

**NYS 4-H General Horse Show Rules**  
**NEW YORK STATE 4-H GENERAL EQUINE SHOW RULES**

It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian of the exhibitor to see to it that the head gear worn complies with the appropriate safety standards as set forth in the official 4-H policy. A memo will be sent to all CCE/4-H offices each year specifying the "official" 4-H Equine Program head gear.

Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYS 4-H, and the New York State Fair make no representation or warranty expressed or implied about any protective head gear, and caution riders that death or serious injury may result despite wearing such protective head gear, as all equestrian sports involve inherent dangerous risk and as no helmet can protect against all foreseeable injuries.

**Proper equestrian footwear with a distinguishable heel and an approved helmet shall be worn at all times that a rider is mounted on an equine, sitting in a cart or handling an equine in a riding arena (whether on the ground, mounted or seated in a cart) at a 4-H sponsored clinic or show.**

Exhibitors are responsible for the humane treatment and well being for any equine in their care. They are to be treated humanely and with dignity and respect. Showing competitively is of secondary importance.

**\*\*\*Since 2004!!** Donkey and Mules will be considered an "equine" and can be shown in any horse or pony classes in all Divisions at the NYS Fair 4-H Horse Show. They must meet all qualification requirements as stipulated in the NYS 4-H Equine Show Rule Book and the State Fair Youth Animal Exhibits book. They must qualify in their county and/or region for any class that they enter in any of these Divisions that are not part of the Donkey/Mule Division. The Donkey/Mule Division rules and qualification requirements do not change.\*\*\*

**I. EQUINE**

- A. All equines must be at least 24 months of age. No intact stallion or jack over 12 months of age may be present at a 4-H event, show, clinic, etc.
- B. All equines shown in ridden and driven classes must be 3 years of age and older.
- C.
  - 1) All equines must have been officially designated as the members project animal by June 1 of the current year. A copy of the completed Equine or Donkey/Mule Certificate must be on file with your County Cooperative Extension office.
  - 2) Members may designate all personally or family owned equines as project animals. Family will be defined as the legal guardian, as well as husband, wife, parent, step-parents, step child, brother, sister, half brother and sister, grandmother and grandfather and in-laws of the same relation.
  - 3) Members not owning or not using a family owned equine may designate one non-owned equine as their project animal. (designate non-owned on the project animal certificate).
  - 4) A 4-H member who owns or leases a horse or pony may also own or lease a miniature equine and/or a donkey or mule.

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- D. Each exhibitor shall present to show officials at the time of check-in a copy of the 4-H Equine Certificate or its equivalent completely filled out and signed by all parties.
- E. All equines entered as ponies will be measured at check-in. This measurement will supersede all previous measurements and will be the sole basis for determination of status. There is no minimum size for equines entered as horses.

For all Divisions, ponies = 14.2 hands or less.

No equine, regardless of the number of exhibitors using that equine, may be shown by one exhibitor as a horse in one division and as a pony by the same or different exhibitor in the same or different division. Where pony classes are sectioned in large and small divisions, small ponies are to be less than 13.0 hands.

### How ponies will be measured

1. A level, flat surface should be used -- preferably a concrete slab or other paved surface or a plywood sheet at least 1" thick. Check the surface for inaccuracies to insure the surface is level. Under no circumstances should animals be measured on dirt or gravel.
2. A maximum of two handlers may present the pony for measurement but they must not interfere with the animal in any way that could influence the measurement, except that they may cover its eyes. There is to be no altering of the pony's position by application of pressure on any part of its body.
3. Check the measuring stick for proper assembly and make sure it is fully extended and locked. It is recommended that the stick be assembled with the ruler facing away from the individual performing the measurement.
4. The pony must stand square. All four legs should be perpendicular to its body and the lead should be in a level position at approximately the same height as the withers.

Familiarize the pony with the measurement stick.

5. Be patient with the pony and give it adequate time to relax. If the pony appears frightened or unruly, let it stand with its attendant until it is comfortable with the situation.
6. The stick should be placed on the highest point of the pony's withers. (To find the highest point, drop the pony's head below its withers and feel for the point with your hand. Return the pony's head to the level position before measuring.)
7. Lower the cross-arm so it rests lightly on the withers. Do not apply pressure to the cross-arm.
8. Check both the levels on the stick to ensure that it is straight.
9. Only when the stick is properly positioned, should the measurement be read. Note this information on the form.

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### II. EXHIBITOR AND ENTRIES

- A. Exhibitors must meet age and membership requirements as specified for all NYS Fair Dept. L participants.

Junior - Youth who are at least eight years of age by January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current club year and in the third grade or higher should enroll as a 4-H member. Junior contestants must not have reached their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current club year.

Senior - Senior contestants must be at least 14 years of age by January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current club year. Youth who have reached their 19th birthday before January 1st of the 4-H club year may not enroll as a 4-H member.

