



Youth Horse Projects: Your Responsibilities

Instructor's Guide



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The following points will help guide instructors in discussing the situations presented in the accompanying Power Point presentation. It is suggested that instructors use those situations that are most relevant for the county participants. Additional situations may be used as appropriate for your county.

Interactive, hands-on teaching methods are effective means to present this information. Participants may be divided into groups to consider specific situations, develop a response to the situations, and present their response to the audience. Responsibilities for 4-H Members, references and resources included on the last two pages may be helpful in preparing for county meetings.

Animal Care and Ownership:

Situation I: You plan to show your new horse in 4-H shows this year. Your 4-H leader distributed your county 4-H rules and policies and the 4-H Horse Show Rule Book at your first club meeting in January. On June 2 you remember that you have not submitted your project/animal enrollment form(s) to your county extension office.

1. This may *or* may not be a problem. The horse or pony a member intends to use in competition must be designated and recorded with the county extension office by June 1 of the current year. Enrollment forms must be in the extension office by June 1. Effective in 2003, if June 1 falls on a holiday, Saturday, or Sunday, then enrollment form and other documentation if required, must be in the extension office by close of business on the next business day.
2. If June 1 falls on a Monday through Friday, and you realize on June 2 that you have not enrolled by the deadline, you will be unable to show your horse in qualifying classes for 4-H district and state shows this year.
3. If your county policy permits, you may be able to enroll in a 4-H project, show your horse in county shows, or participate in other county 4-H horse events. However, you would not be able to show your horse in district, regional, or state shows if you have not met the enrollment requirements.
4. Call your county 4-H extension agent to discuss your options.
5. It is your responsibility to be aware of and abide by 4-H policies and rules.

Situation II: You observe a trainer riding another 4-H member's horse at a 4-H show. The horse is nervous, excited, and frightening the youth and other horses.

1. This may *or* may not be a problem. If the youth is frightened by his/her own horse's behavior, then it *may* mean he/she has not worked with the horse on a regular basis and is not adequately prepared to show the horse in the show ring. His/her participation may create a hazardous situation for that member and for other exhibitors.
2. This situation should be brought to the attention of your parents, leaders, extension agent and/or show officials.

3. *On the other hand*, it could be that the youth *has* worked with the horse and the horse was simply frightened by something at the show. The trainer may be riding the horse to calm it, before allowing the youth to try again. This situation would be appropriate.
4. It is important to recognize there is NO state 4-H horse show rule preventing adults from riding horses at 4-H events. In some situations it *may* be appropriate for an adult to ride or school a horse for safety or instructional purposes.
5. The key is *appropriate* adult involvement. Youth should be doing the majority of the work with the horse, but should have appropriate assistance from adults.

Situation III: This is my first year in showing in Grooming and Showmanship. I have done most of the work with my horse. My horse does not like to have her ears clipped. The more I try, the worse she gets, and I am afraid of getting hurt. My mother and I hold my horse while my father clips her ears.

1. This is *not* a problem.
2. Having your father clip your horse's ears while you are helping is *appropriate* adult involvement. The key is that the member has made the attempt to work with the horse and is still involved in the process.
3. This is a situation where the safety of the member and the horse should be considered.

Situation IV: I board my horse at my trainer's stable. I take lessons each week and work with my trainer on a regular basis. I groom and work with my horse several times each week, and I clean stalls and work at the stable to help pay for my horses board and other expenses. I talk with my parents and trainer to help make decisions about my horse's care and show schedule.

1. This is *not* a problem, provided you are also actively involved in the care, riding and training of the horse.
2. Working with a trainer and getting advice from your trainer and parents is *appropriate* adult involvement, *provided* you ride, train, handle, and care for horse the majority of the time, or as much as you are reasonably able.
3. It is *not* appropriate for a trainer or other person to ride and train your horse all the time, without your participation.

Honesty and Sportsmanship

Situation I: A father of a fellow exhibitor openly criticizes the judge after the show because his daughter placed third. She had won every class this year with this horse, except at this show.

1. Judging horses is a subjective task. There is seldom, if ever, a "right" placing. The judge was asked for his or her opinion on a given day. It is not acceptable behavior or good sportsmanship to criticize a judge's decision. Perhaps the exhibitor/horse did not have as good a ride today as they usually do, or there were better horses in the show today.
2. The PA 4-H Horse Show Rule Book states "When an exhibitor, parent, guardian, 4-H leader, coach, agent, or representative acting in behalf of an exhibitor is guilty of unsportsmanlike or unethical conduct, the 4-H Horse Show Committee may require the 4-H member to return all trophies and ribbons,..... A parent, guardian, 4-H leader, coach, agent, or representative acting in behalf of an exhibitor, deemed guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct may also be prohibited for such a period as judged appropriate from participation in qualifying 4-H horse shows. Persons

deemed guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct may be expelled from the show grounds at the direction of the Show Committee...."

