Introduction
Concussions, or Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs), are an unfortunate risk of equestrian activities. According to a 2016 study (Winkler et al. 2016), equestrian sports were the leading cause of sports-related traumatic brain injuries. To minimize the potential consequences of a fall or injury, you can educate yourself and others about helmet safety, concussion detection, and safe horse handling and riding.

Requirements and Timelines

1) Events (all 4-H events at which riding or driving occurs)
   a) Helmet policy (effective immediately):
      i) All youth must wear helmets while mounted or driving.
      ii) Any adults riding at 4-H events must wear helmets while mounted.
   b) Concussion policy (effective October 1, 2018):
      i) All state-level events with driving or mounted riding must have at least one staff member or volunteer present who has successfully completed the Heads Up Online Training (CDC).
         (1) To access the training: cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html
         (2) Jessica Spaulding will keep a record of all adults who have completed the online training.
      ii) All 4-H events that include equine driving or mounted riding will have a written concussion protocol on hand.
   c) Concussion policy (effective October 1, 2019):
      i) All 4-H events with driving or mounted riding must have at least one staff member or volunteer present who has successfully completed the Heads Up Online Training (CDC).

2) Education
   a) Encourage all local clubs to have at least one safety and concussion awareness-oriented meeting per year.
   b) Make educational materials regarding helmet use and concussion awareness available to all youth involved in 4-H.

Resources
If you would like to provide educational resources to your club leaders, here are a few suggestions:
   • Saddle Up Safely Program:
     - The University of Kentucky has developed a rider safety awareness program with many helpful resources
     - Saddle Up Safety app
       • Injury and Concussion Assessment
       • Return to Riding Protocol
       • Checklists
       • In Case of Emergency Cards
   • CDC: Heads Up Training (cdc.gov/headsup)
     • Prepare yourself to handle accidents and falls at the barn or competitions
     • Complete the online concussion training to receive a certificate; from their website:
       • "Understand a concussion and the potential consequences of this injury,
       • Recognize concussion signs and symptoms and how to respond,
       • Learn about steps for returning to activity (play and school) after a concussion, and
       • Focus on prevention and preparedness to help keep athletes safe season-to-season."
   • "Every Time, Every Ride" DVD
     • This informative DVD features interviews and footage of horses and riders in multiple disciplines
     • The NYS 4-H Horse Program has purchased a library of these DVDs
     • Contact Barbara Jones (bjj6) or Jessica Spaulding (jms943) to check out a DVD
     • Encourage club leaders to show this video at their club meetings

For more information, contact:
Jessica Spaulding, NYS 4-H Horse Events Coordinator  jms943@cornell.edu
Lindsay Goodale, DVM, CCE Equine Specialist  lfg28@cornell.edu
Barbara Jones, NYS 4-H Horse Program Assistant  bjj6@cornell.edu