Imprinting must happen before humans will be able to interfere with the offspring. Producers will begin the training process after the offspring has appropriately imprinted on the mare.
 - Conditioning
 - Conditioning a horse is basically another word for training a horse to respond to certain behaviors and tasks.
 - Horses are learning these behaviors over time, as these behaviors are not learned through mothering and/or inherited. Horses take a little more time to properly condition.
 - Habituation
 - "Habituation is the process where the horse learns to remain calm in the presence of a stimuli that previously elicited fear." – esi-education
 - Wild horses will tend to find a specific territory but will have the ability to roam to new lands if necessary. Tamed horses tend to live on farms and/or pastures that are highly regulated and keep up the proper standards.
- Intelligence
 - - Horses are one of the most intelligent species of any animal found on the planet.
 - Horses are naturally intelligent but will also learn various pieces of knowledge over a long period of time. For example, opening barn doors, discovering new areas of a pasture, figuring out how to escape a pasture, etc.
 - A horse is a fast learner with correct and consistent training.
- Safe Handling Practices
 - Flight Zones

- If you're standing in the flight zone of a horse, it will ultimately make the animal move away from you.
 - Horses also have a point-of-balance that will help you move the horse forwards and backwards. There are specific positions in which you can stand/move that will trigger a reaction from the horse.
 - Producers need to be cautious when dealing with flight zones within horses as they can be quite frightened at the slightest of movements.
 - Temperament
 - Temperament also refers to the typical demeanor of a horse.
 - Horses have a demeanor scale that ranges from 1-10. 1 being the least hostile and 10 being the most aggressive towards other animals.
 - Producers need to understand the temperament of a horse before the training process can start. A lot of producers will not allow younger/less experienced riders to go near a foul temperamental horse.
 - Vision
 - Horses have some of the largest eyes compared to most land mammals. They are positioned on the sides of the head.
 - horses have a range of vision of about 350°, with approximately 65° of this being binocular vision and the remaining 285° monocular vision.
 - Hearing
 - Horses have extraordinarily strong hearing abilities. They can hear low to extremely high frequency sounds.
 - Horses' ears can move 180 degrees by using about 10 different muscles. They can hear lower frequencies than humans.
 - Human Safety Practices for Handling Animals
 - Humans need to be cautious of dealing with horses, especially if the human(s) is not experienced with the animal.
 - Horses tend to be quite able-frightened and can spook at just about anything out of standard.
 - A general rule of thumb is to never stand within leg range on the rear side of the horse. Horses tend to kick at anything unnatural on their rear side.
- Proper Restraint Procedures
 - Restraint devices for working with, training, and treating animals
 - Lead ropes are good tools for restraining a horse. While lead ropes are typically used for moving and handling a horse, it can also be used to tie the horse up.
 - Handlers and reins restrain a horse so that the producer/human can properly ride the horse with enough control and ability.
 - Tools for handling and moving animals
 - Lead ropes are designed to assist the producer/rider in handling the horse and moving it around.
 - Trailers are designed for horses to be moved longer distances without having to walk. Trailers are typically used for recreational activities such as rodeos, shows. etc.
 - Halters and reins are used on horses so that the rider can have enough control and mobility access when dealing with a horse from a saddle perspective.
- Additional Resources
 - "How to restrain a horse" (youtube video) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= kUIJu46LvA>
 - General Care of Horses (magazine article) - <https://www.horsejournals.com/horse-care>
 - Caring for Horses (magazine article) - - <https://equinewellnessmagazine.com/horse-care-industry-standards/>
 - "General Make-Up of Horses" (youtube video) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idwF5tMGIRY>