



February 2009

Level 1 Horsemanship Skills Testing For Youth Under 12 Years of Age Showing Production Animals

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.

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 handling skills requirement.

1. Youth may be tested at their respective local, club or county testing, at other county or regional locations throughout the state, or at a regional testing (if available). Information on regional testing will be distributed to all county extension offices and placed on the PA 4H Horse Program website when/if available.
2. All youth under 12 years of age should be tested on all basic handling skills (1-1 through 1-12 of the Level 1 Horsemanship Skills) AS APPROPRIATE to their project animals.
 - ✓ Retesting of youth that have passed the Level 1 skills in a previous year(s) is required to help ensure that youth are currently capable of safely handling their project animal (s). All appropriate handling skills should be included in testing, but examiners should emphasize those that demonstrate that the youth can safely and confidently control their animal(s).
 - ✓ Horses under 3 years of age that are shown *only in hand* do not have to be bridled and saddled for testing (1-9 and 1-10), and are not tested on riding skills.
 - ✓ Youth that are *riding* horses 2 years of age and over that will be shown in riding classes should also be tested on all basic handling skills (1-1 through 1-12) AND bridling and saddling skills; These youth are *not* required to be tested on riding skills (*unless* the county chooses to test riding skills). *However*, it is highly recommended that youth under 12 years of age be tested on all riding skills if they plan to ride in 4-H shows.
3. **Youth should have information on Level 1 Horsemanship Skills including the 4-H Horsemanship Skills Resource Book for 4H Members prior to testing and be adequately prepared for testing. Youth should have opportunities to practice and learn skills well in advance of testing.**

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4. Youth should be able to properly perform all of the Level 1 handling skills within approximately 30 minutes. Youth who are unable to do so are most likely not able to master the Level 1 skills. This is a guideline only and there may be exceptions.
5. Youth should be able to safely and confidently control and handle their animals for testing. Examiners may excuse or discontinue testing of any exhibitor due to concerns for the safety of any participant or horse, or lack of control of the horse by the 4-H member.
6. Current Production Project Guidelines and Pennsylvania 4-H horse show rules (including Production show rules) are available from local Penn State Cooperative extension offices or on the Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Program website at <http://www.das.psu.edu/> – go to 4-H programs, then horses, rules.
7. Youth should have a copy of the Testing Information Sheet (page 11 of *4-H Horsemanship Skills Resource Book* for Members). Youth should wear appropriate riding attire and bring tack and equipment appropriate for their respective riding discipline.
8. Volunteers that are coordinating Level 1-2 testing should review *Level 1-2 Horsemanship Skills Testing – Information for Coordinators*. This information is available on the website at: <http://www.das.psu.edu/> – go to 4-H programs, then horses, and Horsemanship Skills.
9. County listings of certified Horsemanship Skills Examiners are available from respective Penn State Cooperative Extension offices or on the PA 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.**

Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Program website:

<http://www.das.psu.edu/> –

Go to 4-H programs and horses!