

**feelings of a  
little horse!**



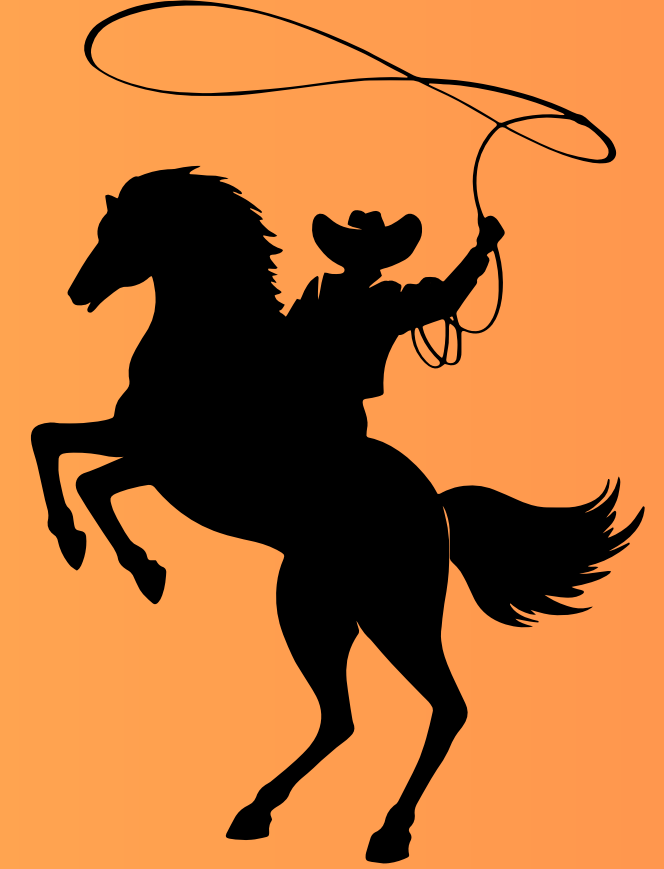
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# overview



*Question: Do horses respond to human emotion?*

*Hypothesis: Horses do respond to human emotion.*

*I chose this because sometimes I hear people say that horses don't understand human emotion and I wanted to prove that was not true.*

*I think this is important because if you are around a horse without knowing that your feelings effect the horse, you may put yourself in a lot of danger.*

*To prepare I researched other studies I found on the internet and spoke to my Horse Riding Trainer and Parent (sources in Logbook).*



# procedure



*Independent Variables - Emotion of human (happy/sad/angry), exercise (before/after)*

*Dependent Variables - Horse's emotions via body language and sounds*

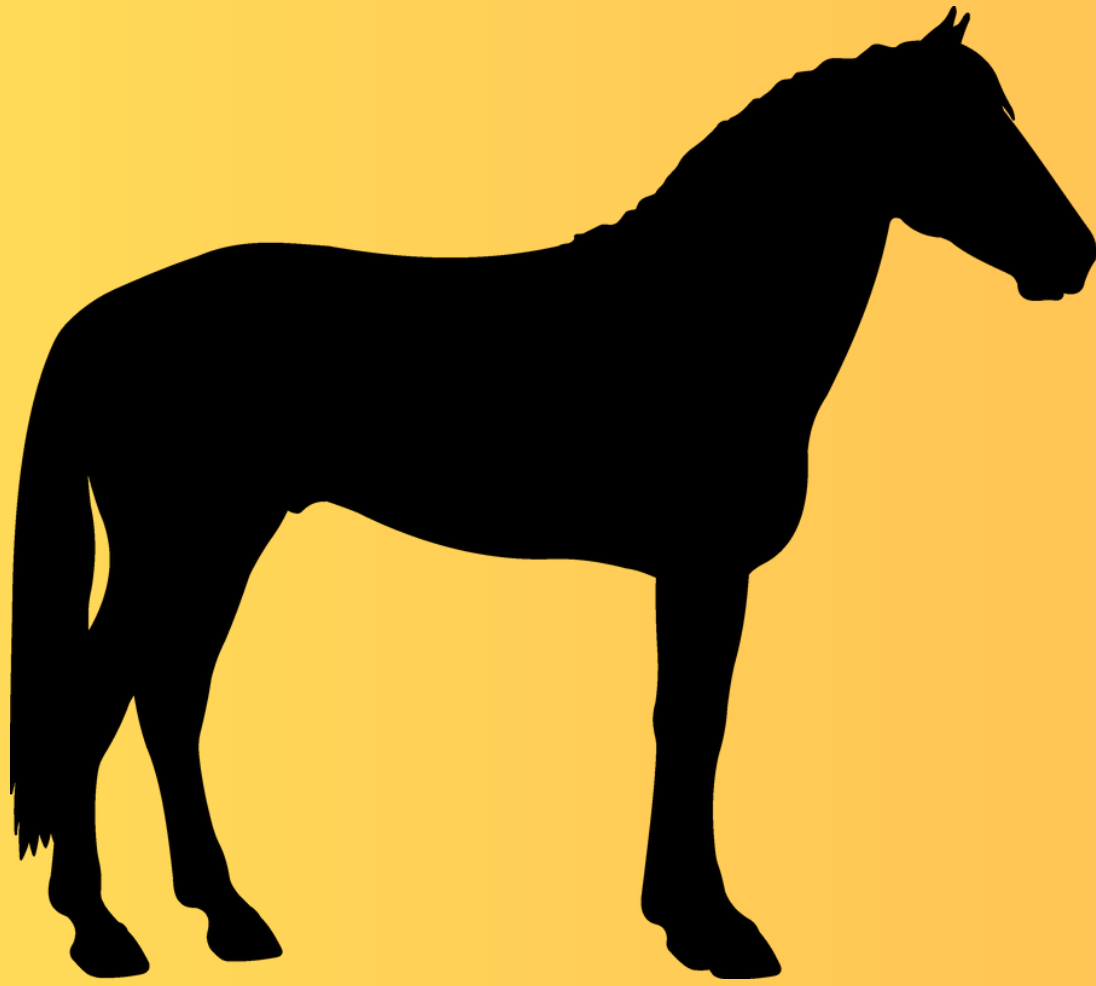
*Constant Conditions - Location (Barn), horse*

