



The 4-H Horse Show - Planning

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4-H horse shows don't just “happen” by themselves. They take organization and hard work. The following guidelines can help you plan a successful show.

Select a Date: Research the date to be sure other shows won't be held the same day in a nearby town or that the town isn't having a big parade, firefighters' muster or other event that might draw a crowd away from your show.

Select a Location: Verify the horse show ring is available and have several dates in mind in case there's a conflict. This step can be done by phone with a written confirmation following the phone call. Make sure you will have water, electricity, access to a telephone, and accessible toilets at the facility, or make arrangements to have these services available.

Draft a Class List: Clarify that this will be a 4-H organized show. If you will be asking for sponsors for various classes, start making those contacts now so they can be properly acknowledged in the class list.

Select a Judge: Contact the judge as soon as possible. Be sure you know the class list, and the amount of money you are authorized to spend for a judge. Approximately 6 weeks prior to the show, send the judge a copy of the class list and a copy of the 4-H Rules for Horse Shows and Activities.

Secure Insurance: Work with your county Extension Educator, 4-H & Youth Development to see that the event is covered by liability insurance. The Extension Educator may be able to help you consider a small medical/accident policy at this time as well.

Order Awards: Order your ribbons and trophies. Often there is a discount if you order early, so don't save this until the last minute. Exhibitor numbers can be ordered at this time as well.

Get the Word Out: Posters are great for advertising your show; even simple flyers. Post these advertisements two weeks prior to the show. Class lists should be mailed to potential participants and to equine organizations two weeks prior to the show as well.

Fill Staff Vacancies: Determine your staff needs and recruit the necessary volunteers. You will need:

- announcer
- gate attendants
- 2-3 secretaries
- ring master
- ring crew for set-up
- steward
- food booth coordinator

Assemble Needed Equipment: You will want the following items available on show day:

- first aid kit
- pencils with erasers
- stapler and paper clips
- thumb tacks and markers
- scissors and tape
- clip boards
- judges cards
- announcer sheets
- exhibitor numbers
- blank entry forms
- add/drop class sheets
- stop watch
- tape measure
- 4-H Horse Show Rule book
- cash box and change
- patterns for jump/trail classes
- class lists
- ribbons and trophies
- accessible toilets
- rocks or weights to hold papers PA system
- jumps, game, trail obstacles

On Show Day - Secretaries: Secretaries will want to arrive at least one hour early to get organized. They will assist exhibitors with signing in and getting their numbers. Have one of the secretary's assistants put the entries onto the class sheets.

Give the judge a judges card as he/she goes into the ring so they can score the exhibitor and indicate how they placed the exhibitor in the class. The name of the class should appear at the top of the judges card; the class names can be put on the cards in advance to save time at the last minute. A copy of the rules for the class being judged can be stapled to the judges card for the judges review.

Post the trail and hunt courses at least one hour before the class is to be held.

If you are going to award high points for the day, begin keeping score at the beginning of the show.

On Show Day - Announcer: The announcer should keep track of the time and announce, if the judges have arrived, a first call at least 10 minutes before the first class. Ring call shall be about five minutes before the first class starts. Once the show begins, the first call is usually given when the class in the ring changes direction.

The secretary will give the announcer a class sheet with the numbers of all entries in the class so she/he can see how many animals should be in the ring. The announcer will also use this sheet when the placings are announced as it gives the name of the person and the name of the animal being shown.

It's extremely important the announcer focus on the ring and ring master during the show. The announcer **MUST** leave the management of the show to the secretary and others. The secretary must prevent the secretary booth from turning into a social gathering place.

Two Day Shows: The suggestions previously given are for a one day show. During a two day show these duties will be spread over a longer period of time and you will pick up new responsibilities as well. Two day shows often require:

- lodging/ meals for the judge(s)
- stalls, bedding for horses
- food service for exhibitors
- public telephone access (optional)

GLOSSARY:

Announcer: The individual who gives instructions to those in and outside the show ring over the PA system.

Class Sheet: A form that can be completed by the secretary which gives the name of the class and name of the individual entered as well as the name of the animal they are showing, riding or driving.

Gate Attendants: Individuals stationed at the "in" and "out" gates and who open and close the gates at the beginning and end of the class and at other times as appropriate.

Judges Card: A form the judge uses to make notes regarding the performance of those entered in the class. The notes taken help a judge to determine class placings.

PA System: Public address system.

Ring Crew: Persons who prepare the ring, set up and remove the trail course, put the jumps into position for the jumping classes and generally help around the ring.

Ring Master: The person in the ring with the judge who relays the judges instructions to the announcer and in some cases, directly to the exhibitors.

Secretary: The person in charge of the 4-H horse show. They take entries, prepare the judge and announcers cards, and keep track of class placings.

Sponsors: Individuals, organizations, and businesses that contribute money to cover the cost of ribbons and trophies for a class at a horse show.

Steward: A show official who is knowledgeable in the rules and etiquette of 4-H shows.

Contact Your County Office For More Information

Belknap

36 County Drive
Laconia, NH 03246
603-524-1737

Carroll

75 Main Street
PO Box 860
Center Ossipee, NH 03814
603-539-3331

Cheshire

800 Park Avenue
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 352-4550

Coos

629A Main Street
Lancaster, NH 03584
(603) 788-4961

Grafton

County Court House
RR1, Box 65F
North Haverhill, NH 03774
(603) 787-6944

Hillsborough

468 Route 13 South
Milford, NH 03055
(603) 673-2510

329 Mast Road, Unit 3

Goffstown, NH 03045
603-624-9481

Merrimack

315 Daniel Webster Highway
Boscawen, NH 03303
(603) 225-5505 (from Concord area)
(603) 796-2151

Rockingham

113 North Road
Brentwood, NH 03833
(603) 679-5616

Strafford

259 County Farm Road, Unit 5
Dover, NH 03820
(603) 749-4445

Sullivan

24 Main Street
Newport, NH 03773
(603) 863-9200

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