

St. Joseph County

2026

# Horse Project Rules

(Specific to St. Joseph County)

**Note:** All other rules can be found in the "[Michigan 4-H Horse & Pony Project Show Rules & Regulations](#)"

Also available on-line at:

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan\\_4\\_h\\_horse\\_pony\\_project\\_show\\_rules\\_regulations](https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan_4_h_horse_pony_project_show_rules_regulations)

# St. Joseph County 4-H Horse/Pony Project Rules

Developed and approved by the St. Joseph County 4-H Horse Council

## General 4-H Horse/Pony Project Rules

1. **4-H Member Project Enrollment Forms** (for any and all projects) are due in the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office by December 1 of the new project year for returning members and May 1 for new members.
2. Exhibitors in the horse and pony project area may own, borrow, lease or share their project animal(s). \***Note:** See Horse Sharing rules.
3. All 4-H Horse/Pony project animals must be registered in the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office by May 1 of the current project year. Registration information must be submitted on the **4-H Horse/Pony Project Animal Registration Form** (available from your horse club organizational leader). Members are responsible for supplying the following information regarding each project animal: name, breed, sex, age, color/distinguishing markings, plus breed registration number and/or 4-H pony county registration number where applicable. A  $3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}''$  identifiable, **CLEAR FULL BODY SIDE VIEW COLOR PHOTO** must be attached to 4-H Horse/Pony Project Animal Registration Form.
4. Refer to 4-H Bulletin, **Michigan 4-H Horse, Pony & Miniature Project Show Rules and Regulations**, for 4-H horse show rules and regulations set forth by the State 4-H Horse Project Developmental Committee, including rules and regulations and information on appropriate tack and dress for a given class. **Note:** In general, the Michigan 4-H Horse/Pony/Miniature Project rules will be followed in any and all 4-H Horse Council-sponsored shows and in 4-H horse/pony/miniature classes at fair. However, the 4-H Horse Council has the authority to develop and approve, if deemed appropriate, 4-H Horse/Pony/Miniature Project rules specific to the St. Joseph County 4-H Horse Program which take precedence over state 4-H rules contained in this bulletin.
5. 4-H officials expect courteous and orderly conduct by exhibitors and attendees at 4-H Horse Project events/shows. Harassment, profanity or unsportsmanlike conduct toward show officials, judges, staff, leaders or other exhibitors will NOT be tolerated.

## Pony & Miniature Measurement Dates/Rules/Procedure

1. All 4-H project animals intended for show in **pony and miniature classes** at any 4-H Horse Council-sponsored show (for which pony or miniature classes are offered) and/or at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair **must** be measured during the current project year in order to establish "show height". **NOTE:** If the project animal in question is five (5) years old or older, and an official St. Joseph County 4-H "show height" has been established for the animal previously, re-measurement is not necessary.
2. **Attention!** The **4-H Pony Measurement Check-In Form** must be completed and turned in to the pony measurement steward at the time of measurement. An official breed measurement card will be accepted from current year or to establish permanent show height of an animal 5 years and older.. A copy must be turned in with May 1 sign ups.
3. A pony can be shown as a horse for the current year and remains horse for that year, but can be shown as a pony the following year after it is re-measured.

## St. Joseph County Rules Governing 4-H Project Animal Changes

1. All 4-H horse/pony project animals must be registered with the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office by May 1 of the current project year on the official **4-H Equine Project Animal Registration Form**.
2. **Eligibility for Requesting a Project Animal Change:** A given 4-H member may make a formal project animal change request to the Horse Council Board.
3. **Procedure for Formal Change Request:**
  - Obtain a copy of the **4-H Equine Change Request Form** from the St. Joseph County MSU Extension 4-H website ([https://www.canr.msu.edu/st\\_joseph/4-h/4\\_h\\_horse\\_and\\_pony](https://www.canr.msu.edu/st_joseph/4-h/4_h_horse_and_pony)). The form requires submission once all sections of the form are filled out.
  - Complete horse registration form (from May signups) and attach Coggins's - turn in with "4-H Equine Change Request Form".
4. **Submission of Completed Change Request Form:** Completed 4-H Project Animal Change Request Form (with veterinary slip attached where applicable) must be submitted to the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office, Centreville, Michigan. The 4-H office will then notify the 4-H Horse Council President regarding the receipt of the change request form.

5. **Last Date for Submitting a Project Animal Change Request Form:** The last possible date for submitting a 4-H Horse/Pony Project Animal Change Request Form to the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office is **August 15 of the current project year.**
6. *IF there are extenuating circumstances surrounding a project animal change after the stated deadline, contact your leader and HC president/executive board to discuss options.*
7. **Change Request Review Process:** The 4-H Horse Council president will be notified that a project animal change request has been received. The president will notify the other members of the Horse Council executive board of the need for a meeting to be held prior to the next regularly scheduled 4-H Horse Council Meeting or by special communication.
8. **Member Notification of Change Request Outcome:** The 4-H member and club leader will be notified of the outcome/decision.

## St. Joseph County 4-H Horse/Pony/Miniature Project Fair Rules

1. All project members, leaders and parents are responsible for reading and following all rules contained in the 4-H/FFA & Other Youth Fair Premium Book which pertain to the 4-H Equine Project, including:
  - St. Joseph County 4-H Participation/Conduct Policy
  - General Rules
  - General Animal Science Rules
  - Michigan Department of Agriculture Rules and Regulations for Exhibiting Livestock in Michigan
  - 4-H Horse/Pony Project Rules found under Department 16
2. **Required Leader Observation:** Each 4-H member wishing to exhibit a horse/pony in 4-H classes at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair must be observed working with the project animal(s) in question by his/her 4-H Horse Equine project leader and specialty leader(s) during the current project year in order to be eligible to participate in 4-H horse/pony/miniature classes at the fair. **Attention:** Leader observation must be completed **by September 1!**
3. All 4-H horse exhibitors must stable a 4-H project horse/pony/miniature in the 4-H barns at the fairgrounds until the designated time published by the Superintendent. **Exceptions are at the discretion of 4-H Horse Superintendent, 4-H Program Coordinator and/or Veterinarian.**
4. Exhibitors who remove their project animal(s) from the fairgrounds prior to this date and time without approval will forfeit their 4-H horse project-related premiums and project animal will not be allowed to exhibit in the remaining fair classes nor be allowed on grounds the remainder of fair week. **Note:** This is a St. Joseph County Grange Fair rule. Exhibitors are required to leave their exhibits on display in exchange for fair premiums.
5. **Required "Thank You" Notes for Trophies/Special Awards:** Each 4-H member who wins one or more trophies/special awards in 4-H horse/pony/miniature classes at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair is required to write a "thank you" note to the trophy donor(s). The completed, properly addressed, stamped "thank you" note for a given trophy must then be submitted during **4-H Trophy/Special Award Pick-Up** on the final Saturday of fair in designated area at the designated time. The pick-up period will run from 10:00 - 11:00 p.m. Volunteers will be on hand to assist with accepting the "thank you" note in exchange for a given trophy/award. **Note:** Donor names/addresses will be posted in Building No. 43 during fair week.
6. **Required Leader Review of "Thank You" Notes:** All "thank you" notes **must** be reviewed by a 4-H Horse leader. The leader must initial the backside of the envelope if they approve of the content of the member's "thank you" note. If the leader does not approve of the content of the note, they need to work with the member (and the member's parents if necessary) on making improvements to the note. A given trophy/special award will only be distributed in exchange for a thank you note.

