

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

# LIVINGSTON COUNTY 4-H HORSE AND PONY RULES



2026 UPDATE



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## GENERAL RULES

1. A 4-H member's project animal is defined as the animal signed up in Livingston County by 5:00 p.m. May 1 of that year. Only that project animal is eligible to be shown at the State 4-H Horse Show by that delegate. Each member may register up to two horses/ponies/miniatures as their Project Animals.
2. A Pony is defined as a mature animal 56" or less at the top of the withers, unless registered in a pony breed which allows larger sizes. Riders of Ponies 52" – 56" may show in Pony or Horse classes, but not both. A miniature Horse ("Mini") is defined as a mature animal 38" or less at the withers where the mane ends. Minis are to be shown In-Hand only, in halter and lead, and are not to be ridden.
3. At any Livingston County 4-H sanctioned show, cantering ponies and all minis may be subject to measurement. An allowance of 1/2 inch for shoes and 3/4 inch for shoes and pads will be made for ponies. Minis are not to be shod. If challenged, any pony/mini must submit to re-measurement. Ponies and minis must be measured on a hard, flat surface while standing squared.
4. A walk/trot rider is defined as any rider who does not feel qualified to canter in the show ring. Walk trot riders are not permitted to canter at any other 4-H events. Violation of this rule will result in the rider being moved up to cantering classes. If a rider wants to return to walk/trot with a new horse, they must petition the Horse Committee for approval by submitting a written request at least two weeks prior to the next Horse Committee's regularly scheduled meeting and then present the request at the meeting by themselves, or through a leader or parent.
5. All shows will use the [4-H Horse and Pony Rules and Regulations Bulletin 4-H 1145 \(current version\)](#) and the Livingston County 4-H Horse & Pony Project Rules (current version). For miniature horse classes, all shows will use the Michigan 4-H Miniature Horse Show Guidelines (current version). These may be obtained from the MSU

Extension Livingston County Office. Shows will abide by the MSU Clover Bud rules for 5 to 7 year-olds.

6. In a gymkhana class anyone who crosses the barrier a second time will be disqualified.
7. All Livingston County 4-H sanctioned shows must be managed by a Gold Level volunteer enrolled in Livingston County 4-H. All show bills must be approved by Livingston County MSU Extension 4-H Staff before promoting the show. This information must appear on the show bill:
  - a. Current 4-H HORSE AND PONY SHOW RULES apply.
  - b. Riders' ages as of January 1 of the current year.
  - c. No stallions.
  - d. The judges and/or show committees decision is final in all classes.
  - e. Location of the show, judge's name(s), date of show and all class fees must be on the show bill.
  - f. ASTI/SEI helmets must be worn by all riders in Walk-Trot, English, Saddleseat, Gymkhana, and Bareback.
  - g. Current negative Coggins test must be provided.
  - h. The current MSU non-discriminatory language (available from MSU Extension office).
8. The day of the show the show manager must have available on the show grounds:
  - a. Protest Procedure forms available at the entry booth. Protest Procedure forms can be obtained at the MSU Extension office.
  - b. A copy of the [4-H horse and pony project show rules and regulations](#), 4-h bulletin 1145 (current edition) and the livingston county 4-h horse & pony project rules (current edition).
  - c. Three stopwatches or an electric timer and one stopwatch.
  - d. All the equipment necessary to correctly hold the events listed on the show bill.
9. Results of the show, including judge's cards, class sheets and master list of those exhibiting at the show should be turned into the MSU Extension Office within 5 days of the show.
  - a. Master list must include:
    - i. Exhibitors back number
    - ii. Exhibitor's name
    - iii. Horse/pony name
    - iv. Entry sheets from the day of the show with entry numbers (no copies).
  - b. Judges' cards attached to each entry sheet; card must include:
  - c. Placings

- d. Judge's signature or initials after any placings that are changed or altered.
  - e. The number of horse/ponies in the class must be circled.
  - f. Make sure to include gymkhana classes.
  - g. Only the judge may write on the judge's card with the exception of the number of animals in the class.
10. Include a copy of the show bill.

