

New Mexico State 4-H Horse Show Rules

(revised February 9, 2023)

1. Determination of eligibility and appropriate age divisions.

All contestants must be bona fide 4-H members in New Mexico, enrolled in a 4-H horse project for the current show year, and in good standing. Each contestant must enter their appropriate age group as follows:

- Novice: Ages 9 through 11. A 4-H member must have passed his/her 9th birthday or be 8 years old and in third grade but cannot be in the 6th grade and have passed his/her 12th birthday prior to January 1 of the current 4-H program year.
- Junior: Ages 12 through 13. A 4-H member must have passed his/her 12th birthday or be 11 years old and in the 6th grade but cannot be in 8th grade and have passed his/her 14th birthday prior to January 1 of the current 4-H program year.
- Senior: Ages 14 through 18. A 4-H member must have passed his/her 14th birthday or be 13 years old and in the 8th grade but cannot have passed his/her 19th birthday by January 1 of the current 4-H program year.

A horse may be ridden in only one age division in each class, either Novice, Junior, or Senior, and the same horse cannot be shown in the other two age divisions. Horses entered in the show must be the project of the 4-H member. The 4-H member may own or lease a horse in which the 4-H'er must manage at least 50% of the time. For project purposes, management is considered to include feeding, grooming, exercising, training, and stall maintenance. The 4-H member is not allowed under any circumstances to exhibit stallions at any 4-H horse event.

The 4-H member must file an identification certificate (aka "4-H Horse Certificate") for his/her horse with the State 4-H Office by May 1st of the current 4-H program year. By filing the horse certificate, the 4-H member, parent and/or guardian, and county Extension Agent, agree that members have read, understood, and agree to abide by the rules stated herein. Upon receipt of a properly executed 4-H Horse Certificate, the State 4-H Office will issue a 4-H Horse Show Exhibitor Number for that horse/exhibitor combination for the 4-H Horse Show year. On the reverse side of that number, identifying information from the 4-H Horse Certificate will be printed as an aid to horse show management when verifying 4-H eligibility. Youth are responsible for their back number, and there will be a \$5 charge to replace any lost numbers.

Although horses are not required to be registered with any breed association, it is recommended that the 4-H member has documentation verifying the identity and ownership of the horse (e.g., registration certificate, New Mexico brand inspection transport permit, etc.)

2. Conduct of classes and show management.

Show management must tally points and placings for each exhibitor according to their 4-H age division (novice, junior, and senior). While hosting groups are encouraged to offer all of the following 4-H classes at each show, they must offer at least 6 of the 11 classes listed to be approved by the State 4-H Office. Shows hosted by breed associations and local horse associations shall not require a membership in their organization in order to compete in a 4-H Horse Show. Applications to host a 4-H Horse Show, as part of the statewide series, that are received in the State 4-H Office by March 15th of the current year will be given priority consideration. The State 4-H Office will review applications, notify hosts, and publish a list of the series shows on their website by April 1 of the current year.

The following classes* (and associated courses, patterns, equipment requirements, arena requirements, etc.) will be conducted and judged according to the rules printed in the most current handbook of the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA). The handbook is available online at www.aqha.com. It is advised that any other 4-H classes offered outside of these be governed by AQHA rules for that particular class. The only exception is for English Disciplined Rail which will be governed by the current rulebook of the Pinto Horse Association of America (PtHA) available at www.pinto.org.

- Showmanship at Halter (AQHA SHW 370 to 378)
- Western Pleasure (AQHA SHW 402 to 414)
- Western Horsemanship (AQHA SHW 430 to 438)
- Ranch Riding (AQHA SHW 416 to 419)

- Ranch Trail (AQHA SHW 420 to 422)
- Ranch Reining (AQHA SHW 562)
- Hunter Under Saddle (AQHA SHW 601 to 604)
- Hunt Seat Equitation (AQHA SHW 616 to 622)
- English Disciplined Rail (PtHA N11)
- Barrel Racing (SHW 700 to 702)
- Pole Bending (SHW 703 to 705)

*Rule numbers given in parentheses are subject to change as updates to the AQHA and PtHA Official Handbook are made on an annual basis. 4-H exhibitors may cross-enter between Western Pleasure and Ranch Riding in the NM 4-H Horse Show.