## Educational Resources:

The following 4-H bulletins are available at the following websites:

- Michigan 4-H Horse & Pony, Draft, and Miniature Project Show Rules & Regulations (revised 2022) ([https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan\\_4\\_h\\_horse\\_pony\\_project\\_show\\_rules\\_regulations](https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan_4_h_horse_pony_project_show_rules_regulations))
- Horse Science ([www.4-hmall.org](http://www.4-hmall.org))
- Horses and Horsemanship ([www.4-hmall.org](http://www.4-hmall.org))
- [https://www.canr.msu.edu/st\\_joseph/4-h/4\\_h\\_horse\\_and\\_pony](https://www.canr.msu.edu/st_joseph/4-h/4_h_horse_and_pony)

GENERAL RULES		
1	Contestant may be led into the show arena.	Passed March 2006
2	Ponies/Miniatures must be measured at a scheduled measurement date and will not be allowed to enter pony classes if measurement is not on file prior to show date. Failure to be measured will result in horse status for the current show year.	Passed March 2006 Amended 2019 & 2023
3	Protective head gear and boots are required in all gymkhana, classical dressage, jumping, Hunt-style, competitive trail, saddle seat and bareback classes.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2017 & 2019
4	Breast collars or straps are required for all horses/ponies in ridden gymkhana and competitive trail events.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2013 & 2023
5	Participant must display correct county 4-H identification number and corresponding horse letter ( <b>or the assigned HC 3 digit number</b> ) for all classes at Horse Council sponsored shows. Noncompliance could result in forfeiture of all points accumulated in affected classes.	Passed March 2006 Amended 2023 & 2024
6	No PVC pipe may be used for any obstacle in any class, except "in-hand" classes, pole bending, and driving obstacles. ABS is acceptable.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2013 & 2019
7	Fairbook class changes to be applied as needed.	Passed October 2007; Amended 2017
8	In all classes, every exhibitor that enters the gate qualifies as an entry in the class - even if "DQ" or "no time" status occurs.	Passed March 2009
9	When there is a Qualifier show, points are not pro-rated. 1st place will be 6 points, 2nd will be 5 points, etc., regardless of class size. Totals will apply to State Delegate selection only.	Passed November 2007 Amended 2023
10	All donations, monetary and physical, will be considered St. Joseph County 4-H Horse Council/MSU Extension property from the date the donation is received. The Horse Council Treasurer, upon the request of the donor, will issue a receipt. ALL DONATED FUNDS MUST BE MADE PAYABLE TO SJCHC. FUNDS ARE NOT TO BE MADE PAYABLE TO HORSE COUNCIL MEMBERS.	Bylaws March 2026
11	At this time, all 46" and under Miniature horses are allowed to participate at the State Show, therefore, selections for the State Show will abide by MSU rules for the number of participants.	Passed February 2008; Amended 2014, 2019, 2024, & 2025
12	No new rules/programs may be put in action after the April Horse Council meeting of the current project year. Rules/Programs may be applied for and approved by the Horse Council after that date but will not be in effect until the next project year.	Passed March 2008 Amended 2016 & 2023
13	Requirements for all Specialty areas must be met before September 1 of the project year.	Announced by MSUE October 2010 Amended 2022
14	Any St. Joseph County 4-H measured Pony/Miniature, if shown in Horse classes, remains a horse for the calendar year and must be re-measured to re-qualify as a pony (original pony number should be re-activated).	Passed December 2011 Amended 2019
15	Show bills, forms, notices, and additional information available online at: <a href="https://www.canr.msu.edu/st_joseph/4-h/4_h_horse_and_pony">https://www.canr.msu.edu/st_joseph/4-h/4_h_horse_and_pony</a>	Announced by MSUE October 2011; Updated 2014, 2017 & 2019
16	Returning 4-H Horse/Rider combo may forgo two (2) workout minimum <i>if</i> approved by Specialty Coordinator. Member is responsible for verifying approval with Coordinator.	Passed December 2011 Amended 2019
17	Non-4-H members (parents, siblings, etc.) are not allowed to ride at workouts. Although for safety in the Competitive Trail program, adults are allowed as outriders. Also, for safety in the driving program, a parent/adult is allowed in the cart with youth.	Announced by MSUE August 2008; Amended December 2011, 2013, 2017 & 2019

<b>COMPETITIVE TRAIL</b>		
1	All 4-H members are eligible to compete at fair in competitive trail if approved by the competitive trail coordinators only. First year members must be seen at a minimum of two (2) Competitive Trail workouts. Returning 4-H horse/rider combination may forgo the two (2) minimum required workouts if approval is given by the competitive trail coordinators only. Member is responsible for verifying approval with the coordinators. The Judged Competitive Trail ride is held prior to fair.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2013, 2014 & 2016
2	Protective head gear and boots are required.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2017 & 2019
3	Breast collars, halters, and leads are required for all horses/ponies.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2013, 2017 & 2019
4	All members must know the competitive trail rules provided by the specialty leader.	Passed 2017

<b>DRESSAGE</b>		
1	Members are encouraged to attend one (1) workout to participate in Ridden Dressage at fair.	Passed 2017 Amended 2022

<b>DRIVING and IN-HAND</b>		
1	All 4-H members & Cloverbuds are eligible to compete at fair in driving classes if approved by the driving coordinators. First year members must be seen at a minimum of two (2) Driving workouts. Returning 4-H horse/driver combination may forgo the two (2) minimum required workouts if approval is given by the driving coordinators only. Member is responsible for verifying approval with the coordinators.	Passed March 2006; Amended December 2011, 2014, 2016 Amended 2018 & 2019
2	All project animals for driving must be three (3) years or greater by January 1 of project year.	Passed 2017 Amended 2018
3	All 4-H members & Cloverbuds are eligible to compete at fair in in-hand classes after completion of a minimum of two (2) workouts. Returning horse/handler combinations may forgo the minimum required workouts if approved by the specialty leader.	Passed 2017 Amended 2018
4	Contestant may be led into the show arena.	Passed March 2006
5	All ponies 46" and under that will participate in any in-hand jumping classes must be greater than three (3) years of age by January 1 of the current project year.	Passed December 2011; Amended 2017
6	The lines that attach to the bit on the driving bridle must be attached with buckles (no clips or snaps are allowed).	Passed December 2011
7	Equines can at no time be tied with the cart/wagon still attached to the animal.	Passed February 2014 Amended 2019
8	A mini/pony is not to be lead without a driver in the seat holding the lines.	Passed February 2014 Amended 2019, 2022
9	A whip must be in the cart/wagon and accessible at all times.	Passed February 2014
10	No open toe/open heel shoes or sandals are allowed while working with your horse/pony.	Passed February 2014; Amended 2025
11	Bridles are not to be removed until the equine is unhooked from the cart/wagon.	Passed February 2014 Amended 2019
12	First year drivers are encouraged to make one (1) established beginner workout.	Passed February 2014; Amended 2017
13	In-Hand Attire: Closed toed shoes mandatory, hats optional. Appropriate show attire suggested.	Passed 2017
14	Driven Dressage: Entry is limited to two (2) consecutive Dressage test levels	Passed 2017
15	Binders, side check, and over checks are suggested, but not required.	Passed 2019
16	Helmets are suggested for driving time events, but not required.	Passed 2019