*Procedure Steps:*

- 1. Approach the horse while behaving with different types of emotions*
- 2. Have second person film the experiment so outcomes can be observed and documented*
- 3. Observe horse ears, eyes, sounds, and body movement*
- 4. Conduct experiment 3 times before and after exercise to see if it changes the outcome*

# safety

*I followed these rules so that the horse and I were safe:*



- 1. Got permission from Trainer*
- 2. Had an adult present*
- 3. Stayed in front of horse to avoid kicks*
- 4. Conducted experiment while horse was in cross ties so it didn't run away*
- 5. Conducted experiment during a quiet time at the barn*
- 6. Had a plan that if horse reacts in a way that may seem too dangerous, I would cancel the experiment*

# results

## Before Exercise

## After Exercise

### Happy

### Sad

### Angry

### Happy

### Sad

### Angry

#### Experiment 1

Ears - Up

Eyes - Kind of open

Body - Still

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - Nickering

Head - No Change

Ears - In the middle

Eyes - Open

Body - No Change

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - Turned to Look at Person

Ears - Moving front to back a lot

Eyes - Wide

Body - Shifted side to side

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - Went up

Ears - Up and forward

Eyes - Wide

Body - Moved toward person

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - Nickering

Head - No Change

Ears - In the middle

Eyes - Kind of open

Body - Still

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - No Change

Ears - back

Eyes - wide

Body - puffed up

Tail - no change

Voice/Mouth - lower lip moved

Head - threw back

#### Experiment 2

Ears - Up

Eyes - Wide

Body - Still

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - No Change

Ears - Up

Eyes - Wide

Body - Leaned Closer

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - Silently

moving lips

Head - No Change

Ears - In the middle

Eyes - Open

Body - No Change

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - Silently

moving lips

Head - Nudged person

Ears - Up

Eyes - Wide

Body - Still

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - Nickering

Head - No Change

Ears - Up

Eyes - Open

Body - Puffed up

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - Turned toward person

Ears - In the middle

Eyes - Open

Body - Shifted weight and puffed up

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - No Change

#### Experiment 3

Ears - Up

Eyes - Open

Body - Still

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - No Change

Ears - In the middle

Eyes - Open

Body - Shifted side to side

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - No Change

Ears - In the middle

Eyes - Open

Body - No Change

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - No Change

Head - No Change

Ears - up and foward

Eyes - open the normal amount

Body - no change

Tail - no change

Voice/Mouth - licking his lips

Head - up

Ears - up

Eyes - open the normal amount

Body - no change

Tail - no change

Voice/Mouth - licking and nuzleing

Head - up

Ears - Forward

Eyes - Open

Body - Moved closer to person

Tail - No Change

Voice/Mouth - Nibbled and licked person

Head - Moved closer to person



# findings

*For example, when the human was mad, the horse would pin its ears back and puff its chest. When the human was sad, the horse would nuzzle and put its head down. When the human was happy, the horse's ears would go straight up and it would make nickering noises. Similar reactions were observed before and after exercise but the reactions were bigger after exercise. I was surprised that the horse did not use its tail to display a reaction to the human emotions because this is something other animals use.*

*Next time, I would not feed him right before the experiment, like I did in experiment 3 because the horse was more distracted.*





# conclusion

*Horses do react to human emotion.*

*This can be see mostly through how they move their ears, body, head, and mouth (including sound).*

*But what they react to most...is the sound of the food container!*

