

# MICHIGAN 4-H HIPPOLOGY CONTEST OFFICIAL RULES

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## CONTEST OBJECTIVES

- To test general knowledge and stimulate an interest in seeking out information and applying it to questions, samples, and models.
- Allow participants the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of equine knowledge, and to recognize excellence in this area.
- Provide opportunity for youth to interact with knowledgeable equine professionals and experts.

## OVERVIEW

The 4-H Hippology Contest is held annually on the campus of Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. For more information, please contact Extension Educator David Lindsay at [lindsa75@msu.edu](mailto:lindsa75@msu.edu) or at (517) 353-1748.

Hippology team entries will be entered online. Coaches are responsible for accurate and correct entries. MSU Extension staff must check entries prior to submission to ensure the members are in the correct age category, are a current 4-H member (verified in 4-H online), and have entered the correct division. Online payment options include credit/debit card or check. **CREDIT CARD PREFERRED.** Entries must be submitted by March 31, 2026. MSU Extension county staff will be responsible for providing volunteers for the event and will be contacted by David Lindsay for specific names of volunteers. A copy of the entry submission and contest rules will be shared with county staff and coaches.

All Hippology teams are invited to submit 10 multiple choice questions that may be used for future Hippology Written Exams. All questions must include the correct answer, reference material used and page number that includes answer. Not all questions may be used, they will be seen as suggestions. **This is optional.** Questions can be emailed to David Lindsay at [lindsa75@msu.edu](mailto:lindsa75@msu.edu).

## TECHNOLOGY POLICY

***This years contest will require youth to use phones or tablets to scan a QR code to get to Test answer formats. If youth do not have access to technology, one will be available (limited I-pads available to borrow). Youth will NOT be allowed to use their phones, tablets, or technology outside of the contest room.***

There are no refunds. Ages are determined by the age the participant is on January 1 of the contest year. **Counties submitting entries are responsible for furnishing older teens and/or adults to help with the contest. If any of the contestants require a reader or other accommodation, please include that on the entry form. Accommodations cannot be guaranteed unless they are noted on the entry form.**

## ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility rule for contestants: Senior members who have competed in at least one approved and authorized interstate contest (national or regional) in the same contest area, are eligible to compete again in that contest area at the Michigan 4-H Hippology Contest, **however, their team may not be eligible to go on to national competition, depending on the contest they qualify for at the state level. For example, 4-H members may only participate once at the Eastern National 4-H Horse Round Up in a given contest area.**

In addition:

- To participate in a national contest, no contestant may be older than 19 years of age as of January 1 of the contest year, and they must be at least 14 on January 1 of the contest year.
- Michigan 4-H contestants must **not have participated in any post-secondary coursework in the subject area.**
- Teams qualifying for out-of-state competitions that have an open roster slot may have the opportunity to extend an invitation to an individual competitor
  - must have competed at the current year's state-level Michigan 4-H Hippology Contest to be eligible from another county to join their team for the out-of-state competition. Any substitutions must be approved by State Extension Educator.
- The first-place team will be eligible to compete at the Eastern National 4-H Roundup. However, the first-place team may choose to compete at a different contest such as Arabian Nationals or Quarter Horse Congress.

- A. Junior Age Requirements - Contestants must be at least 8 years of age on January 1 of the current calendar year, and not be more than 13 years of age on January 1 of the current calendar year.
- B. Junior Novice or Senior Novice Division: will consist of members (all members) who have never competed in the State 4-H Hippology Contest, **except for in the Cloverbud division.** Novice teams are NOT eligible for national or interstate competition.
- C. Senior Age Requirements - Contestants must be at least 14 years of age on January 1 of the current calendar year, and not be more than 19 years of age on January 1 of the current calendar year.

