



Total Arabian Interaction & Learning Program Manual



ARABIAN
HORSE ASSOCIATION

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Total Arabian Interaction & Learning Program

Arabian Horse Association

Vision Statement

To incite a passion to own and enjoy the Arabian horse by bringing a rich, life-long experience to people through involvement with Arabians, Half-Arabians and Anglo-Arabians.

Mission Statement

To grow the breed by:

- Providing services, industry involvement and market development;
- Encouraging people to fully experience and enjoy the Arabian, Half-Arabian, and Anglo-Arabian horse for recreation, sport and companionship; and
- Maintaining accurate and reliable Arabian horse registration records



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Introduction

Do you remember the first time you touched a horse? Do you remember how his warm breath felt in the palm of your hand? Or how he smelled of hay and warmth? Most of us remember that first introduction. The thrill of communicating with such a large and gentle creature stays with us to this day. If that first experience with a horse hadn't meant something to you, you wouldn't be reading this handbook right now.

The Total Arabian Interaction & Learning Program (TAIL) is a way you can share that feeling with others, and introduce them to the Arabian horse in such a way that they will always remember it. And who knows, maybe a child that you help to experience the wonderful Arabian horse for the first time will become an Arabian horse enthusiast too.



Introduction



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What is the TAIL Program?

While many of us may not show our Arabian horses, as Arabian horse enthusiasts we know that a show can be a wonderful place to see many of our beautiful, versatile horses in one location. But for the family that would like to spend a fun day together looking at these animals, a show can be an intimidating, unwelcoming experience. These families are the Arabian horse lovers and owners of tomorrow and we need to make them feel welcome and a part of the experience.

That is where the TAIL program comes in. Families and youth groups can make an appointment to attend the show and will be introduced to the Arabian horse by a smiling TAIL Guide, wearing a brightly colored shirt or other identifying apparel. The TAIL booth will be set up at the show with plenty of signage to show the way. Here is where the group will first meet their TAIL Guide. They will receive a "TAIL Bag", filled with brochures and information from AHA, Parts of the Horse sheets, coloring pages, coupons, and info from local farms, ranches, feed and tack stores. The group should be made to feel welcome and everyone has received a gift!

Now the Guide will spend an hour with the group. They will sit in the stands for a while and explain a little bit about the show and how the classes work. They can answer questions about the different gaits and what the judge is looking for. After that, the guide may take the group over to the farrier and see some of the tools. Now it is back to the barn area. The specific barn and horse to visit should be determined before the tour by the TAIL program coordinator.

With this the real objective has been met: these kids and their families have gotten to touch an Arabian horse. As a child, who would not have been thrilled to be given that opportunity?

What is the TAIL Program?



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It's a small thing, but important for the Arabian horse industry

AHA visualizes this as something that can be done at any horse show, horse fair or other equine venue. Each respective TAIL program coordinator will need to put together a list in their area of youth groups, schools, churches, etc. to send the information out to, as well as coordinate local volunteers to act as TAIL guides. How many people do we all know that love to talk about their Arabian horse? The only skill required to be a guide is the desire to share information about the Arabian horse with others.

It's a very simple thing really. Make someone feel welcome and they'll be back. This is something that will benefit all facets of our Association. It helps to put a friendlier face on our organization. It gives trainers and breeders a chance to meet prospective new owners. After the TAIL experience is over, many times the parents ask where they can find riding lessons for their child.

Organizing and running a TAIL program at your Arabian horse venue needs surprisingly few volunteers. As a matter of fact, one energetic and motivated person could probably handle everything, but if a small committee of three or four people was formed, it gets even easier!

The first time the TAIL program is held will involve the most work and financial expenditure. But once a contact list is put together, items have been gathered for the TAIL booth, perhaps purchased vests or t-shirts for the TAIL guides, and had signs made that can be reused, the TAIL program is pretty much set and will be a snap to put together.

What is the TAIL Program?



