

4-H HORSE SHOW JUDGING STANDARDS

One of the values on which the 4-H program is based is that of learning-by-doing. This concept, sometimes referred to as experiential learning or learning-by experience, is built on the idea that people learn best if they are directly involved in the experience themselves, rather than watching something happen, or listening to others tell about something.

One of the best ways that 4-H'ers can be involved in learning-by-doing experiences is thorough their 4-H projects. Projects are a primary learning tool in the 4-H program.

4-H projects are designed to provide the 4-H'er with a series of learning experiences. A 4-H project is an area of emphasis in which the 4-H'er enrolls, studies, learns, keeps records, and, perhaps, exhibits. The evaluation of that 4-H project can be done in several ways. The 4-H'ers evaluate their work through their project records and in visiting with volunteer leaders, parents, and other 4-H'ers. An exhibit is an item from the project area that the 4-H'er has chosen to have evaluated-judged-at a show or fair.

Having project exhibits judged at a show or fair provides an opportunity for a judge, a person with knowledge and experience in that project area, to evaluate the 4-H'ers work. It's also a chance to receive recognition for what they have accomplished, and to learn how to improve their skills and techniques. This evaluating by self and others is part of the learning process.

JUDGING SYSTEMS

There are several systems used in placing exhibits. One is to rank all exhibits within a class from first place to last place. A second system is to recognize the top group and may or may not provide recognition to the other entries. Another method is to divide the exhibits into groups, based on similar quality or efficiency. The process of dividing exhibits into groups is known as the Danish system. In general the ribbons are awarded one of two ways. 1) Purple, blue, red and white ribbons are awarded to the designated groups. 2) Blue, red, and white are awarded to the designated groups with Purple being used to represent an outstanding exhibit.

Purple Ribbons - In some counties these ribbons may be used where the judge feels that within the blue ribbon exhibits there are one or more that are truly outstanding and merit special recognition

Blue Ribbon - Indicates that in the judge's opinion the 4-H'er shows above average workmanship, knowledge, and effort in the project based on the conference judging criteria.

Red Ribbon - Indicates that in the judge's opinion the 4-H'er shows expected or average workmanship, knowledge, and effort in the project based on the conference judging criteria.

White Ribbon - Indicates that in the judge's opinion the 4-H'er shows below average workmanship, knowledge, and effort in the project based on the conference judging criteria.

Some advantages of the Danish system of judging are as follows:

1. Standards can be more clearly established in the minds of the judges and of the 4-H'ers. However, judges do need to know and use established and recognizable differences in making decisions between the groups.
2. Judges do not have to make hair-splitting decisions without clear-cut differences. Exhibits are evaluated individually and placed in equivalent groupings, not ranked in comparison with each other.
3. It is easier to judge classes since grouping similarities is easier than separating individual differences.
4. The Danish system tempers the emphasis on champions, as well as the emphasis on competing with peers.
5. Judges may omit a ribbon placing or grouping of awards if there are not exhibits in the class that merit these placing, based on established standards. All exhibits may be placed in one or two groupings.
6. All 4-H'ers receive recognition for their exhibits. All exhibits meeting the class requirements are placed in some ribbon group.
7. 4-H'ers are recognized as part of a group, rather than being singled out for individual recognition, a concept that can contribute significantly to youth development.

Some disadvantages of the Danish system are:

1. Judges must be educated to learn and use uniform standards so that ribbon placing has consistency among shows and fairs.
2. It may not adapt itself well too small classes where there are not enough exhibits to establish groupings.

3. Unless adapted, the Danish system does not allow for selecting exhibits for special recognition or for representing that class at a higher level show.

The Danish systems of placing exhibits can be adapted to rank some of the exhibits. For example, within a class of exhibits the blue ribbon, may be rank ordered, or the top section of the blue ribbon group may be given “purple” or special recognition. Or perhaps, “a best-of-class” or champion is selected.

The Danish system, or a variation of it, is used in judging Iowa 4-H exhibits. It provides educational and developmental opportunities consistent with goals and objectives of youth development in the Iowa 4-H program.