For any classes not specifically included in the AQHA rules, the horse show judge is the final authority on how that particular class should be conducted and judged. Furthermore, the horse show judge is the final authority for interpreting AQHA rules as they apply to conduct of a show. In the event of inclement weather, the horse show judge is the final authority on determining which classes can safely be held. If a class is not conducted due to the judge's ruling, then no points will be awarded for that class.

NM 4-H Horse Show rules for conduct and safety (supersede any AQHA/PtHA rules):

- Safety is the foundation of good horsemanship. If the judge or show manager deems an exhibitor and/or horse is displaying unsafe behavior or lack of control, the judge or show manager shall notify the exhibitor to refrain from such behavior. If this behavior occurs in the show ring, the judge may "whistle off" the exhibitor to conclude the performance at that point, and the exhibitor will exit the arena. If this behavior occurs outside the arena, the judge or show manager shall issue a warning to the exhibitor. If repeated occurrences of unsafe behavior continue, the judge or show manager may excuse them from the show.
- Positive youth development requires a fair and level playing field, and show management should make this a primary consideration for each 4-H Horse Show. Exhibitors expect fair and honest competition when they enter a contest, and all should strive to attain that at each event. If an exhibitor receives external aid (calling out specific maneuvers for a class, yelling out to correct a missed lead, etc. from a parent/guardian, trainer, coach, etc.) while in the competition arena, the judge and/or show manager shall issue a warning to those involved in the unfair behavior. If the external aid does not cease, the judge shall disqualify the entry in the class. If the external aid continues beyond one class, the show manager may disqualify the exhibitor/horse combination from the show.
- In speed events, a 5-second penalty shall be assessed any time the exhibitor's hat or helmet does not remain on their person when in the competition arena.
- Any disqualification due to unsafe or unfair behavior forfeits any fees paid for participation in the show. However, any points gained prior to disqualification shall stand.

Upon accepting the judging assignment, the horse show management should send a copy of these rules to the judge. Horse show management should have a copy of these rules and the current year's AQHA and PtHA rulebook on hand at the show for review.

3. New Mexico 4-H Horse Show Attire and Equipment Rules

- Exhibitor attire requirements will follow AQHA SHW 320. Exhibitors and judges are reminded extra accoutrements shall not enhance class placing beyond a neat, clean, and functional presentation of exhibitor and horse that meets the class requirements.
- Equipment for all classes shall conform to AQHA SHW 300, 305, 306, 307, 310, 311, and 312 for the respective class. Class specific rules mentioned in Section 2 above also apply. Equipment rules for English Disciplined Rail shall also follow these AQHA rules.

4. Determination of All Around Awards

- The number of approved 4-H Horse Shows that comprise the series will be posted on the State 4-H Office website by April 1 each year. To be eligible for series awards, a youth must compete in a minimum of 50%

of the approved shows listed by April 1. For determination of overall 4-H Horse Show Series awards, the exhibitor may only count points from their best (highest point value) shows that represent, in whole show increments, a simple majority (i.e., 2 of 4, 4 of 8, 4 of 7, 3 of 5, etc.) of the entire number of shows offered in the series. For example, if there are a total of 8 shows scheduled for the series, an exhibitor must participate in at least 4 different shows to be eligible for series awards, and the exhibitor can only count points from their "4 best (highest point value) shows" of the entire series. If an exhibitor chooses to participate in all 8 shows, they may count the points from their "4 best" shows towards the series award point tabulation. In the case of only 3 shows being offered in the series, an exhibitor would need to participate in at least 2 shows, and only the points from the 2 best shows would count towards the series award point tabulation.

- Points toward high point and series awards are as follows. For classes with 6 or more entries, 1st place receives 6 points, 2nd place receives 5 points, 3rd place receives 4 points, 4th place receives 3 points, 5th place receives 2 points, and 6th place receives 1 point. For classes with less than 6 entries, each placed exhibitor will receive a point for each exhibitor they place above plus 1 additional point. For example in a class of 4, 1st place receives 4 points, 2nd place receives 3 points, 3rd place receives 2 points, and 4th place receives 1 point. Points are compiled on a one-horse, one 4-H member basis.
- In case of a tie, the order of tie breakers will be: (1) earned points in the greatest number of different classes, (2) earned the most points in the riding classes, (3) greatest # of first places, (4) coin toss.