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Making it Work

When a group of excellent volunteers have been gathered, here are some ideas for splitting up the work. A TAIL committee might be made up of the following:

TAIL Public Relations

This person would put together the list of contacts for press releases, flyers and information. They would send out the press releases at intervals, and send flyers via conventional mail, email or distributing on local bulletin boards. They would see to the production and distribution of flyers at local schools. They would also act as the media liaison for local radio and television.

Booth and Signage

This person would be in charge of acquiring all of the items to set up the TAIL booth. They would also have signs made to welcome and direct visitors to the TAIL booth. Setting up and tearing down the booth would also fall into this category.

TAIL Bags and TAIL Horses

One of the key elements of the TAIL program is the TAIL horses. This person would coordinate one or two horses to be on the grounds for the visitors to interact with. He or she could also see to the production of the TAIL bags that are given to each TAIL participant.

TAIL Guide Coordinator

Asking for volunteers and scheduling them is very important. This person could also handle scheduling appointments for visitors, and making sure that a TAIL guide could be scheduled for the same time.

Getting Started: The TAIL Committee



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Putting it Together

Now it is time to put together a budget. Holding a TAIL program need not be an elaborate or expensive affair. Each club and/or region can tailor their budget to fit their needs. Many items can be borrowed or donated. Each club will need to decide if, for instance, they would like to budget enough to purchase a canopy that can be dedicated for the TAIL booth, or if they will borrow one from a club member. Should vests be made for the TAIL guides, or maybe just name tags? There is a lot of flexibility in how much needs to be spent. Here are some areas of cost:

Public Relations

There will be some printing and mailing costs, but don't forget about the beauty of the internet. It costs nothing to send an email.

Booth and Signage

This is where the most potential costs lie, especially initially, but many of the items needed for putting together a TAIL booth would be easy to borrow. Signs can either be professionally made up, to be used again and again, or maybe an artistic club member can paint some.

TAIL Bags and TAIL Horses

It is suggested to purchase cool turquoise/yellow bags with the handles, or ask a local supermarket to donate a box of plastic grocery bags. All of the farms, trainers, etc. who would like to have a flyer or other information handed out should be included. As for the TAIL horses, ask show management if the TAIL horses stalls might be provided at no charge. See if a horse could be brought in just for the TAIL tours or if someone showing will have a horse with some down time.

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TAIL Guide Coordinator

The TAIL guides should wear something that will identify them to visitors and exhibitors. If there is a member that can sew, vests are super easy and can be reused. Maybe t-shirts would be an option for the club. The guides should also wear name tags.



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A successful TAIL program is measured on how many people make it to the show and actually spend time with an Arabian horse. It is key to get the information out to a target audience, in this case youth groups and families. A list of contacts will become an invaluable tool which can be updated easily. Press releases sent at intervals to as many media outlets in the area as possible can turn into free advertising with broad exposure. And, of course, the internet can be the most powerful ally.

Come One, Come All

Six months before an anticipated TAIL venue, prepare a press release. There are many “how-to” references online to help get started. There is a sample press release at www.arabianhorses.org/TAIL. The goal is to write a press release in a way that grabs the editor’s attention, and requires little editing. Including a photo in the press release is a sure way to get noticed. A note at the bottom of the page letting the editor know a photo can be provided for their publication is also a bonus.

Put together a list of media contacts in the area. Again, the internet is invaluable for this. Include all local radio and television stations, newspapers and other publications. Don’t overlook the big glossy magazines. Children and animals are always a popular subject and many editors would love the story. One caveat with trying to get information in one of these large publications: they need at least a six month lead time. So get those press releases done early!

Send the press release out to a media contact list at least four times: six months, three months, one month, and two weeks ahead. This will assure that all of the varying copy deadlines are met. Send all of the press releases electronically and not pay one cent in printing or postage, so don’t skimp here—it may take a few times to get noticed!

Getting the Word Out: TAIL Public Relations



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Remember your target audience: families and youth groups. Again the internet can help with putting together a list of youth organizations like Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, FFA, 4-H and others. Include churches and local youth centers. Homeschooling parents are always looking for educational activities to take their students to. Look on the internet for sites where homeschooling parents chat or exchange tips. Charter and private schools are another great contact. Include these groups in the media contact list for press releases, but be sure they receive the flyer of information about the TAIL program the club is putting on.