Please Note: These are the age requirements for State Fair activities. County, regional and national events may have additional age requirements.

- B. All entries will be submitted on a county basis and must be verified for accuracy and signed by the County CCE Educator/Staff before being sent to the State Fair Entry Department and must have been received in the State Fair Entry Office, Syracuse, 5:00 p.m., on the published deadline date. No phoned in entries will be accepted. Entries must be made on official forms which will be supplied. No additions or subtractions of entries will be accepted after the entry deadline.

- C. Selection of exhibitors from each region shall be at the discretion of the county agent/staff, county Horse Education Committee, and/or the region's 4-H Horse Education Committee, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) Owned Equines - Each exhibitor shall exhibit no more than two (2) equines in the state show.
- 2) Non-Owned Equines - Exhibitor shall exhibit no more than one (1) non-owned equine in the state show. Multiple exhibitors may show the same equine, but must exhibit the animal in different state equine show divisions. Different divisions mean Saddle Seat, Western, Gymkhana, etc., NOT junior or senior exhibitor.
- 3) No more than one (1) equine may be entered in any one division, and no more than two (2) equines may be stabled in the pole barns at the same time.
- 4) Entries in the various division are based on the following quotas:
  - a) County Parade Team Two teams per county or group of counties represented as team
  - b) County Drill Team Two teams per county or group of counties represented as a team
  - c) County Mounted Games Team One Jr. and one Sr. team per county or group of counties represented as a team

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**Note:** The quota for c-i below will be 4 per county in each division if selected on a county basis, 4 times the number of counties in the region in each division if selected on a regional basis.

- c) Gymkhana
- d) Driving
- e) Dressage
- f) Hunt Seat
- g) Miniature Equine
- h) Saddle Seat
- i) Western

- D. Each exhibitor may enter no more than five (5) classes in any division and no more than fifteen (15) in the show regardless of the number of equines being exhibited. Fitting and showmanship does count as one of the five (5) classes per division. Drill/Parade, Mounted Games and Costume Classes do not count in determining the number of classes in a division or in the show.
- 1) Exhibitors must always use the same equine(s) in the state show event as they used at the regional/county selection show(s).
  - 2) Exhibitors may enter only those classes in the state show in which they received a "blue-excellent" award or its equivalent in the same or similar classes at the county and/or regional selection show(s). If consecutive order placing ribbons are used in the selection show(s), it shall be the responsibility of the county/regional staff or committee to determine the number of entries in each class deemed to merit the "blue-excellent" rating:
    - a) One (1) class may be entered in which a "red-good" rating was awarded in the same or similar class at the regional/county selection show(s) in order to assist meeting the suggested minimum of three classes per exhibitor except for over fences classes in the Hunt Seat Division, or reining and Western riding in the Western Division.
  - 3) Exhibitors may not enter a State show class in which, in the same or similar class at the regional/county selection show(s), they were dismissed from the ring, received no score or time, or received a "no-award" regardless of the reason.
  - 4) No equine may be entered by more than one exhibitor in any class.
    - a) No non-owned equine may be shown by more than one exhibitor.
- E) Entries may not be submitted for nor will they be accepted from exhibitors who, during their participation in the previous year's State event, received an official reprimand for rule violation from the Extension Specialist/Horse, Horse Show Superintendent, Chair of the Division, Show Committee or the 4-H Cooperative Extension Agent of their county of membership.

### III. PROCEDURES

- A) All exhibitors must wear their numbers on their backs or on both sides of the equine on the saddle pad or on the vehicle seat for Driving Division at all times when mounted on the

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equine show grounds. Numbers must be clearly visible at all times. No handwritten numbers are allowed, commercially prepared number only.