GYMKHANA		
1	All 4-H members are eligible to compete at fair in gymkhana classes if approved by the gymkhana coordinators only. First year members must be seen at a minimum of two (2) Gymkhana workouts. Returning 4-H horse/rider combination may forgo the two (2) minimum required workouts if approval is given by the gymkhana coordinators only. Member is responsible for verifying approval with the coordinators. At least one (1) observation must be at 4-H workout.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2013, February 2014 & 2016
2	In gymkhana a five second penalty will be added for knocking over an obstacle.	Passed March 2006; Amended December 2011 & February 2014
3	Exhibitor must show in at least three gymkhana classes to be eligible to exhibit in gymkhana horsemanship and showmanship classes.	Passed March 2006
4	Indiana Flag Race: The flag must be placed and remain flag end up as the rider crosses the finish line to be considered a qualified ride.	Passed March 2006
5	Blindfolding a horse to get into the arena is not acceptable and is not allowed and will result in an immediate disqualification.	Passed 2017
6	In gymkhana, all snaffle bits (including O-ring, D-ring and eggbutts) are acceptable in gymkhana classes, but must not be severe.	Passed March 2006
7	Draw bits, gag bits, and hackamore combinations are acceptable in gymkhana classes.	Passed March 2006 Amended 2019
8	Long sleeve collared shirts, a tie, pin, choker, necklace, scarf or bolo must be worn in gymkhana classes for 4-H shows only (excludes fundraiser). <b>Belts are not required.</b>	Passed March 2006 Amended 2016, 2023
9	Speed and Action Class: Exhibitor may be disqualified if horse/pony does more than a quarter turn in the box. Judges decision is final.	Passed March 2006 Amended 2016
10	Contestant may be led into the show arena while mounted on the horse, no more than one horse length past the gate, exception of PEP program.	Passed March 2006 Amended 2016, 2024
11	Breast collars are required for all horses/ponies in ridden gymkhana and competitive trail events.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2013 & 2017
12	<b>The Gymkhana championship will be based on a run-off at the end of the show for all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place winners in each class on Gymkhana Day at the fair (horse and pony). Run off event will be: Barrel/Cloverleaf.</b> In the event of a tie, we will have the tied individuals do another run off.	Passed March 2006 New March 2023 Amended 2024 & 2025, March 2026
13	Protective head gear is required.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2017
14	Horse/Rider combination has one (1) minute after name is called to enter arena or will be disqualified. - Monitored by appointed official.	Passed April 2016 Amended 2023

JUMPING		
1	Horse/Rider combination may show in only one of the following levels: Baby Green Over Fences or Working Hunter Over Fences.	Passed March 2006 Amended 2023, March 2026
2	No PVC pipe may be used for any obstacle in any class.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2013 & 2019
3	All 4-H members are eligible to compete at fair in jumping classes if approved by the jumping coordinators only. First year members must be seen at a minimum of two (2) Jumping workouts. Returning 4-H horse/rider combination may forgo the two (2) minimum required workouts if approval is given by the jumping coordinators only. Member is responsible for verifying approval with the coordinators.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2013, 2014 & 2016
4	Protective head gear is required.	Passed March 2006; Amended 2017
5	Horse must be four (4) years of age by January 1 of current project year.	Passed December 2011

**REINING**

1	Reining pattern #1 will be on odd years and reining pattern #2 will be on even years.	Passed 2013 Amended 2016 & 2019
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# Green Western/English Riding Pattern

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan\\_4\\_h\\_horse\\_pony\\_project\\_show\\_rules\\_regulations](https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan_4_h_horse_pony_project_show_rules_regulations) for full rules and scoring criteria.

In this event, the horse is judged on quality of gaits, lead changes at the lope or canter, response to the rider, manners & disposition. The horse should perform with reasonable speed, be sensible, well-mannered, free & easy moving.

Preference will be given to complete flying changes of leads midway between the markers throughout the entire class. Simple lead changes will not be penalized. This indicates the control of the ride over their mount & encourages youth to train for the event.

Rider will be penalized for losing a stirrup, using two hands on the reins (except where two hands are permitted), changing hands on the reins (except when negotiating the gate), or touching any part of the saddle with the free hand. While the horse is in motion, the rider's hands should be clear of the horse & saddle.

**Course Description:** Markers (cones, barrels) are separated by a uniform distance of not less than 30 feet & no more than 50 feet. The Distances may be altered if the arena is too small.

1. The horse will be judged on the quality of gaits, changes of lead, response to the rider, manners, & disposition.
2. The horse should maintain an even cadence & change leads precisely & easily, front & rear, at the center point between markers as indicated by the shaded areas on the pattern. The horse should have a relaxed head carriage, showing its response to the rider's hands, with moderate flexion at the poll. The tail should remain quiet throughout the pattern. The horse should cross the log at the jog or pleasure gait & lope without breaking gait or radically changing stride.
3. Additional information about the pattern.
  - The arrows on the lines indicate the direction of travel & type of line indicates the gait.
  - The log should be at least 8 feet long & laid on the ground.
  - The markers should be cones or pylons. In the row of five markers, the markers are separated by equal distances of 30 to 50 feet.
  - After stopping & backing at least 10 feet at the end of the pattern, the rider will report to the judge to be excused.
4. A horse going off pattern is disqualified. Off pattern is any of the following: an incomplete pattern, incorrect order of maneuvers, knocking over markers, passing on the wrong side of markers, making extra loops in the pattern, missing the log, five or more simple lead changes & failure to change leads.
5. The judge may require an exhibitor to repeat or reverse any part of the routine.
6. Only one hand is allowed on the reins & only the index finger is allowed between the reins. Except when negotiating the gate, the hand on therein cannot be changed. When romal reins are used, they will be carried as described under "Stock Seat Equitation" in the Western Division.
7. The running walk or other pleasure gait is acceptable for any horses that do not jog.
8. Each rider will enter the ring with a score of 70, which represents an average performance. Final scores will generally fall in a range from 40-80.
9. See scoring guidelines in the 2022 Michigan 4-H horse and pony project show rules & regulations.