Example of Using the Danish System for Showmanship Classes

Rating	Project Quality	Grooming	Presentation	Description
Purple (Blue)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent-high quality.
	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Qualified for a blue even though the 4-H'er needs help showing
	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Qualified for a blue even though the 4-H'er needs help in growing.
	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Grooming & presentation made up for lack of quality in the project.
Blue (Red)	Good	Good	Good	Good - A level below excellent.
	Excellent	Good	Good	Needs help in grooming & presentation so that the judge can appreciate quality.
	Good	Good	Excellent	Even though the presentation was excellent, the project quality and grooming limited the project.
	Good	Excellent	Good	O.K. in grooming but, project quality and presentation held project to red.
	Good	Good	Average	Deserving of red in the majority of areas.
	Good	Average	Good	Deserving of red in the majority of areas.
	Average	Good	Good	Deserving of red in the majority of areas.
Red (White)	Average	Average	Average	Average – A level below good or not good.
	Average	Average	Poor	Lower quality project plus more work is needed.
	Average	Poor	Average	Lower quality project plus more work is needed.
	Poor	Average	Average	Quality of project limits rating.
	Poor	Poor	Poor	4-H'er deserves the lowest possible rating.

Evaluation Principles Used in Judging 4-H Horse Exhibits

The evaluation or judging can be thought of as a sequence of four steps, each one leading to the next:



The following information is provided to help gain some common understanding and uniformity throughout the state on the judging of 4-H horse shows.

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The Showmanship Pattern

A showmanship pattern can be divided into two parts. For example, walking to the judge and trotting back to the line might be one part of a pattern, and the set-up for the judge, the second part. Each part of the pattern would be scored from 1-10 using the following scale.

10	The perfect run. Excellent pattern. Absolutely correct showmanship. No deviation from the ideal. The beautiful showman who does everything correctly with style.
9	The near perfect run. May lack style or beauty of a 10. Very correct showmanship. Excellent pattern.
8	The excellent run. Correct pattern, good to excellent showmanship. Some beauty and style.
7	The good run. Pattern basically correct. Good showmanship. This run is a run that lacks sparkle. Nothing wrong. Just not exciting.
6	Small error in pattern. Errors in showmanship. No sparkle. Errors are beginning to outweigh the good.
5	Major pattern or showmanship errors.
4	Major errors in both pattern and showmanship.
3 or below	Off pattern, horse refuses to trot, etc.

From Competitive Horse Judging, American Quarter Horse Association.

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	Average	Average	Poor	Lower quality project plus more work is needed.
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	Poor	Average	Average	Quality of project limits rating.
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EXAMPLES OF SHOWMANSHIP PATTERNS

- Enter the pen and lead in a counterclockwise direction.
- Line up as directed by the ring steward.
- Each contestant will work individually as follows:

Pattern 1: **Class** _____

1. Walk to the judge and stop.
2. Set-up for inspection.
3. Turn 180° and trot back through the line.
4. Turn 180° and return to the line.
5. Set-up.

Pattern 2: **Class** _____

1. Walk to the judge and stop.
2. Turn 180° and set-up for inspection.
3. Trot back through the line
4. Turn 180° and return to the line.
5. Set-up.

Pattern 3: **Class** _____

1. Walk to the judge and stop.
2. Turn 360° on the hindquarters.
3. Set-up for inspection.
4. Turn 180° and trot back through the line.
5. Turn 180° and return to the line.
6. Set-up.

Pattern 4: **Class** _____

1. Trot to the judge and stop.
2. Turn 360° on the hindquarters.
3. Set-up for inspection.
4. Turn 180° and walk back through the line.
5. Turn 180° and return to the line.
6. Set-up.

Pattern 5: **Class** _____

1. Trot to the judge and stop.
2. Back 3 steps.
3. Turn 360° on the hindquarters.
4. Set-up for inspection.
5. Turn 180° and walk back through the line.
6. Turn 180° and return to the line.
7. Set-up.

SCORING PROCEDURES FOR EQUITATION CLASSES
Stock Seat Equitation, Hunt Seat Equitation, Saddle Seat Equitation

Performance	40 points
Hands and seat	40 points
Appointments	15 points
Suitability	5 points