3. The father's behavior should be brought to the attention of a leader or other show officials. The judge should be quickly removed from this uncomfortable situation. In this case, the exhibitor of the horse should ask their father to calm down. If the behavior persists, it would be acceptable for show authorities to ask the father to leave the show grounds.
4. *Suggestion:* Use videos of 3-4 judging classes and ask the participants to place the horses and write down their placings. Collect the placings from all participants. Read aloud some of the different placings. It will be very obvious that judging is subjective, and to some extent a matter of personal preference.

Situation II: Your horse is a little over 14.2 hands, which is too tall to enter the pony classes. Your parent suggests that the farrier should trim the horse's hooves very short so that the horse will be eligible for the pony classes.

1. Altering the horse's true height to make it "fit" into the pony classes is unethical and dishonest. Trimming the hooves very short may also cause the horse pain and result in a temporary lameness. This would be abusive and inhumane.
2. Encourage your parents to do the right thing and allow the farrier to trim the hooves only as needed. Accept the horse's true height, and show in the horse classes.

Situation III: Your mother and trainer are standing together on the rail while you are showing at the county roundup. This is your only county qualifying show for the district show. You are very nervous, but rode your equitation pattern well, and really want to make it to the district show. Your trainer tells you to ride with more contact on the reins, look up, watch out for number 911, and coaches you each time you ride by. Your mother says, "Smile, sit up straight and relax!"

1. This is a common situation, but is not appropriate.
2. The trainer or parent should not be coaching from the rail. Assistance or coaching from outside the ring may be penalized.
3. Your trainer's and mother's comments are likely to make you more nervous and distract you while showing. Politely tell them that you appreciate their encouragement and support, but ask them to refrain from coaching from the rail.
4. Work with your trainer or parent *at home* on exercise and drills to improve your riding. This will give you confidence to ride without coaching from the rail at the show. Discuss your showing and pattern strategy and practice with your coach *before* the class.

Animal Health and Biosecurity

Situation I: You arrive at your regional production show and go to the show office to get your number and class schedule. The show officials inform you that you did not include a copy of the negative EIA status (Coggins Test) for your horse with your entry. Since this is one of the required health tests, you will not be permitted to show without proof of negative EIA status. You have traveled 2 hours to compete in this show and you do not have a copy of the test results.

1. It is the exhibitor's responsibility to ensure that all entry and health requirements are met.

2. Review entry and health requirements carefully for every show, and make sure that your horse has all of the required tests and vaccinations. You should always take all required health and registration papers with you when traveling with your horse to shows or other events.
3. The horse should be taken home without complaint.

Situation II: Even though your health papers are in order, you notice your horse exhibiting signs of influenza (high temperature, nasal discharge, cough) as you are loading it in the trailer to go to a show.

1. Taking the horse to the show may further stress the sick horse and result in expensive vet bills. It will also expose other horses to a contagious and potentially dangerous illness.
2. The PA 4-H Horse Show Rule Book states that horses showing evidence of infectious, contagious, or parasitic diseases shall be removed from the show grounds at the discretion of the Show Chairperson.
3. The long term health and welfare of the horse should be considered.
4. You should unload the horse and return it to his stall. Take his temperature, and call the vet! It looks like you won't be showing today, after all!

Quality Assurance

Situation I: Your horse becomes very nervous in the arena during schooling at the county horse show. A fellow exhibitor's parent offers acepromazine (a tranquilizer) to calm your horse down before the show begins.

1. Refer to the drug rules in the current PA 4-H Horse Show Rule Book. No horse or pony may be shown in any class if it has been administered, in any manner, a forbidden substance. A forbidden substance is any stimulant, depressant, or local anesthetic, which might affect the performance of a horse. Acepromazine is a forbidden substance.
2. If you have any questions about a particular drug, contact your veterinarian or the show chairperson prior to the show.
3. You know that no drug tests are likely to be administered at the county show.
4. Do the right thing. Giving your horse acepromazine to calm him down may seem like a good idea, but it is against the rules, and is unethical. If your horse is too nervous to show, then withdraw from the class for everyone's safety. There's always next year and other shows.