The following are considered faults & should be penalized at judge's discretion:

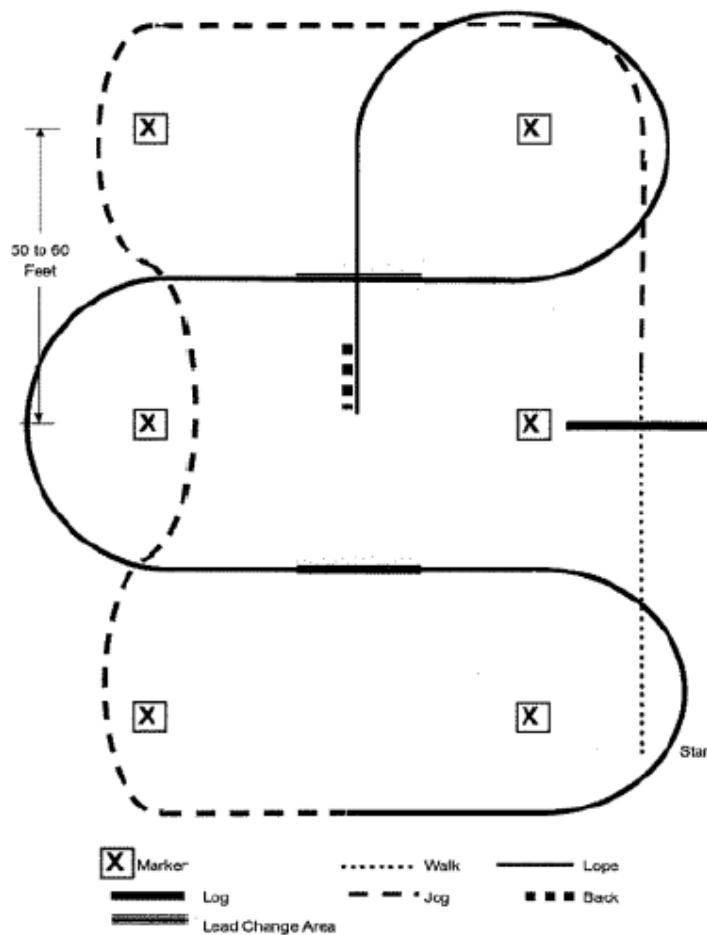
- Opening mouth excessively or throwing head on maneuvers
- Anticipating signals or early lead changes.
- Stumbling, losing a stirrup, or holding on.
- Any unnecessary aid given by the rider: talking, petting, spurring, quirting, or jerking the reins.

# Green Western/English Riding Pattern #1

## (Odd Year Pattern)

Scoring and rules are located in the Michigan 4-H horse & Pony Project Show Rules & Regulations  
[https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses\\_ponies/uploads/files/2022HorseBk-Big-FullSheet\\_Proof1\\_2022-04.pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses_ponies/uploads/files/2022HorseBk-Big-FullSheet_Proof1_2022-04.pdf)

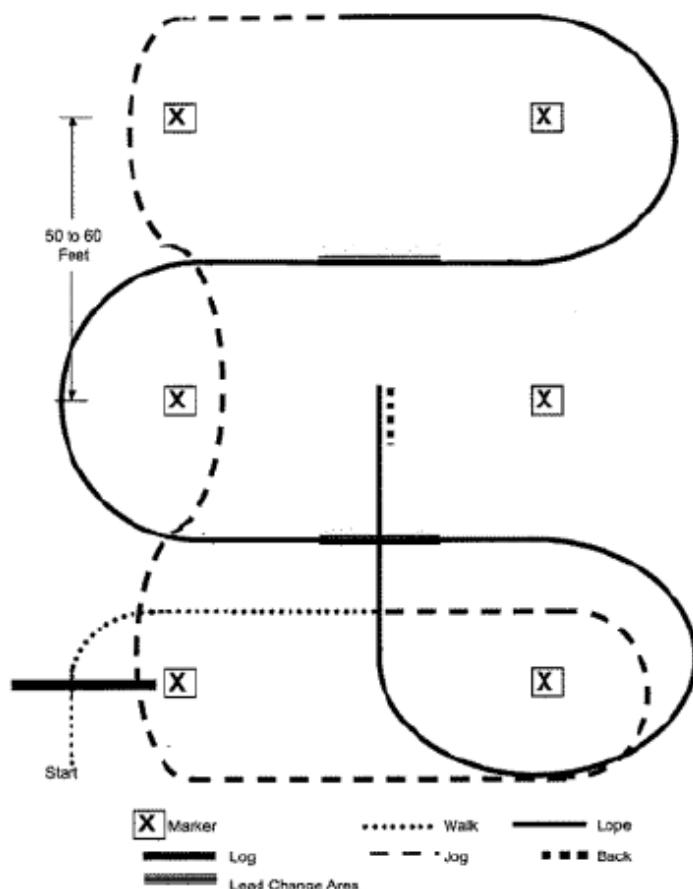
### *Western Riding*



1. Begin at the first cone. Walk over the log.
2. Pick up a jog, jog around the end.
3. Weave through the cones at the jog.
4. Pick up the lope at the middle of the end.
5. Do two crossing changes.
6. Circle the last cone, lope down the centerline.
7. Stop and back at least one horse's length.

# Green Western/English Riding Pattern #2 (Even Year Pattern)

Scoring and rules are located in the Michigan 4-H horse & Pony Project Show Rules & Regulations  
[https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses\\_ponies/uploads/files/2022HorseBk-Big-FullSheet\\_Proof1\\_2022-04.pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses_ponies/uploads/files/2022HorseBk-Big-FullSheet_Proof1_2022-04.pdf)



1. Begin before the first cone. Walk over the log.
2. Pick up a jog half-way across the pattern, turn right and jog around the end.
3. Weave through the cones at the jog, passing over the log at the first cone.
4. Pick up the lope at the middle of the end.
5. Do two crossing changes.
6. Circle the last cone, lope down the centerline.
7. Stop and back at least one horse's length.

# Gymkhana Horsemanship: Mixed Funnel

Mixed Funnels utilizes cones, poles and barrels as a versatile training horsemanship pattern. It allows the judge to better view horsemanship as it pertains to the gymkhana horse and rider. The pattern should be fast paced but always controlled. The rider can begin their pattern to the left or the right and will complete the pattern by turning the middle individual barrel to the left if your 2<sup>nd</sup> barrel is left or right if the 2<sup>nd</sup> barrel is right and coming back through the center of the funnel to the end of the arena. The judge may ask to examine your tack at this point or have the contestant dismount and exit the arena.

Required Gear: Helmet, Breast Collar, Single Rein or Split Rein (Knotted).