The Schoolhouse Rock

The best bang for a printing buck is having flyers go home with elementary school age children in the area. Contact the local elementary school district and ask about their policy on sending flyers home with students. Most require that the activity be educational, free, within the school district boundaries and put on by a non-profit organization. Submit a flyer to the school district for approval, and directions for distribution. For instance, a school may need 23 stacks of 20 flyers, and 15 stacks of 30 flyers. Two weeks before the event, deliver them to the school with a copy of the approved flyer, which was stamped by the district, on top of the stack. A flyer will then go home with every single school-age child. This is an amazingly cost-effective way to get information to the target group.

Then There's the Old-Fashioned Way

Of course, being visible all over town never hurts, so distributing flyers to local businesses is always a good idea. Try to think of places where kids and families might frequent. Don't forget the local library, recreational center and ball fields!

Getting the Word Out: TAIL Public Relations



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One of the cornerstones of the TAIL program is making visitors at Arabian horse events feel welcome and comfortable. From the moment visitors walk onto the grounds there should be signs welcoming them and pointing the way to the TAIL booth, where they can meet up with a TAIL guide or just get their questions answered. Like most of the elements of holding a TAIL program, there is a lot of room for how simple or elaborate the booth is. The most important thing is that it is easy to find!

A Sign of Welcome

Even if the TAIL booth is very simple, it should still look neat and professional. The TAIL booth will be one of the first things visitors encounter, and first impressions are important. The following suggestions are just a guide. Please feel free to adapt the booth to the surroundings and needs.

Canopy

If there is a soccer mom in the club, chances are she has one of those “easy-up” canopies. It is just the thing to create the framework for a booth and keep the sun or, heaven forbid, rain off of everyone.

Folding Banquet Table

These are very inexpensive at local warehouse stores or office supply super stores.

A Section of Indoor-Outdoor Carpet

This helps keep everything neater and cleaner looking, and can be coordinated with the other booth decorations.

If You Build It... The TAIL Booth



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Tablecloth

For a polished look purchase or easily sew a three sided table cover. One benefit of using a table cover is it can hide all of your TAIL “stuff” under the table and no one will see it. Visitors will think you are very neat and organized. Just don’t let them behind the table!

Chairs

A couple of chairs behind the table for the TAIL volunteers.

Brochure Displays

It is nice to have a few clear acrylic brochure displays for all of the AHA material that is displayed. These are very inexpensive and can be found at office supply stores.

Plastic Chest of Drawers

A small plastic cabinet with wheels that can roll under the table (and behind the table cloth) will prove super handy to store things like scissors, pens, hammer (to put up the canopy), duct tape, zip ties (for banner), vests, name tags, clip boards for appointments, and volunteer duties.

Nice Touches

Spruce up the booth with things like plants, buckets of carrots, and those mini straw bales that can be purchased at craft stores. Ask club members if they have any old issues of Arabian horse magazines. They are too nice to throw away, but what can you do with them? Hand them out to visitors! This is always a big hit, both with the people who are happy to give their old magazines away and the lucky recipients.

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We Are Friendly

Signs can be fairly expensive to purchase, but there are ways to produce signs on a budget. Here are some signs to consider:

A Large Welcome Sign

This is a purchase that a club, or region, can use for just about any function it has. It would be worth it to have one made up on strong, waterproof material. This sign should see many years of use. If having one professionally made is not an option, then break out the poster board and paint!

Arena Banner

Just think of all the win pictures the TAIL program will be in if there is a banner to hang in the arena!

Direction Signs

These are to point the way to the TAIL booth. The number needed will vary from location to location.

TAIL Booth Sign

This is a sign to have at the TAIL booth letting everyone know what it is!

Find some TAIL sign examples at www.arabianhorses.org/TAI.



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The TAIL program is primarily aimed at children, because if we make the right impression is made on a child now, that child could become the Arabian horse enthusiast of tomorrow. By getting children involved with Arabian horses, we also get the bonus of having the whole family involved. The TAIL bags are a gift to them, and the TAIL horses are pretty much the reason the kids are there to begin with.

