



Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Production Project Guidelines

May 2009

Foals of the current year must be born by May 1 in order to show at any 4-H sponsored production show. (It is *preferable* for foals to be born by early spring.) Foals born *after* the May 1 deadline *may* still be *enrolled* as production projects and shown in subsequent years. No stallions older than weanlings will be allowed to be shown in production shows. Horses may be enrolled in the production project through their 3 year old year. In - hand classes for 3 year olds and pleasure futurities for 5 year olds are included. See current *Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Show Rule Book* for eligibility details, additional rules and other details for production projects.

4-H members must be 12 years of age or older *or* have passed handling skills of the Level 1 Horsemanship Skills Program with *each* production project animal to show at county, regional, or state 4-H production shows. *Youth under 12 years of age must retest the appropriate Level 1 handling skills on an annual basis with each production project animal to be shown.*

Effective in 2010: 4-H members under 12 years of age must pass all Level 1 handling *and* riding skills with their project animal(s) if they are riding at county, regional, or state 4-H production shows.

For 4-H members *under* 12 years of age, a copy of the Level 1 Horsemanship Skills Evaluation Sheet must be included with entry forms or submitted at the show for each animal. The Evaluation Sheet must include signatures of 3 certified Horsemanship Skills examiners and indicate that the youth has passed all applicable handling skills. Youth under 12 years of age who have *not* passed Level 1 handling skills may be *enrolled* in the production project but will not be allowed to *show* until they are 12 years of age (4-H age as of January 1 of current year) *or* meet the skills requirement.

Objectives of 4-H Horse Production Project:

- Develop life skills in youth, including responsibility, teamwork, critical thinking, sportsmanship, and positive attitudes of self-worth
- Learn principles of safe horse handling and riding
- Develop methods for safely working with young horses
- Promote knowledge of horsemanship and responsible, ethical animal care, management
- Learn principles of selection and evaluation of horses for breeding, competition, or recreation
- Promote selection of high quality breeding animals and responsible horse breeding and ownership

The following are suggested guidelines for participation of 4-H members in the 4-H Horse Production Project and Regional 4-H Horse Production Shows. All counties are strongly encouraged to implement policies to help ensure appropriate 4-H member and adult involvement in the 4-H Horse Project.

1. All 4-H members must abide by county policies and current PA 4-H Horse Show rules for participation in the 4-H Horse Production Project and production shows. To be eligible to compete at county level or further shows, all 4-H members must have completed appropriate project requirements as determined by their respective county.

2. All 4-H members participating in production projects must abide by current state 4-H policies and respective county 4-H enrollment and attendance policies.
3. The production project is recommended for youth at least 12 years and preferably older, or more experienced 4-H members. All 4-H members should be carefully supervised when working with production project animals. Supervision and guidance of younger members is especially important. *Safety must be considered at all times and is especially important when youth are working with young horses.*
4. The 4-H member should care for (feed, exercise and handle) the project animal(s) the majority of the time with appropriate adult supervision. In the event the animal is leased and/or stabled away from the 4-H member's home, the 4-H member should be actively involved in working with the animal on a regular basis.
5. *Appropriate* adult involvement is encouraged, yet adults should not perform the majority of the work with the project animal(s). Adults are encouraged to work with youth, and assist them to safely and properly handle and care for their production project animal(s).
6. Parents, leaders, and experienced adults should work with youth and their production project animals to teach correct handling, training, conditioning, and showing methods. Youth should understand and practice correct procedures when preparing horses for shows. Consult reputable professionals or experienced adults as needed to assist youth.
7. Education of youth and families about selection of quality breeding animals, selective breeding, and responsible horse ownership are primary objectives of the production project. Families should be encouraged to consider the long-term consequences of breeding animals rather than buying or leasing young horses. Youth should be encouraged to breed only animals that meet the highest standards for breeding stock. *See page 3 for judging and evaluation criteria for production shows.*
Youth and families should consult with recognized judges, industry professionals and reputable breeders for guidance *if* considering breeding project animals. For information about selection of breeding animals refer to respective breed association guidelines for judging and selecting horses. Considerations and resources for responsible breeding practices are available from breed organizations, the Unwanted Horse Coalition (www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org) and the Animal Welfare Council (www.animalwelfarecouncil.com).
8. All 4-H members should present their current year project record to the county extension office prior to the production show. Extension agent, in consultation with the club leader, may deny production show entry(ies) based on incomplete project book and/or failure to satisfy county policies or requirements.
9. All 4-H members should be able to safely and confidently control and handle their production project animal(s) prior to showing in production shows. **It is highly recommended that all youth are proficient in all Level I 4-H Horsemanship Skills (handling and/or riding skills as appropriate) with their project animal prior to showing. See page 1 for specific requirements for youth under age 12 showing production project animals.**

County listings of certified Horsemanship Skills Examiners are available from respective Penn State Cooperative Extension offices or on the 4-H Horse Program website. *Only* evaluation sheets signed by three (3) certified examiners who have successfully completed Level 1-2 examiner training are acceptable to fulfill the production show requirements for youth under age 12.

10. Judging guidelines and evaluation criteria for production shows are included below. Animals must meet or exceed minimum breed and industry standards for conformation and breed type in order to receive blue ribbons.

11. **All exhibitors showing in production shows will be evaluated on their ability to safely handle and control their horse(s).** ♦

When evaluating an entry in all conformation classes, the judge will consider:

Handling ability of exhibitor*	25%
Conformation, type and condition of horse	75% (according to breed or type standards)

* Includes:

Ability of exhibitor to safely control and effectively present the horse to the judge

When evaluating an entry in all pleasure futurity classes, the judge will consider:

Riding ability of exhibitor *	25 %
Performance of horse	75 %

* Includes:

Ability of exhibitor to safely control, properly ride, and effectively show the horse to the judge

♦ **NOTE:** Judges may further penalize, disqualify or excuse any exhibitor due to concerns for the safety of any participant or horse in any class, separation of the horse from the rider or handler, or lack of control of the horse by the exhibitor.

See current *Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Show Rule Book* for additional details and specific rules for production shows. Rule book is available from your local Penn State extension office or on the 4-H Horse Program website at:

<http://www.das.psu.edu> – 4-H programs, horses