## Rider:

1. The contestant should be using the inside rein to turn (right hand to turn right, left hand to turn left). Using both hands on the reins to turn is acceptable with inside rein slightly higher than outside rein.
2. If turning with one hand on rein, the outside hand should be grabbing the saddle horn for balance.
3. When turning, the rein should run from the hip to slightly higher than the horn. Lifting is preferred to pulling. The horse should bend from the nose through their barrel (midsection).
4. The inside rein should be used to move the horse laterally, moving a shoulder away from an obstacle, rather than pulling the nose to the obstacle.
5. Horse should rate, dropping their hindquarters and setting a pivot foot. This can be achieved by the rider making a vocalization, dropping their weight in the saddle and keeping their legs still and quiet.
6. As the horse moves to the back of the cone/pole/barrel, the rider should look towards the next obstacle.
7. Encourage the horse to accelerate from the obstacle using legs, voice, freeing their head (loosening up the reins) when you have a direct line to the next obstacle.

## Horse:

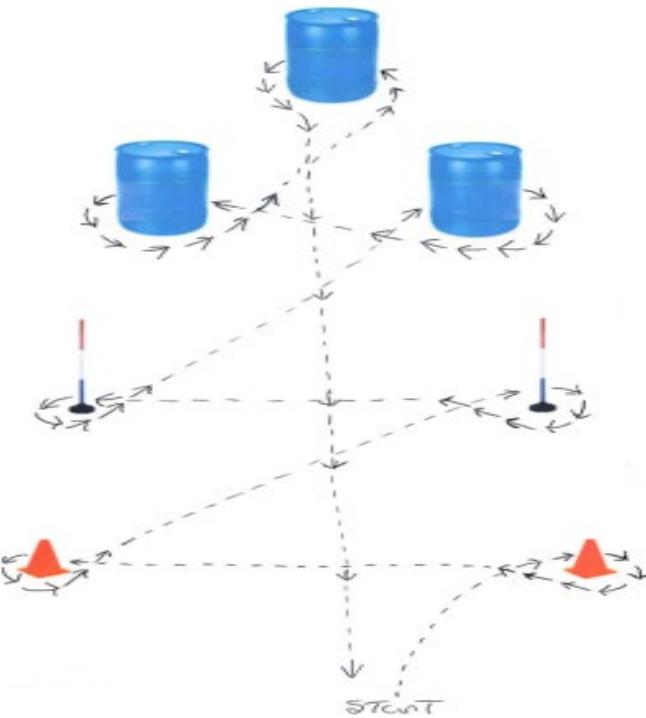
1. The horse's nose should be tipped towards the obstacle and should not be bending through the body.
2. The horse should be able to move laterally as to avoid hitting an obstacle.
3. The horse should turn in the pocket (area about an arm's length away from any obstacle).
4. The horse should rate by gathering himself up and slowing momentum momentarily.
5. The horse should set a rear inside pivot foot.
6. The horse should be on the correct lead when turning.

## Faults:

1. Neck reining (outside hand crossing in front of saddle horn when turning). Ran in outside hand instead of inside hand nearest obstacle.
2. Rider's legs are behind them.
3. Kicking through the turn, not asking the horse by body position or voice to check/rate/gather.
4. Running off at an obstacle.
5. Shouldering a barrel (see #1 under horse section).
6. Knocking over an obstacle.
7. Turning in the wrong lead.
8. Balancing on the horse's mouth instead of saddle horn.
9. Grabbing the back of the saddle.
10. Turning an obstacle in the wrong direction.

## Disqualifications:

1. Lack of forward motion
2. Broken pattern
3. Falling off



# Explanation of Miniature In-Hand Classes

[https://www.shetlandminiature.com/\\_files/ugd/c40877\\_d90c0f71c45649d99898fdb9325b10e0.pdf](https://www.shetlandminiature.com/_files/ugd/c40877_d90c0f71c45649d99898fdb9325b10e0.pdf)

**In-Hand Trail/Obstacles** (46" and under): Judged on the performance and way of going with emphasis on manners throughout the course. Responsiveness and willingness of project animal is to be considered.

- Pony/Mini to be shown in halter with appropriate lead, chain on lead is permitted.
- Pony/Mini to be penalized for any unnecessary delay or excessive time at an object. Judge can advance an exhibitor to the next obstacle team is taking excessive time at an obstacle.
- Maximum time of sixty (60) seconds per obstacle. Refusals do not constitute class disqualification.
- Off course is defined as:
  1. Taking an obstacle in the wrong direction.
  2. Negotiating an obstacle from the wrong side
  3. Skipping an obstacle unless directed by judge
  4. Negotiating obstacles in the wrong sequence
  5. Off pattern
- Cause for elimination/disqualification:
  1. Carrying a whip or crop
  2. Handler physically moving or coercing the pony by touching the pony (handler must maneuver using the lead, halter or bridle only.)
  3. Willful abuse
  4. Major disobedience such as rearing.

**In-Hand Jumping** (46" and under only): Handler jogs beside the pony/mini on the left side with the pony/mini jumping the jumps. Pony/mini to be shown in halter with appropriate lead, chain on lead is permitted. See rule book for list of acceptable objects.

- Jumpers are to be scored mathematically on accumulated faults and on time to complete the. Circling once upon entering the ring and once upon leaving the ring is permissible, but not after crossing the start line. There will be one (1) round which will be both scored for faults and timed. Exhibitors will be placed in order of faults.
- Time used to break any ties.
- Cause for elimination/disqualification:
  1. Three (3) total refusals
  2. Off course
  3. Fall of horse and/or exhibitor
  4. Failure to pass through the start/finish line
  5. Loss of control, dropping the lead, horse running away or horse exiting on its own.

**In Hand Hunter** (46" and under only): Hunters are to be judged on style, form over fences, manners, way of going and pace in that order. Preference given to those horses who cover the course at an even pace, with free-flowing strides, as in a brisk trot, canter, but must maintain same gait throughout the course. Circling once upon entering is permissible.

- Trot past the judge for soundness check is mandatory (done after all members have jumped and in jump order straight line).
- Cause for elimination/disqualification:
  1. Three (3) total refusals
  2. Off course
  3. Crossing your own path
  4. Fall of horse or exhibitor
  5. Jumping of obstacle by exhibitor
  6. Carrying a whip
  7. An unsound horse
  8. Failure to pass through start/finish and/or knocking over cones.

# Explanation of Driving Classes

**Working pleasure:** This class is judge mainly on the horse; this class is to be judged on the performance, manners, suitability quality presence and the apparent ability to give a good pleasure drive.

- Enter the ring to the right at a working trot.
- All gaits will be performed in both directions of the ring.
- In the lineup, horses must stand quietly squared or parked, stay checked at all time and back readily.
- Attendants are permitted to assist in lining up the horse, wiping the horse, checking the reins and overcheck, and giving assistance to ensure driver safety. The attendants should step back as the judge approaches.
- Scorecard for this class:
  - 70% on performance, manners and way of going
  - 20% on condition and fit of harness and vehicle
  - 10% on appointments of horse, driver, and attendant (header)

**Reinsmanship (Driving Equitation):** This class is judge mainly on the driver. The driver should be seated comfortably on the seat so as to be relaxed and effective. The elbows and arms should be close to the body with an allowing, but steady hand enabling a consistent feel with the horse's mouth. An allowing, but steady hand permits the horse to move forward, but maintains steady contact on the horse's mouth to facilitate cuing.