Situation II: You have an 18 year old gelding that has mild degenerative joint disease. He is sometimes a little sore and slightly lame. Your veterinarian advises you that it is OK to ride him and prescribes phenylbutazone ("bute") to use before the show.

1. The full use of modern therapeutic measures including phenylbutazone for the improvement and protection of the health of the horse is permitted..... As prescribed by your veterinarian, this is a legal, ethical treatment for your horse's condition in this situation.
2. Use the bute as prescribed, and show your horse.
3. Recognize that there may be *other* situations where use of bute or other drugs may mask symptoms of serious problems, further aggravate a problem, and should not be used. However, consult your veterinarian when using any drug and follow his/her advice and the event rules.

Human Health and Safety

Situation I: You are preparing your horse to compete in the district show. Adults in the stall next to you are applying aerosol grooming products to a horse and the fumes drift directly into your stall. You can not see what type of product they are using.

1. Fumes from the fitting products may be dangerous for you to breathe.
2. Since you can not see the product label, you don't know for sure what you are breathing.
3. Adults may assist youth with grooming, but the 4-H member should do the majority of the work.
4. A show official should examine the situation in the next stall and ask the adults to stop spraying the product in a poorly ventilated area.
5. You should re-locate your preparation area if the people do not stop using the product.

Situation II: It is a hot, humid, but slightly windy day at the county roundup, and flies are irritating your horse. You begin to spray your horse before entering the show ring, and the wind causes the fly spray to reach you, instead of your horse!

1. If the fly spray is on your skin or in your eyes, it may pose a health hazard to you.
2. Hand your horse to a happy horse holder, and follow the label directions to rinse the spray off of your skin and out of your eyes. Seek additional medical help as needed.
3. It is acceptable to use fly spray on your horse, so change your position relative to the wind direction, and spray your horse again before entering the arena.
4. Fly sprays and other insect repellants may be beneficial and prevent irritation of the horse if used appropriately.

Situation III: You are fitting your horse for Grooming and Showmanship. You plan to buy hoof black and white spray from a vendor at the show to use on your horse. When you look at the labels, you notice the hoof black and white spray both contain methylene chloride. Your horse's feet and legs are not very clean, and you really need the hoof black and spray.

1. This is a problem. It is preferable to groom and thoroughly clean your horse, so that few, if any, grooming and fitting products are needed. Careful cleaning, grooming and fitting, good feeding, and proper conditioning of your horse are more important than fitting products such as hoof black and white spray or chalk.
2. Some grooming and fitting products contain ingredients that may be harmful to human health if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.
3. Methylene chloride may be hazardous to your health and should be avoided.
3. Be prudent and cautious with all grooming and fitting products. Use products intended for equine use and handle according to label instructions.

Situation IV: You are a beginner rider and can't afford an expensive horse. Your parents have little experience with horses, but are willing to buy you a horse. A local horse breeder offers you a yearling that is very pretty and cheap, but has little training. The breeder says "you can grow up and learn together."

1. This is a problem. Inexperienced 4-H members should not start with a young horse. Young horses are extremely unpredictable and can be dangerous. While it may be tempting, beginning riders and young horses generally do not mix. Either someone gets hurt or the inexperienced rider becomes frustrated and loses interest.

2. The concept of growing up and learning together is invalid because a young horse may hurt you while it is being trained. If neither you nor your parents are knowledgeable enough to train the horse, it may develop bad habits and become unmanageable.
3. You should not buy this horse. Instead you and your parents should continue to look for a well-mannered, trained horse that you can afford to use until you become more knowledgeable and experienced.
4. Youth may work successfully with a young horse if they have appropriate, experienced adult supervision and assistance. Talk with your 4-H leader to locate experienced horsemen in your area that may be able to assist with finding an appropriate horse in your price range. Have patience and keep looking!

Ethics and Conduct

Situation I: You observe a competitor in the stall next to you tying his horse "high and short" for several hours. This is done to tire the horse and cause it to carry its head lower in a western pleasure class.

1. This is an unethical and unacceptable practice, and it is inhumane to the horse.
2. This situation should be brought to the attention of your parents, leaders, extension agent, and/or show officials.
3. The Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Program Statement of Position on Animal Welfare requires that all equine be treated humanely, with respect and compassion, and not be mistreated by 4-H members or exhibitors, parents, coaches, trainers, instructors, or others participating in the program.