- D. Cloverbud division: Must be age 5-7 as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of current year. Cloverbuds will be given the opportunity to participate, but will not be scored or placed. Each participant will be recognized. It is our hope and intention that this introduction at a young age will encourage Cloverbuds to return and compete in Hippology competition in future years. **Their participation in the Cloverbud division will not eliminate them from competing as a Novice in future years.**
- E. Participants must be currently enrolled in a 4-H project in the Michigan county they represent and be approved by their County Extension staff person. This does not have to be the county in which they reside. This can also be a secondary county to their other 4-H projects. Members are not required to own a horse or pony to compete in this contest.
- F. Teams are made up of either 3 or 4 members. When 4 are entered, the 3 team members with the highest scores will comprise the team total, with the lowest score being dropped. Counties with less than three participants may enter them as individuals. All participants are eligible for individual awards.
- G. National and Interstate Competition
  - a. All entries must be authorized by the State Extension Educator.
  - b. In the event that an eligible team does not have enough available members to compete in the contest, they may add, with the approval of the Extension Educator and appropriate county Extension staff members, other members from their county. These members must have competed in the current year's competition and must meet the eligibility rules for that contest.
  - c. The first-place team will be eligible to compete at the Eastern National 4-H Roundup. However, the first-place team may choose to compete at a different contest such as Arabian Nationals or Quarter Horse Congress. In this instance, the second and third place team may compete at the same contest. For example, if a first-place team decides to attend Arabian Nationals, instead of the Eastern National 4-H Roundup, both the second and third place team may compete at Quarter Horse Congress.

## **NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER COUNTY**

Each county may enter unlimited teams and/or individuals in any division.

## **AWARDS**

The following awards will be given in the four contest divisions:

- Top 5 scoring Teams
- Top scoring team in Team Problem phase
- Top 8 scoring Individuals Overall
- Top 5 scoring individuals - Examination phase
- Top 5 scoring individuals - Station phase
- Top 5 scoring individuals – Slide phase
- Top 5 scoring individuals – Judging phase

Each Cloverbud participant will be recognized during the Awards Program.

## **CONTEST PROCEDURE**

- A. All county contestants and teams must report at the designated check in time.
- B. No talking will be permitted during the contest. Talking among contestants will result in disqualification,

unless during the team problem phase. *Once in the testing area, passing of any information either written or oral, may lead to disqualification.* Contestants may bring quiet, self-entertainment type materials with them for use in the holding room.

C. The Holding Rooms are to be used before and/or after each phase during the contest. Contestants are expected to be respectful and follow the directions of the room monitor. *Disrespectful behavior on the part of a contestant may result in the disqualification of that contestant.*

D. References for the contest:

a. Junior Division References

- [Michigan 4-H Horse & Pony Project Show Rules & Regulations \(Revised 2022\)](#). Michigan State University Extension.
- [4-H Horse Science \(4-H 1229\)](#). Ray J. Antoniewicz, National 4-H Council.
- [4-H Horses and Horsemanship \(4-H 1228\)](#). Ray J. Antoniewicz, National 4-H Council.
- **The Official Horse Breeds Standards Guide**, Fran Lynghaug.
- **Equine Science: Basic Knowledge for Horse People of all Ages**, Jean T. Griffiths.
- **Dover Saddlery-Apparel, tack and horse care items, for the English rider.** To request a free catalog please visit <https://www.doversaddlery.com/>.
- **Schneider Saddlery** – apparel, tack and horse care items for the English and Western rider. To request a free catalog please visit <https://www.sstack.com>.
- **Big Dee's Tack & Vet Supplies.** To request a free catalog please visit <https://www.bigdweb.com>.
- **The Horse Industry Handbook.** American Youth Horse Council.
- **Ohio State University Horse Learning Lab**, contact your local county office to see if a kit is available. For more information: <https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/horse-learning-lab-kit/>.

b. Senior Division References

*ALL JUNIOR REFERENCE MATERIALS as well as the following:*

- **The Illustrated Dictionary of Equine Terms.** New Horizons Education Center Inc.
- **The Horse.** (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by Warren J. Evans.
- **The Horse Industry Handbook.** American Youth Horse Council.
- **Feeding and Care of the Horse.** (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by Lon D. Lewis.
- **Coloring Atlas of Horse Anatomy** by Dr. Robert Kainer & Dr. Thomas McCracken.
- **AYHC HS HORSE SMARTS: AN EQUINE REFERENCE & YOUTH ACTIVITY GUIDE**, by the American Youth Horse Council
- **Other:** Grains, forages, and feed preparations used in this contest will be representatives of feeds utilized in horse rations.