- Way of movement will be the same as the working pleasure class.
- Scorecard for this class:
  - 75% on driver's performance (handling of reins and whip, control, posture, and overall appearance.)
  - 25% appointment of horse, drivers and attendants, condition and fit of harness and vehicle, and neatness of attire.

**Drive and Ride:** To be shown as a pleasure driving class driving the vehicle, both ways of the arena at a walk, slow trot, working trot and extended trot to stand quietly and rein back.

- Under saddle to be shown both ways of the arena at a walk, trot and extended trot, to stand quietly and to rein back.
- Scorecard for this class:
  - 50% on performance, manners way of going and suitability in harness.
  - 50% on performance, manners and way of going under saddle.

**Drive and Showmanship:** To be shown as a pleasure driving class driving the vehicle, both ways of the arena at a walk, slow trot, working trot and extended trot to stand quietly and rein back.

- Showmanship pattern will be designed by the judge and judged as a showmanship class.
- Scorecard for this class:
  - 50% on performance, manner, way of going and suitability in harness.
  - 50% on performance, manner and presentation of pattern.

**Obstacle Driving:** This is a timed class. This class shown as a cone course, gamblers choice, scurry obstacle, pick your route, or cross-country etc.

- Scored on the following: time, faults and/or points of obstacles.
- The course and all rules are posted at the beginning of the driving show. These classes are also practiced at workouts.

**Driven Dressage:** The Dressage test is encouraged to be driven by memory, but may be called at all levels. These tests are available from your driving leaders.

- Scored on each movement and scored from 0-10 with 0 being the lowest of scores.
- If there is an error on the course the judge will ring a bell or blow a whistle and stop the competitor, who should then continue the test at the point the error was made, the judge will show the competitor if necessary.
- Every error results in a penalty.

# Competitive Trail

A Study Guide is available on the MSU Extension 4-H website and on the Competitive Trail Facebook page.

There is a written test to be completed after the judged trail ride (prior to fair) - Written Test is taken during fair.

## Rules:

1. Trial ride is to be done at a walk/trot- open to all w/t and w/t/c exhibitors.
2. Exhibitor/Horse combination must attend at least two (2) qualifying trail rides before the official judged ride. Exhibitors may qualify on more than one horse. Qualifying rides must be completed on each horse to be considered eligible for the judged ride.
3. Returning exhibitor/horse combination may be allowed to attend only one ride per the discretion of the competitive trail leader. Exhibitor is responsible to confirm.
4. Up to eight placings will be awarded based on the overall ride. Points are based on the competitive trail scoring requirements.
5. In case of a tie, the winner will be determined by the horse with the lowest pulse & respiration.

## Competitive Trail Scoring Information:

- 60%- trail ride, vet scoring on horses, health & condition of horse, trail equitation & handling of obstacles.
- 20%- test score and saddle bag of required items, grooming of horse & cleanliness of tack.
- 20%- based on ground handling/behavior and interaction between horse/exhibitor.
- Comments from vet and outrider

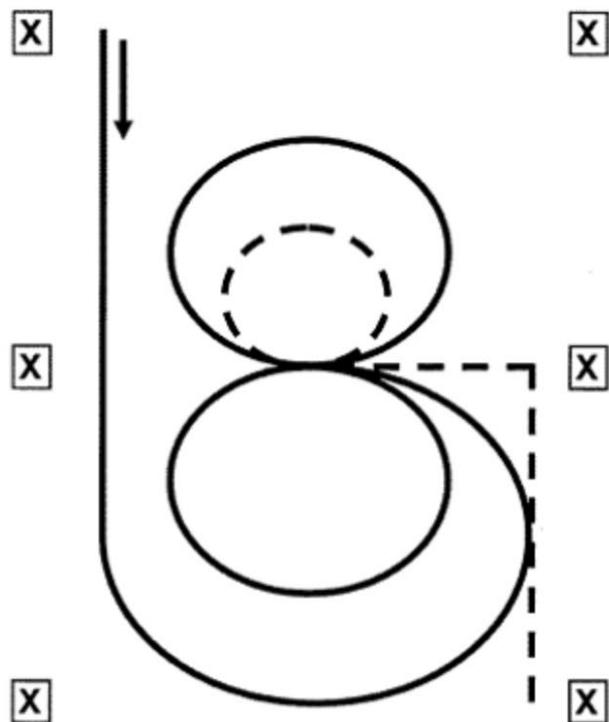
Required Items for Competitive Trail Ride	First Aid Kits should include the following
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Proof of Negative Coggins</li><li>2. Approved Riding Helmet</li><li>3. Riding Boots (no tennis shoes)</li><li>4. Breast Collar</li><li>5. Halter &amp; 8-10 ft lead rope. Halter to be worn under bridle, lead rope tied around neck.</li><li>6. Canteen or Water Bottle</li><li>7. Saddle Bag (horn or cantle)</li><li>8. Compass</li><li>9. Watch</li><li>10. Rain Poncho</li><li>11. Hoof Pick</li><li>12. Brush</li><li>13. Sponge</li><li>14. Leather Strips or Strings of Rope</li><li>15. Fly Spray</li><li>16. First Aid Kits for horse &amp; rider</li><li>17. Map of Route</li><li>18. Snack for Rider</li><li>19. Baggie of Grain for Horse</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Waterproof Container or Zip Lock bag</li><li>2. Gauze Roll or Vet Wrap</li><li>3. Adhesive Tape</li><li>4. 1-Pocket Knife/Leatherman/Wire Cutters</li><li>5. Antibiotic Ointment</li><li>6. 1 pair latex (rubber) gloves</li><li>7. Band Aids</li><li>8. Rubbing Alcohol or Peroxide Wipes</li><li>9. Ibuprofen/Acetaminophen (Tylenol)</li><li>10. Emergency Contact &amp; Phone Numbers</li><li>11. Wet Wipes</li><li>12. Gauze Bandage</li><li>13. Benadryl or Equivalent for Bee Stings for Horse or Rider</li></ol>

# Reining Pattern #1

## (Odd Year Pattern)

Pattern, scoring, and rules are located in the Michigan 4-H horse & Pony Project Show Rules & Regulations

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses\\_ponies/uploads/files/2022HorseBk-Big-FullSheet\\_Proof1\\_2022-04.pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses_ponies/uploads/files/2022HorseBk-Big-FullSheet_Proof1_2022-04.pdf)