Everyone Loves Presents

AHA has produced some great promotional items. Not only are they beautiful and professional, they are educational, and they are free for the taking. Handouts will be sent to you for minimal shipping costs if you go onto www.arabianhorses.org and order your promotional items under the marketplace. We want to be sure that every TAIL participant receives this great information. Included are items like the “Discover the Arabian Horse” brochure with many printable inserts, a beautiful Gladys Brown Edwards print, description page of each discipline, poster that traces the ancestry of all modern day horse breeds, and even some coloring sheets of a Native Costume horse and a detailed Parts of the Horse sheet. These are all the beginnings of goodies to stuff in the bags, as well as promotional items from local trainers and farms.

The fact that these TAIL bags will be handed out to many potential Arabian horse enthusiasts is a golden opportunity for the local Arabian horse community to reach new people. Just think how many children would take advantage of a coupon for a free lesson? Or how many parents might see a flyer advertising a farm and inviting visitors, and decide that it would make a fun family outing on Saturday.

Get the word out about accepting items for TAIL bags to the club and region members. Let them know how many bags will be stuffed, and by what date the items are needed. Each club may consider the possibility of charging a nominal fee for this service, which could in turn help cover other expenditures.

Fun Stuff: TAIL Bags & TAIL Horses



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Items that have been handed out in TAIL bags include trinkets promoting the Arabian horse, crayons for the coloring pages, lesson coupons, flyers with barn information on one side and a conformation lesson on the other, candy, coupons for feed stores, membership applications for the club, information about Youth clubs, and even DVDs!



Be sure the bags are all filled and ready to go before the big day. Hold a “Bag Stuffing” party if stuffing a large number. One safety tip: consider handing the bags out to the TAIL participants at the end of the tour. This way people won’t be trying to pet a horse or watch classes with bags flying around!

The Moment of Truth

We are a fortunate group of people indeed. We have the privilege of interacting with our wonderful Arabian horses everyday. Upon invitation of families and youth groups to the TAIL event, many of these children will have never even touched a horse before. This moment is what it’s all about, helping to see that this experience is a wonderful one.

When asking for TAIL horses make sure the owner and/or trainer know what is expected. These horses are the ultimate ambassadors and must behave impeccably. Remember this is not the place or time to promote sale horses or stallions. It is always a plus if someone familiar with the horse comes along for the tour so they can tell everyone more about the horse.

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Whether they are referred to as greeters or ambassadors, the TAIL guide is the backbone of the TAIL program. They are, in many cases, the first contact the TAIL participant has into the world of the Arabian horse. The happy surprise that most volunteers discover after they have spent time with people talking about their passion, is they remember all over again why they fell in love with the Arabian horse in the first place. The best resource for TAIL guides is the how to video that is posted on the TAIL section of the Arabian Horse Association website (www.arabianhorses.org/TAIL).

A Code of Ethics

The goal of the TAIL program is to introduce people, especially children, to the Arabian horse in a manner that is friendly and educational. It is up to the TAIL guides to make that happen. It is very important to remember that in the role as an ambassador for the Arabian horse, no one should be volunteering in order to sell horses, breedings, trainer services, etc. or offer personal opinions of the services of others. As a TAIL guide the person should be impartial to the information that is put in the TAIL bags. The success of this program is based on our devotion and love of the Arabian horse in a general way, not promoting individual agendas.

The following are some guidelines AHA would like the TAIL guides to follow, but as in anything else, common sense is usually the best guide of all!

Meeting Your Party

- You should be at the TAIL booth 10 minutes prior to your appointed time. Your group will have been instructed to meet you there.
- Please wear a TAIL vest or t-shirt with a name badge on it. The vests or shirts will help identify you to exhibitors and trainers at the show as you are walking around with your group.

Heart & Soul: The TAIL Guide



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- Please have everyone in your group wear a name badge. The obvious reason is that it will help you with their names, but the other benefit is it will identify these people as newcomers and may prompt some friendly exchanges with the exhibitors.
- Please be sure everyone in your party receives a TAIL bag, which has information and fun stuff in it. It is a good idea to wait and hand the TAIL bags out at the end of the tour, so the participants can safely pet the horses without holding onto their plastic bags.