GUIDELINES ONLY			
	Good	Minor Faults	Major Faults
Seat	Keeping center of balance Complete contact with saddle Straight back	Sitting off center Sway back Round back Losing center of balance	Excessive body motion Popping out of saddle Falling out of saddle (At judge's discretion)
Hands	Quiet, light hands Maintaining consistent head position	Unsteadiness Restriction causing untrue gaits. Excessively loose or extremely tight reins.	Horse's mouth gaping Heavy hands Constant bumping Two handing reins (for senior horses) Touching saddle Touching horse Finger between romal reins
Legs	Secure leg position Proper weight in stirrups Controlling motion Weight evenly on ball of foot Heels lower than toes	Uneven stirrups Motion in legs Insufficient weight in stirrups	Interfering with another rider Excessive spurring Loss of contact between legs & saddle/foot & stirrup Coming in contact with fence or other riders Loss of stirrup Touching in front of cinch
Control	Maintaining horse in good form at consistent gaits	Breaking from walk to jog Breaking from jog to lope Not standing in line-up	Breaking from jog to walk Breaking from lope to jog Allowing horse to back crooked Missing leads Failure to back Failure to correct leads
Overall appearance	Suitable, well-fitted outfit Well-groomed horse Clean equipment	Saddle not suitable to rider's size Unfitted outfit Dirty boots	Unclean equipment Ungroomed horse Untrimmed horse
General	Good attitude towards horse & judge Consistency of rider's form	Equipment not fitting horse Failure to use corners and rail Suitability of horse & rider	Excessive voice commands Excessive circling Major delays in transitions Falling off Failure to pass individual tests Schooling horse Romaling horse Off pattern (At judges discretion)

SCORING PROCEDURES FOR PLEASURE CLASSES

Western Pleasure, Hunter Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, English Pleasure

Performance of the horse and rider	80 points
Conformation – horse to be serviceably sound	10 points
Appointments of the horse and rider	10 points

PLEASURE	GOOD	MINOR FAULTS	MAJOR FAULTS	ELIMINATION
WALK	Ground covering Flat footed Good attitude	Slow Disinterested/lethargic Not attentive	Nervous Jogging Not walking	
JOG	Easy riding Good motion Consistent Steady	Too slow Too fast	Not performing a two beat jog Failing to jog both front and back Hard or rough riding	
LOPE	Easy riding Good motion Consistent Steady	Too slow Too fast	Wrong lead Pulling Not performing a 3 beat lope Hard or rough riding	
EXTENDED JOG	Easy riding Good motion Consistent	Inconsistent speed	Breaking gaits Pulling Hard or rough riding No increase in speed	
BACK	Proper flexion Readily responsive Back in straight line	Hesitant Not backing straight	Throwing head Gaping Pulling Not backing Rearing	
GENERAL	Smooth Steady Easy riding Proper flexion & balance Good attitude	Sour ears Switching tail Inconsistent speed Out of balance Improper or incomplete appointments	Over or under flexion. Throwing head. Poll too high or too low. Constant bumping the bit. Gaping. Constant breaking of gaits. Obvious schooling. Two hand on reins (except with bosal or snaffle) or fingers between closed reins or more than 1 finger between splint reins. Cueing horse in front of cinch. Excessively loose or extremely tight rein. Cutting off another exhibitor on rail.	Kicking Illegal equipment Lameness (AAEP score>0) Fall of horse or rider - at judge's discretion. Bleeding mouth Body condition score of 1-3.

SCORING PROCEDURES FOR TRAIL CLASSES

Each obstacle is scored on a 10-point scale. Evaluation of trail obstacles.

TRAIL	GOOD	MINOR FAULTS	MAJOR FAULTS	ELIMINATION
Walk Jog Lope (on the course)	See Pleasure Chart			
Control obstacles Gates Back through Side passes Turns on forehand, hindquarter Serpentines	Smooth Good position Responsive to aids	Slight touches Slant side passes Wide positions Slow response Poor head position	Knock down of elevated elements Stepping out of confining elements Losing gate Fussiness and extreme tension Refusals	
Agility Obstacles Walk-over Trot or lope cavalettis Bridge	Attentive Careful Willing	Slight touches Too hesitant Failure to stay on Center lines	Knock downs Refusals Failure to maintain gaits Off side of bridge	
Calmness Obstacles Water Brush Plants Carrying objects Dally and drag with rope	Steady going Alert Careful but willing	Tense over or through obstacles Nervous when carrying objects or working rope	Jumping over or stampeding through obstacles Spooking when carrying objects or working rope Losing rope Refusals Cueing in front of cinch	Off course - No Score
General			Two hand on reins (exceptions: junior horses shown in a bosal or snaffle and horses shown in english equipment). More than one finger between split reins. Fingers between closed reins.	Fall of horse or rider. Illegal equipment. Bleeding mouth.

