

## ICONS



## NOT HORSING AROUND

*A high-school student trots her way to the top as the Florida 4-H Horseman of the Year.*

**H**ard work, dedication and a love for horses resulted in success for 18-year-old Natalie Palumbo, who recently was recognized as the Florida 4-H Horseman of the Year. Since age 8, this Winter Springs High School graduate has had no shortage of enjoyable moments working with these beautiful animals.

"My mom had horses when she was a kid, and she found someone that I could take instruction from," Palumbo recalls. "I just started riding, and I loved it. I became a member of 4-Hat around the same time," she adds, nuzzling her horse, Regal, at a stable in Geneva while

preparing for their workout.

During her years as a member of 4-H, Palumbo participated in several activities, including the Horse Program.

"Leadership projects and community service are what helped me win the award," Palumbo explains. Competitors have to be involved with leadership and civic activities in order to become well rounded individuals. Requirements for entrants include an original Florida 4-H Portfolio and a narrative explaining what the program has meant to them.

In Florida, only four students from middle school through high school made it to the interview stage. As winner of the

Horseman of the Year Award, Palumbo received a \$500 scholarship, which she will use for college. Palumbo plans to attend Michigan State University to study biochemistry and philosophy. "I always knew that I wanted to become a veterinarian, but it wasn't until I got involved with 4-H and started riding horses that I decided to be an equine veterinarian," she says.

Palumbo's affiliation with the association that has brought her to this point is far from over. "There is a 4-H program in college," she says. "I will definitely stay involved because I'll be an alumna, and I intend to volunteer." — Susan Cross