Things to Do With Your Group

- The most important thing to remember is SAFETY. Be careful!
- Under no circumstance should you put anyone up on a horse.
- Take your group to the stands for awhile and explain, in general terms, what is going on.
- Take your group over to the farrier, vet truck and various vendors. Introduce your group to everyone you know.

Going Back to the Barns

- This will be what most of the kids are waiting for, to touch a horse!
- Go to the prearranged barn and horse that the TAIL program coordinator has arranged.
- Take your group to the TAIL horse. If the horse is willing and calm you may CAREFULLY let your group one at a time come and pet the horse or feed carrots. If feeding carrots, we recommend that you feed them out of a bucket or bowl so no fingers accidentally get nibbled on.
- If the TAIL horse looks like it is anything other than totally at ease and relaxed, do not take it out of the stall. There will be many horses on the grounds that will be wonderful to interact with, ask your TAIL program coordinator about ideas.

Heart & Soul: The TAIL Guide



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6 Months Prior

- Form the TAIL committee, including the Chairperson or TAIL program coordinator. Appoint committee members to handle TAIL public relations, production of the TAIL booth, production of TAIL bags, coordination of TAIL horses, and scheduling and outfitting of the TAIL guides.
- Determine the budget.
- Confirm the venue for the TAIL program.
- Discuss pros and cons of the site and which variables might need to be addressed.
- Set up a tentative schedule for the committee to meet in the coming months.
- Put together list of media contact and youth & family contacts.
- Write a press release and send it out to the media contact list. This is intended to reach magazines that need an early copy deadline. See an example at www.arabianhorses.org/TAIL.
- Put a notice in the local club and regional newsletters letting people know that the club is accepting items to be included in the TAIL bags. Be sure and specify the number of bags planned, the date by which items must be delivered, who they must be delivered to, and cost of providing the service, if any. Run this notice up until the delivery cut off date.

4 Month Prior

- Create the flyer that will be sent to the schools, youth groups, and distributed around town. (see sample on website)
- Send out the flyer via email to the youth contact list.
- Mail out the flyer to contacts on the list that may not have an email.
- Decide on the TAIL guide “uniform”. If choosing vests, it is suggested to have at least three in various sizes. If choosing t-shirts it is suggested to provide one for each TAIL guide and volunteer.
- Begin to gather the items needed for the TAIL booth.

Getting Organized: TAIL Timeline



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- Put a notice in the club and regional newsletter asking for TAIL volunteers. Run this notice up until the TAIL date.

3 Months Prior

- Send out press release to media contacts. Be sure to update the release date.
- Contact AHA and request promotional material for TAIL bags. Be sure and specify the number of bags planned.
- Order the TAIL bags and things like crayons if they are going to be included.
- Determine which signs will be needed and have them produced. There are examples on the website of TAIL friendly barn signs and a horizontal and vertical TAIL program banner that can be used as is just by sending it to a printer. (www.arabianhorses.org/TAIL)
- Order or set TAIL guide “uniforms”.

2 Months Prior

- Send out the flyer again to the youth contact list.
- Contact the local elementary school district to learn about their policy on sending home flyers with students. If the criteria is met, send them a flyer for approval and find out how many flyers are needed, and how they should be bundled.

1 Month Prior

- Send out the press release to media contacts. Be sure and update the release date.
- Send out the flyer again to the youth contact list.
- Have flyers for school distribution produced.
- Determine which horses will be used and make arrangements for where they are stalling.
- Complete gathering of all the components of the TAIL booth.
- Schedule a TAIL bag stuffing party!

Getting Organized: TAIL Timeline



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2 Weeks Prior

- Send out the press release to media contacts. Be sure and update the release date.
- Deliver flyers to elementary schools.
- Confirm schedule of TAIL guides with volunteers. Be sure and schedule to have someone in the booth at all times, plus the TAIL guides.
- Confirm tour times with TAIL horses.

The Big Day

- Buy lots of carrots and have fun!



Getting Organized: TAIL Timeline



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