Situation II: Your horse would not load in the trailer, and you arrive late at the show. You rush to get ready for your first class, but forget to wear your number. Your horse works very well, but you are not placed. As you are leaving the arena, you say loudly to your mother, "Mom, you forgot to put my number on!"

1. Exhibitors are required to display their numbers. See General Rule in the State 4-H Horse Show Rule Book that states, "Failure by the exhibitor to wear the correct number in a visible manner shall result in a penalty at the judge's discretion."
2. Accept the judge's decision graciously. It was your mistake. Don't make the same mistake again!
3. It is your responsibility to be prepared for the show – not your mother's. Accept the responsibility for your actions and do not blame others.

Situation III: You are busy working your horse for the next class. You are parked a long distance from the show ring and can not hear the announcer very well. You are late for the class and complain to the show steward when you are not allowed to enter.

1. You are responsible to be on time for your class.
2. You are responsible to be aware of when your class is showing. You should check the progress of the show periodically, and be aware of when your class is expected to show.
5. If you unable to hear the announcer, politely bring the problem to the attention of the show committee. You should continue to be aware of the progress of the show and not rely entirely on the show announcements to be on time for your class.



Your Responsibilities as a 4-H Horse Project Member...

A responsibility is an obligation or a duty. Being responsible means being in charge of our choices, being accountable for what we do and who we are and carrying out our obligations or duties at all times.

4-H horse project exhibitors and their families represent more than themselves. They represent the 4-H program, the youth horse industry, and society as a whole. Many people look to 4-H exhibitors to do the job well and be good role models for others. Truly responsible 4-H exhibitors and their families must decide whether each action taken is trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and a model of good citizenship.

4-H horse project exhibitors can demonstrate responsible behavior in the following ways...

- Live by the Golden Rule – treat other exhibitors, spectators and judges the way they would like to be treated.
- Listen to others and try to see their point of view.
- Be courteous, polite and appreciative toward other exhibitors.
- Show respect to animals through proper care feeding, housing and handling.
- Record birth and possession dates of horses correctly.
- Adhere to deadlines for enrollment and entry forms.

Prepared by Donna Zang, Butler County,
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- Assume responsibility for grooming and handling of their horse by doing as much as they are capable of doing by themselves.
- Know the project and roundup rules for showing a horse.
- Collect and enter into the project book important information such as photographs taken to document the progress of the project.
- Record medical facts that accurately reflect all the vaccines and medicines given and the medical care the horse has received.

Parents can demonstrate responsible behavior by...

- Becoming knowledgeable enough about horse care to be supportive of their children; seeking guidance and assistance from knowledgeable 4-H volunteers and horsemen.
- Allowing children to do all they are capable of doing.
- Teaching children to do, rather than doing for them.
- Treating all exhibitors and families with respect.
- Accepting winning or losing with grace.
- Focusing on the child's experience and not the goal of winning.

Do the right thing at all times even though the right thing is not always the popular thing to do.

Adapted from SHOWING CHARACTER, Louisiana State University

References and Resources - Ethics and Quality Assurance

PA 4-H Horse Program web site at: www.das.psu.edu - click on horses, then 4-H horse program, then references, rules and resources.

Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Show Rule Book (and available supplement)

Guidelines for Pennsylvania 4-H Open Trail and Obstacle Trail

Guidelines for Working Hunter, Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fences and Hunter Hack

Guidelines for Bits in Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Shows

4-H Horse Production Project Guidelines

4-H Horse References list

4-H Horse Safety References list

Horses, Kids and Ethics video by Jeff Goodwin (ordering information on 4-H Horse References list)

4-H Horse Safety Packets, I, II distributed to all county extension offices; several references including:

4-H Horse Safety Checklist

4-H Horse Safety Standards

Start With Safety: Horse Safety Guidelines. Second Edition, American Youth Horse Council

4-H Horsemanship Skills Resource Book (4-H Member)

4-H Horsemanship Skills Resource Book (Volunteer/Professional)

Character Counts Curriculum available at <http://www.charactercounts.org/>

Showing Character and other Character Materials ordering information available at <http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/curricul/character-edu.htm>

Positive Attitudes and Youth Horse Programs, by Jean T. Griffiths

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Communicating with Horse People, by Jean T. Griffiths and Marvin Glock

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The following materials are available from Penn State Publications Distribution at 814-865-6713 or <http://pubs.cas.psu.edu>

Developing Sportsmanship (professional and volunteer resource guide)
Sportsmanship Expectations for Youth Participants
Sportsmanship Expectations for Parents and Supporters
Sportsmanship Expectations for Spectators