- B) All tack and equipment shall be of appropriate design, well fitted and indicate proper care. Improper, poorly cared for, poorly fitted and unsafe tack or non-standard shoes shall be penalized as prescribed or at the judge's discretion. Broken tack in a class will result in a disqualification from the class. Silver and new equipment shall not count over a good working outfit in good condition.
- C) Fake tails will be allowed.
- D) A fall in the arena for whatever reason will result in immediate disqualification. A fall will have occurred when an equine's shoulder touches the ground or when a rider comes in contact with the ground except as in the execution of a required and traditional dismount.
- E) Any equine not following the pattern required in any class, including the specified gaits, may be disqualified as specifically prescribed or, in the absence of specific guidelines, at the judge's discretion.
- F) Unless there is an official veterinarian available, the judge has the authority to dismiss from any class or the show any equine judged to be unsound or is apparently carrying a disease or other condition which would preclude appropriate or safe performance.
- G) The judge, ring master, division chair or equine show superintendent may dismiss from any class, the show or the grounds any exhibitor who is cruel and abusive of an equine, fails to follow or obey instruction, cannot maintain control of an unruly or inadequately trained equine, or fails to cooperate with show management or other exhibitors. A kicking equine shall be considered to be unmanageable.
- H) The decisions of the judges are final and represent a non-protestable expression of individual preference, unless a decision is alleged to be in violation of rules.
- I) In case of ties, a judge may require additional work, but contestants other than in Gymkhana or Mounted Games cannot be required to repeat an entire performance.
- J) A judge, technical delegate or division chair shall have the authority to inspect all tack and equipment and to require the removal, replacement or alteration of any piece of equipment deemed by the judge, technical delegate or division chair to be unsafe, inappropriate for a 4-H show or which would give the equine or the exhibitor an unfair advantage.
- K) Classes which are larger than the ring can safely accommodate may be split.
- L) No exhibitor shall be asked or permitted to perform any maneuver or execute any part of a class routine on or with an equine other than their own.
- M) Except in those classes where whips and crops are required or permitted, striking the equine with any object, including the hand, shall be caused for immediate disqualification. In classes where whips and crops are permitted or required, exhibitors must use great discretion.
- N) Delay of classes:
  - 1) In classes in which equines compete collectively, a warning is issued and the in gate is closed at the end of the one-minute call.

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- 2) In classes in which equines compete individually, an order of go will be established and one minute will be allowed for an entry to enter the ring. If jump order is used, it must be posted 30 minutes prior to the start of the class.
- 3) If a class in which equines compete together is in progress and must be stopped due to a storm, accident or other emergency, it is recommended that the class will be held over in its entirety and no consideration will be given to the performance during the original session.
- O) No patterns or course will be used that will jeopardize the safety of the equine or the exhibitor. All patterns and courses for classes other than those contained in the rule book are to be posted at a reasonable time prior to the start of that class and there is to be no variation from the posted pattern or course.
- P) Classes in which there are fewer than four exhibitors may be combined with other classes as deemed appropriate by the show officials. Classes may be sectioned by age of rider.
- Q) Mounting/Dismounting - Youth may be asked to mount or dismount at the judge's discretion. If a child has special needs, please talk with the Division Chairperson or Equine Show Superintendent. The Equine Show Committee will make a decision in these instances.
- R) No bareback classes will be held in any division. No bareback riding will be allowed on the NYS 4-H grounds.
- S) All 4-H exhibitors must have their show number visibly displayed at all times when mounted on the equine show grounds.

#### **IV. SUPERVISION AND CONDUCT**

- A) Protests must be made by an exhibitor or group captain, not by parents, coaches or any outside party. Protests must be confined to the exhibitor or group's own performance or placing, and in no case may a protest be made of another exhibitor's or group's score, placing or performance.
- B) Protests are to be lodged with the Technical Delegate or the chair of the division prior to the beginning of the next event or class. The Technical Delegate and/or Division Chair will then determine the necessity of approaching the judge through the ring master and/or the Division Chair. The name of the Technical Delegate and the Division Chair will be posted and/or announced.
- C) No parent, coach, visitor or exhibitor may approach, question, or direct public comment to or about the judge. Violations will be handled on an individual basis by the Technical Delegate, Division Chair, Equine Show Superintendent, Show Committee and, in extreme or flagrant cases, the N.Y.S. 4-H HEC.
- D) Conduct unbecoming to a parent, supervisor, or exhibitor will be subject to immediate disciplinary action.
- E) No coaching from ring side please.
- F) No exhibitor or other youth will be permitted to sleep in the barns.

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- G) There shall be no riding or other using of equine within the rings or pole barn area after the rings are officially closed for the day.
- H) No smoking, cooking or use of any heat generating device may take place in the barns or immediately adjacent to the barns.
- I) No one other than exhibitors may ride, school or train an equine entered in the show while on the 4-H show grounds. If a youth is having a problem with an equine, please talk with the Equine Show Superintendent or Division Chairperson. With Equine Show Committee approval, exceptions may be made. Safety of the youth will always be of primary concern.

### **V. SPECIFIC COMPETITIVE EVENT RULES**

- A) Each specific division is governed by rules developed for that specific event (see rules for each event for details).
- B) The rules developed for each specific division will take precedence over general rules or the seat you may be riding if there is any variation.
- C) Due to the many different breeds, types and quality of animals exhibited by 4-H youth in New York State, as much as possible the NYS 4-H Equine Show rules are patterned after those of the USA Equestrian rules. When this has not been possible, other appropriate rules have been utilized as a guide. Dressage Division will use USEF (United States Equestrian Federation) rules as guidelines.
- D) **PLEASE** remember that the NYS 4-H Equine Program is about youth, NOT about winning!

### **VI. CLASS LIST, SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND ORDER OF GO**

**See your State Fair Book**