## STATE SHOW DELEGATE RULES

1. The 4-H State Show is a horse show in which all counties in Michigan may send delegates. The rider must be between the ages of 12-19 years, cantering (unless showing a mini), and meet the following requirements to be eligible.
  - a. Livingston County State Show delegates must use their May 1 project animal.
  - b. Member must have passed the Horse Levels of Achievement I.
  - c. Member must submit a request either in writing or in person to the Horse Committee by the June monthly meeting to be considered for selection as a State Show Delegate.
2. If there are more applicants than delegate slots allowed, preference will be given as follows:
  - a. Members who have not competed at State Horse Show in the prior year.
  - b. Oldest members.
  - c. Members who have completed further Horse Performance Levels (II through V).
3. Member may only show one May 1 horse/pony at the State 4-H Horse Show. If the State 4-H Miniature Horse Show is a different date from the State 4-H Horse Show, then a Member may elect to show one May 1 miniature at the State 4-H Miniature Horse Show in addition to showing one May 1 horse/pony in the State 4-H Horse Show in the same year.

## RECOGNITION PROGRAM RULES

Livingston County 4-H Horse Recognition Program is for every child enrolled in the Livingston County 4-H horse/pony project area. Members do not need to have a horse or have any prior knowledge of horses to join a club and participate in this program.

Each of the areas below must have an equine emphasis with the exception of community service, county/ state awards and leadership. Each area is worth 5 points each time the member participates. **(5 points max per category per day.)**

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## Requirements:

### **Cloverbuds (5-7 year olds) Members (8-19 year olds)**

Bronze-----15 points (three categories) Bronze - 25 points—five different categories

Silver-----30 points (three categories) Silver - 50 points—seven different categories

Gold-----45 points (three categories) Gold - 100 points--ten different categories

Platinum - 200 points—ten different categories

**\*\*\*Club meetings, practices, lessons and other similar events do not qualify for the points program in any category.**

This program is meant to be challenging. Younger members may not be able to obtain a Gold or Platinum until they are older.

All participation must be reported to the point secretary by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Point totals will be available at the October meeting for members to review. If a member feels there is a problem with the points awarded they should have their leader contact the point secretary. A reward will be given at the year-end County Awards Reception or at the Fall General Meeting to all participants who meet the requirements. A \$50 gift certificate will be given to the 8-19 year old member receiving the most points. **These gift certificates apply only to the Horse Recognition Program.**

### **Areas to obtain points:**

**Trail Ride-** This needs to be an organized trail ride by club, county or another group and must last at least an hour. Participation must be done with a 4-H club.

**Camping with your horse-** An organized camping trip with equine, organized by a club, county or group. You do not have to have your own horse to obtain points, but must be actively playing a role in the camping area.

**Community Service-** These points will be awarded for any community service not necessarily involving equine.

**Volunteer-** This could be at a show, clinic, fair, Horses Haven or any other equine event. Participation of these events are separate points; this item is only for volunteering at the event.

**Therapeutic Riding Program-** Participate as a volunteer for the Grand Equestrians Program. (5 points each day)

**Teen Leader-** Must be registered with the Extension office as a teen leader in the horse & pony project area for your club. Only a leader can register members in this category.

**Leadership-** Show leadership by becoming a club officer, junior officer, be on 4-H council or on a committee at a club, county or state level. Five points awarded for each position.

**Horse Committee Representative-** Be an active voting member of the Horse Committee group.

**Clinics-** Judging clinics, riding clinics, seminars etc. that are put on by an equine professional. If it is a club sponsored clinic club must turn in an event form to receive approval from 4-H staff.

**4-H Sponsored Workshops –** Any equine or leadership workshop.

**Hippology –** Must be a registered member of the current Hippology team. (All practices are lumped together for 5 pts total, additional 5 pts for each competition.)

**Horse Judging-** Must be a registered member of the current horse judging team. (All practices are lumped together for 5 pts total, additional 5 pts for each competition and clinics should be recorded under clinic category)

**4-H Horse Shows –** Must show participation in any 4-H horse show in any county. If you do not have a horse you can obtain points for volunteering at these events in the volunteer section. 5 points per event only even for multiple day shows.

**Exploration Days –** Must participate in the current year.

**Levels of Achievement –** Must participate in the current year, do not need to pass to obtain points. Level V members will automatically receive 5 points (be sure to write Level V on your tally sheet).

**Educational Club Outings-** For example, vet-a-visit, visit a horse farm, equine related event such as horse races, polo matches etc.

**State Show –** Member must be chosen as a State Delegate and attend State Show. If entering a symposium class this would be considered a separate event.

**County Awards-** Member must apply for a county award.

**State Awards/Mark of Excellence Delegate-** Member does not need to win a State Award but, but must be a delegate.

**Fair-** Participation in fair in a category that includes the horse and pony project area (scrapbook on your horse, showing your horse, demonstration on horse topic, animal or veterinary science poster, photograph, painting or drawing etc.) A maximum of 5 points can be earned per year no matter how many projects you enter.