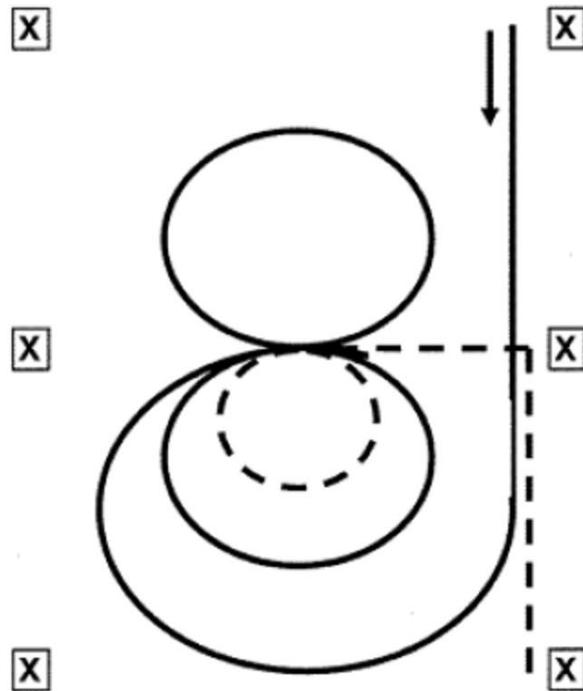
1. Jog along the right rail to the center marker. Stop.
2. Execute a ninety (90) degree turn on the haunches to the left. Jog to the center of the arena, and do a figure eight and one-half, first circle to the right at the jog, left circle at the canter, change leads at the center of the arena, then do a right circle at the canter. Stop at the center of the arena.
3. Execute a one hundred and eighty (180) degree turn on the haunches to the right.
4. Lope around the end of the arena and down the left side. Stop approximately even with the third marker.
5. Back at least ten (10) feet. Hesitate to show completion of the pattern.
6. Walk to the judge and stop for inspection.

# Reining Pattern #2

(Even Year Pattern)

Pattern, scoring and rules are located in the Michigan 4-H horse & Pony Project Show Rules & Regulations

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses\\_ponies/uploads/files/2022HorseBk-Big-FullSheet\\_Proof1\\_2022-04.pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/horses_ponies/uploads/files/2022HorseBk-Big-FullSheet_Proof1_2022-04.pdf)

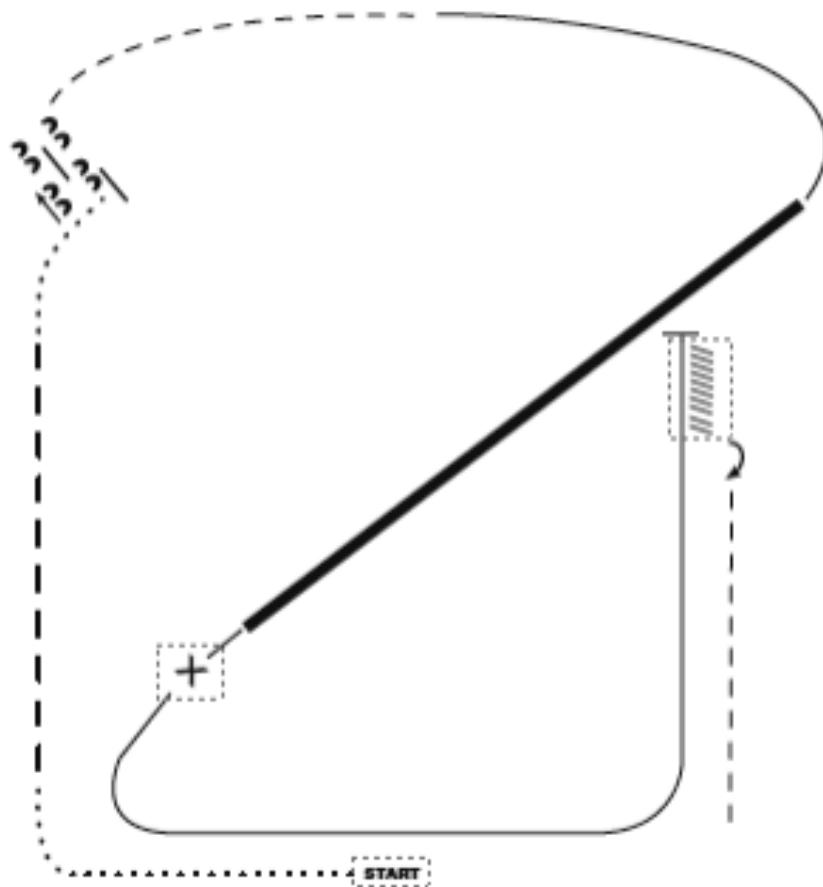


1. Jog along the right rail to the center marker. Stop. Execute a two-hundred and seventy (270) degree turn on the haunches to the right.
2. Jog to the center of the arena, and do a figure eight and one-half, first circle to the left at the jog, right circle at the canter, change leads at the center of the arena, then do a left circle at the canter. Stop at the center of the arena.
3. Execute a three hundred and sixty (360) degree turn on the haunches to the left.
4. Lope on the left lead around the end of the arena and down the right side. Stop approximately even with the third marker.
5. Back at least ten (10) feet. Hesitate to show completion of the pattern.
6. Walk to the judge and stop for inspection.

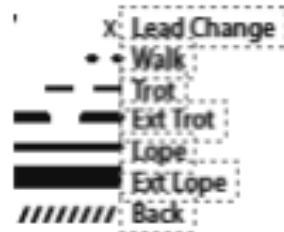
# Ranchmanship Pattern #1

## (Odd Year Pattern)

**Ranchmanship** - purpose is to bring forth the versatility in both the ranch horse & exhibitor, in the task of performing the designated pattern constructed of both Ranch Trail obstacles & ranch riding maneuvers.



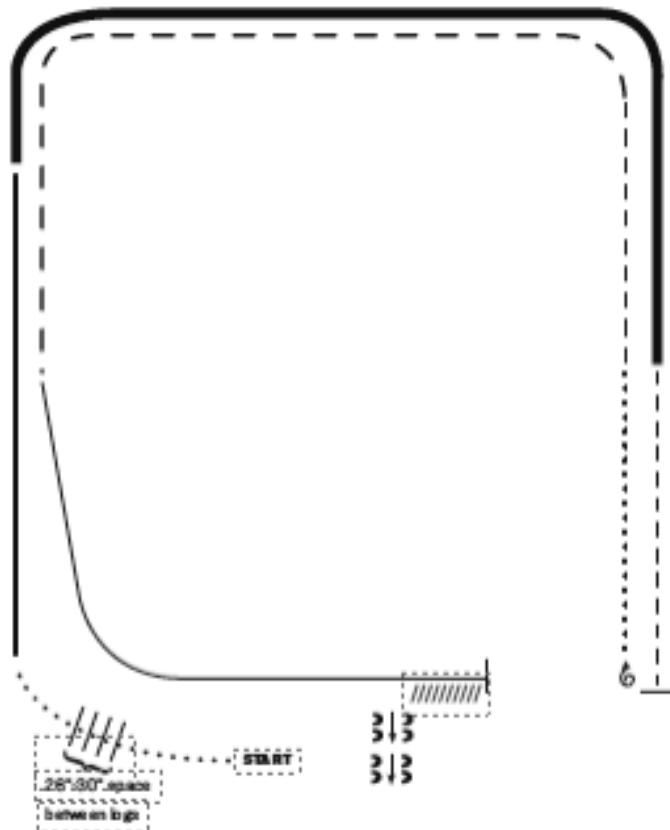
1. Walk
2. Extended Trot
3. Walk
4. Stop, side pass log left
5. Trot
6. Lope Right lead
7. Extend lope right lead
8. Collect lope and change leads (simple of flying)
9. Lope left lead
10. Stop and back
11. 180 deg. turn to right
12. Trot



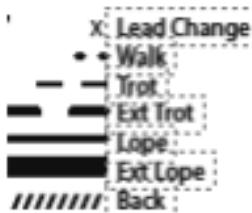
# Ranchmanship Pattern #2

## (Even Year Pattern)

**Ranchmanship**- purpose is to bring forth the versatility in both the ranch horse & exhibitor, in the task of performing the designated pattern constructed of both Ranch Trail obstacles & ranch riding maneuvers.