## EXPLANATION OF PHASES

**Written Examination Phase** - Senior Division contestants will have 40 multiple choice, 10 true & false. Junior Division contestants will have 20 multiple choice, 5 true & false. The Written exam phase will account for 50 points possible for Seniors and 25 points possible for Juniors.

**Station Phase** - Each area is called a station. Each station is numbered and represents a particular subject. A station may ask to identify or demonstrate tack, equipment, feed samples, internal & external parasites, diseases, gait, leg wrapping, injections, haltering, and other equine activities. Seniors will have seven (7) stations and will have three (3) minutes per station. Juniors will have five (5) stations and will have four (4) minutes per station. The Station phase will account for 70 points possible for Seniors and 50 points possible for Juniors.

**Slide Test** - 30 projected slides (Seniors) or 15 projected slides (Juniors) to be identified as to, but not limited to, breed, color pattern, tack/equipment, activity, etc. The slide test phase will account for 30 points possible for Seniors and 15 points possible for Juniors.

**Judging Phase** - The contestants will be required to judge one video halter class and one video performance class. The classes will consist of 4 horses. The breeds of the horses may include but are not limited to; Stock-type, Arabians, Morgans, Saddlebreds, Draft-type, etc. Contestants will not give oral reasons. Contestants will be asked to answer 5 questions on each class (worth 5 points each). These questions may be, but are not limited to, color pattern, conformation, appointments, etc. Questions are meant to evaluate observation and memorization skills of contestants. The judging phase will account for a total of 150 points possible.

**Team Problem** (Senior & Junior Teams) - The team problem will consist of a hypothetical problem relating to horse management. Teams will be allowed ten (10) minutes to discuss the problem, and five (5) minutes to present their answer to the judge. The explanation or solution should be given by the entire team. It is important that all members of a team assist in the presentation. The teams will be scored on completeness, 40%; accuracy, 40%; and the presentation of the team as a whole, 20%.

*For Senior Teams only: A spontaneous team problem will also be presented to the judge and scored. Teams will be allowed no preparation time for the spontaneous team problem and will be given 5 minutes to present their answer to the judge.*

Problems will be specific to age and skill level, Juniors will be more introductory and Seniors will be more advanced. Examples may include:

- Plan a specific youth participation activity.
- Set up an annual herd health program.
- Design a stable of a given size for a specific number of horses.
- Set up a nutritional feeding program.
- Design a manure management program.
- Design a training program for a specific type of performance horse.

The Team Problem phase will account for 200 points possible for Senior Teams and 100 points possible for Junior Teams.

## **CONTEST SCHEDULE**

While the exact schedule of the contest day is subject to change due to size of participants, availability of judges, number of volunteers and length of contest phases, below you will find an approximate timeline for participants.

### **Sunday**

8:00am	Check-In for Participants & Volunteers
9:00am	Orientation (rules for the day, technology use review, review schedule, etc.)
9:30am	Begin Judging Phase
10:00am	Begin Slide Test Phase
10:40am	Begin Written Exam Phase

11:00am      **Instructions!** Participants will stay in the Holding Room until a designated volunteer instructs them to go onto the next phase of the contest. This would be a good time for lunches, etc. Stations Phase and Team Problems Phase begin

11:15am      Depending on size of contest, participants may wrap up around this time. They are welcome to

3:00pm      leave once they have completed all the phases.

**Awards Ceremony in Auditorium approximately 2 hours after the contest concludes.**

## **COUNTY VOLUNTEERS**

Each county must supply 2 workers during the contest. Volunteers should check in during registration for assignments and instructions.

## **TIE BREAKING**

All ties overall, individual and team will be broken using the following sequence:

- 1.) Written examination scores
- 2.) Stations scores
- 3.) Judging scores

For all participants, ties within any phase are to be broken using the overall score of above listed (1.-3.) phases first. If further tie breaking is needed, the scores at each station, in order, will be used.

## **LUNCHES**

No lunch break is formally scheduled during the contest and participants must provide their own lunches. All lunches should be packaged for each individual participant with their full name and county labeled on it for distribution during the contest. It is recommended any beverages be brought in re-sealable containers.

*If you have any questions or concerns about any of these rules or guidelines do not hesitate to contact Extension Educator David Lindsay at [lindsa75@msu.edu](mailto:lindsa75@msu.edu)*