**Promotion/Publicity-** Bring in a new 4-H member or promote 4-H at an event such as melon festival, balloon fest, parades, county wide fundraisers (not club fundraisers) etc. (Does not need to be equine specific).

**Clover Bud Mentor Program-** To qualify you must register with the 4-H Office. \*Currently paused\*

**Horse Committee Meetings/General Meetings-** Each Horse Committee Meeting is a separate event.

## Livingston County

# 4-H HORSE LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT I, II, III, IV and V

## RULES

1. To test any Level, 4-Hers are required to wear long pants and boots, leather shoes or tennis shoes. No sandals or bare feet.
2. Those testing for Level III should wear a shirt or top that will not catch or hang-up on the saddle horn when riding. Riding boots or leather shoes with heels suitable for riding must also be worn.
3. Format of Levels testing shall be testing stations run by approved volunteer testers for levels I-III.

## LEVEL I

4. Identify several feeds-oats, corn, barley, bran, commercial sweet feed, grass hay, legume hay and straw.
5. Tie a horse with a quick release knot that will hold when pulled against.
6. Identify the six most common grooming tools and demonstrate how to properly groom a horse using the correct sequence of grooming tools.
7. Know one safety rule/precaution from each of the 11 categories pertaining to horses and be able to explain what each means.

8. Name the four main types of feed which are water, roughages/forage, concentrates and salt/trace minerals. Explain what they are, when and how much of each should be supplied.
9. Demonstrate how to properly lead and turn a horse at halter.
10. Name three ways to de-worm a horse and how each is administered.
11. Name the six natural gaits of a horse.
12. Discuss proper care and use of equipment used on the horse (saddle, bridle, pad or blanket and grooming tools).

## LEVEL II

1. Member must have passed and met the requirements of LEVEL I.
2. Name and locate 20 parts of the horse (excluding eyes, ears, mane, tail, hooves, upper and lower lip and forelock).
3. Clean a horse's feet safely and correctly and know the proper care of the feet.
4. Participate in a least one Livingston County 4-H point approved horse show, fair or Achievement Days (work or show) in the last or current year. Form is provided for signature of the show secretary.
5. Know how to cool out an overheated horse.
6. Know the parts of the English and Western saddles and the proper fitting of each to the horse.
7. Know the parts of the English (hunt type) snaffle bridle and English full or double bridle and the Western split eared bridle. Explain the proper fitting of a snaffle bit and a curb bit to the horse.
8. Tie a bow line knot (non-slip).

## LEVEL III

1. Member needs to notify the Levels Coordinator of intention to take Level III at least two weeks prior to the testing date to schedule a riding time.
2. Member is required to provide a horse or pony for their testing and will need to provide Levels Coordinator with a current negative Coggins test for the horse used at the test date.
3. Member must have passed and met the requirements of LEVEL II.
4. Demonstrate horsemanship ability-correctly tack and untack, mount and dismount, safely ride at three gaits and back the horse.
5. Know how to keep a horse healthy and be able to explain.
6. Know the body colors, leg markings and face markings of the horse.

7. Know the parts of the hoof and proper care.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of fitting and showmanship.
9. Have knowledge of horse grooming needed for showmanship of the breed in which you are interested.
10. Give an informational talk or demonstration at your local 4-H club and have your 4-H leader verify this was done.
11. Give an informational talk or demonstration at a 4-H Horse Committee meeting (February, March, April, or June, September, or October). (The talk may be done before taking the actual Level III test.) If this talk is not completed, you will not pass and will have to take Level III again.

#### LEVEL IV

1. Level IV will be in oral and demonstration form.
2. Member must have completed at least one year in the horse and pony project area before starting this level.
3. Member must have passed and met the requirements of LEVEL III.
4. Know the normal resting temperature and demonstrate the proper method of taking a temperature.
5. Know the normal resting respiration of the horse and demonstrate the proper method of taking a respiration.
6. Know the normal resting pulse and three areas it can be found and demonstrate the proper method of taking a pulse on a horse.
7. Know the four types of teeth found in the adult horse and the number of teeth in a stallion or gelding, mare and foals.
8. Know and describe three unsoundnesses of the head.
9. Know and describe five unsoundnesses of the front legs and five unsoundnesses of the hind legs.
10. Identify and describe ten additional conformation faults, blemishes or additional unsoundnesses, not the same as in #7.
11. Name 7 common diseases, their signs, and treatment and control of each.
12. Name 5 internal parasites, how they are contracted and five ways of prevention.
13. Name 5 external parasites, what each does to the horse and suggested methods of controlling each.
14. Identify and explain the use of seven boots or leg restraints.
15. Describe the normal procedures used in locating lameness or unsoundness.