1. Walk
2. Walk over logs
3. Lope right lead
4. Extend lope (right lead)
5. Trot
6. Stop, execute one and one half turn right
7. Walk
8. Trot
9. Extend trot
10. Lope left lead
11. Stop and back
12. Side pass right



# St Joseph County 4-H Horse Council

## Official Height Measurement of the 4-H Project

### Horse/Pony/Miniature

Adopted March 2009

- 1 Stand the animal on a smooth, level surface so the front legs are vertical and the back of the hocks are in a vertical line with the point of the hip (see fig 1.)
- 2 Hold the animal's head only low enough to reveal the highest point of the withers and no lower. With the horse in this position, measure the vertical distance from the highest point of the withers to the ground. If the horse is deemed a miniature horse then it will be measured at the base or last hairs of the mane and shall be no taller than 38".
- 3 Place the arm of the measuring standard over the highest point of the withers, or if deemed a miniature horse, at the base of the last hairs of the mane. No measurement taken at any other point than stated above will be accepted.
- 4 The standard shall be a straight, rigid official measuring stick and should be provided with a plumb bob or spirit level to make sure the standard is perpendicular from the withers or base of the last hairs of the mane to the ground and that the crosspiece is parallel to the ground.
- 5 Ponies must measure 56 inches or less at the withers, miniature horses must measure 38 inches or less at the base of the last hairs of the mane.
- 6 Shod ponies or miniature horses will be allowed 1/2 inch for the thickness of the shoes.

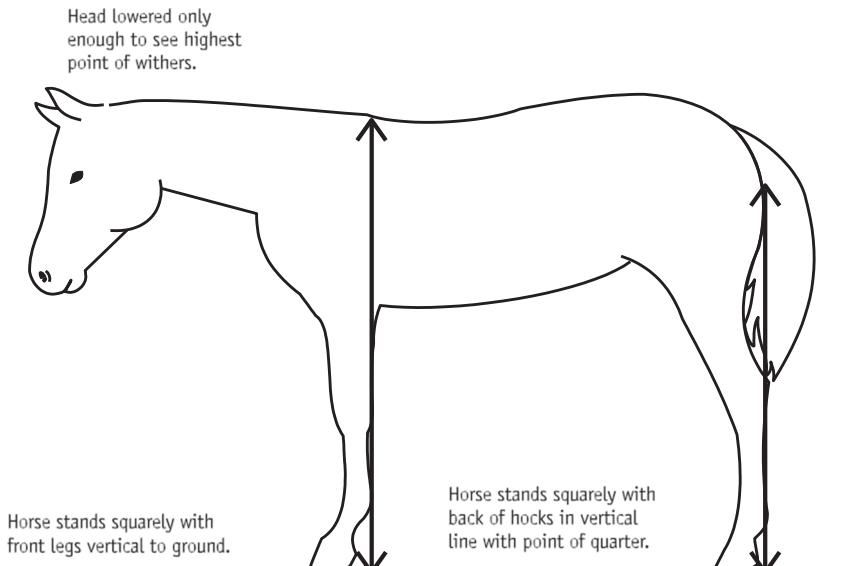


Figure 1. Measuring a horse.

# WEATHER & WORKOUTS

Adopted January 2026; Amended March 2026

This procedure is for any 4-H workouts. The weather sometimes plays a big part in workouts which is why the following procedure is in effect for all council sponsored workouts: **Any weather alert/advisory must expire two (2) hours before the workout begins or the workout is CANCELED.** Even if the weather looks good where you live, the weather can change very quickly.

## MSU Policy:

**Weather:** Because 4-H programming is conducted year-round and, in many locations, counties must have a plan for dealing with inclement weather. This plan should be shared with volunteers and used during club meetings and activities hosted by volunteers. It is recommended that staff members have a weather radio available or check weather apps on their phones during events so they can monitor the weather regularly.

**Prior to Events:** Before events are held, the program site should be evaluated for emergency shelter options in case inclement weather occurs.

**Air Quality:** Monitoring air quality before events is important when there are concerns about human and animal health. It is recommended that staff consider postponing or canceling 4-H outdoor activities/events in communities that are experiencing poor air quality. This is a local decision and should be based on air quality conditions in your counties. To get information about the air quality in your community, visit the CDC at

<https://www.cdc.gov/air/infographics/information-about-local-air-quality.htm>

**Heat Advisory:** Monitor the heat index before events when there is a concern about high temperatures. For safety steps during periods of high heat and/or humidity, reach out to your club/specialty leader(s) for further instructions.

**Rain:** Programs may need to be suspended temporarily depending on the amount of rain and the type of activities being held. If rain is hard or heavy, staff must evaluate the site for safety before restarting events. This is especially important for events in which youth participate in equestrian events (for the safety of both the youth and the horse) or when the possibility of injury might increase because of wet or muddy ground.

**Thunder & Lighting:** "If you hear it, clear it"

It is impossible to have thunder without lightning, even if you do not see the lightning. When thunder is heard or lightning is spotted, all programming must cease immediately, and participants must be moved to a safe, indoor shelter until the person in charge of the event decides the weather is clear. It is safe to initiate programming again.

"Safe to initiate programming again" means no thunder and lightning is heard or seen for 30 minutes.

**Tornado:** Suppose the Weather Service issues a tornado warning or watch. In that case, all program activities should be suspended, and participants and observers should be encouraged to seek shelter in designated areas. Event cancellation may result if severe weather persists. It is recommended that staff members be familiar with specific emergency response plans for program facilities. Awareness of emergency exits and evacuation plans will assist staff in program preparation.

**Snow:** If significant winter weather is predicted, events that require participants to travel should be canceled or postponed. Many MSU Extension Offices follow the lead of local school systems. If schools are closed, 4-H events are also canceled. Be sure that all potential participants are notified of the cancellation.

Monitor club and/or specialty Facebook pages and the 4-H website for updates, look for text messages and/or emails from the 4-H office. When in doubt, text or call the leader for that workout/show to confirm it is still on.