16. Name and describe five types of colic, six ways of identifying a possible colic and eight ways to help prevent colic.
17. Give and explain five safety rules for each of the following: trail riding; trailering and fire prevention.
18. Bring a basic first aid kit for cuts on legs & body, punctures, colic, founder, and abscesses. Be prepared to explain the use and purpose of each item.
19. Submit a six-month record of care and keeping your horse to the Level Coordinator by August 31 of the current year.

## LEVEL V

1. Member must have passed and met the requirements of LEVEL IV.
2. Level V test form is available at the MSU Extension Office or you may contact the Levels Coordinator.
3. You need to submit a letter to the Levels Coordinator by December 31st stating you are going to complete Level V.
4. Level V is open book requiring you to do various research in many areas and to spend a day with a veterinarian.
5. Members have from January 1 until August 31 of the same year to complete the test.
6. Test should be submitted in notebook form and neatly organized. Be imaginative.
7. Completed test needs to be submitted to the Levels Coordinator on or before August 31 of the test year.

## Suggested References for Livingston County 4-H Horse Levels of Achievement (others may be used)

All references are available from the MSU Extension office, including Levels Study Guides.

\*In any area that the reference sources do not cover all the information or you are unclear of what is being asked please contact your 4-H Horse Leader or the Levels Coordinator for a detailed explanation.

\* 4-H Bulletin 4H1228 and 4H1229 are available at the MSU Extension Livingston County

\* 4-H Horse Learning Lab

\* Current edition of 4H1145 – 4-H Horse & Pony rules and regulations

## LEVEL I

1. Your 4-H Horse Leader, 4-H Horse Learning Lab or Levels Coordinator.

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2. Information on the quick release knot is available from your leader, levels coordinator or MSU Extension office.
3. Horses and Horsemanship\*\* pages 35-39
4. Horses and Horsemanship pages 51-54
5. Horse Science\*\* pages 32-41
6. Horses and Horsemanship page 52
7. Tube, powder/pellet and paste\*
8. Horses and Horsemanship page 17
9. Horses and Horsemanship page 34

## LEVEL II

1. Check with the Levels Coordinator
2. Horses and Horsemanship page 8
3. Horses and Horsemanship pages 47-50
4. Exhibit or volunteer and get signature from the show secretary at a Livingston County 4H Point Approved Show, or fair.. Turn the signed form into the Levels Coordinator by August 31.
5. Horses and Horsemanship page 36
6. Horses and Horsemanship pages 27-34
7. Horses and Horsemanship pages 28-31
8. Information on the bowline knot is available from your leader, levels coordinator or MSU Extension Office.

## LEVEL III

1. Check with the Levels Coordinator
2. Horses and Horsemanship pages 20-26
3. Horse Science pages 32-46
4. Horses and Horsemanship pages 4-7
5. Horses and Horsemanship pages 47-50
6. Horses and Horsemanship pages 35-39
7. Horses and Horsemanship pages 44-46 AND 4-H Horse & Pony Show Rules and Regulations\*\*\*
8. Check with your 4-H Leader
9. Check with your Levels Coordinator and schedule your talk at a Horse Committee Meeting with the MSU Extension office at least 2 weeks in advance.

## LEVEL IV

1. Check with Levels Coordinator
2. Horse Science pages 14-17
3. Horse Science page 12-13 AND Horses and Horsemanship pages 12-13
4. Horse Science pages 47-49
5. Horse Science pages 56-59
6. Horse Science pages 52-55
7. Horse Learning Lab Available at MSU Extension Office
8. Horse Science pages 50-51
9. Check with your 4-H Horse Leader, Levels Coordinator or MSU Extension Office
10. Horse & Pony Project Record Book is available at the MSU Extension Office

## LEVEL V

1. Ask your 4-H Leader or Levels Coordinator
2. Refer to the references mentioned in Levels I, II, III and IV.
3. Horse Lab available at MSU Extension Office.
4. Look up information in sources you find on your own (example: magazine articles, internet, books)
5. Talk with and interview a veterinarian.
6. Talk with and interview knowledgeable people involved in areas.