5. Two-year-old western pleasure futurity and showmanship classic

- 4-H'ers (Juniors and Seniors) with advanced skills in horsemanship are eligible to nominate a two-year-old horse for the Western Pleasure Futurity and Showmanship Classic held each year during the State 4-H Horse Show.
- **Nominations are due in the State 4-H Office by May 1st of the current 4-H program year.**
- Horses eligible for the two-year-old Western Pleasure Futurity must be totally green, that is, having never received any riding by ANYONE other than the 4-Her who nominates the horse to the futurity.

A. Basic Rules for the Western Pleasure Futurity

- The 4-H member, brother or sister, parent or guardian must own the horses. Horses eligible for the two-year-old Western Pleasure Futurity must be totally green, having never received any riding by anyone other than the 4-H member who nominates the horse.
- Horses must be in the 4-H member's possession and under his or her complete management (100%) and care by May 1st of the current year.
- 4-H members may nominate more than one horse, but they may only show one horse in the class.
- 4-H members nominate horses for the futurity by completing the nomination form available from the State 4-H Office. The nomination form must be certified (signed) by the county extension agent. A \$20.00 nomination fee must accompany the form. Futurity nominations must be in the State 4-H Office postmarked no later than May 1st. No late entries will be accepted. A list of horses nominated, will be published by June 1 on the State 4-H Office website. Nomination does not constitute an entry to the State 4-H Horse Show or Western Pleasure Futurity Class.
- 4-H members, with a properly nominated horse, may enter their futurity project in the State 4-H Horse Show. Members must submit the appropriate entry forms and fees to show management.
- As soon as the horse becomes a futurity project, it can only be ridden and shown by the 4-H'er.
- Advice and counsel on training techniques may come from outside sources; however, the 4-H member must do all the riding and work on his/her own futurity horse (Refer to 1a). Horses for the futurity do not have to be registered.

B. Procedures - Western Pleasure Futurity

- Three go-rounds will be held during the State 4-H Horse Show. Each round will be judged independently, by a different judge, according to AQHA rules for two-year-old Western Pleasure as described in rules SHW402 to 414.
- The point system for each go-round will follow Section 4 above.

- Winner of the champion award will be the horse with the greatest number of points after all three go-rounds.
- In the event of a tie, the winner will be decided by a coin toss.

C. Procedures - Showmanship Classic

An additional dimension to the Western Pleasure Futurity is the Showmanship Classic. It is only open to those horses nominated to the Western Pleasure Futurity. This will enable 4-H'ers who do not feel their futurity prospect is sufficiently trained for the Western Pleasure Futurity to participate in the State 4-H Horse Show, and it will assure their futurity prospect's eligibility for the three-year-old versatility class the following year. The Showmanship Classic is also open to those horses that are going to be shown in the Western Pleasure Futurity. If the 4-H member has nominated (2) two or more horses to the two-year-old Western Pleasure Futurity, he or she may only show one horse in the Western Pleasure Futurity, but they may show a different eligible horse in the Showmanship Classic.

D. Basic Rules for Showmanship Classic

- Only those horses properly nominated to the Western Pleasure Futurity are eligible for the Showmanship Classic.
- Members must submit the appropriate entry forms and entry fee to show management.
- The Showmanship Classic will be handled in the same manner as the regular showmanship class. Exhibitors may be asked oral questions from the NM 4-H Horse Project Manual by the judge. The exhibitor's final score will be the score on showmanship and the score on the questions.

Note: Only those horses that are nominated as two-year-olds for the two-year-old Western Pleasure Futurity, whether shown or not, will be eligible for the three-year old Versatility Class the following year.

6. 4-H Three-year-old versatility

The horses properly nominated, as two-year-olds to the futurity are eligible the following year to enter the three-year-old versatility classes. The versatility class is held during the State 4-H Horse Show.

Nominations for the versatility class are due to the State 4-H Office by May 1st of the current year.

A. Basic rules for the Versatility Class

1. Only those horses properly nominated as two-year-olds to the two year old Western Pleasure Futurity, whether shown or not, are eligible for the three year-old versatility classes. Horses must be in the 4-H member's possession and under his or her complete management (100%).
2. Advice and counsel on training techniques may come from outside sources; however, the 4-H member must do all the riding and work on his/her own versatility horse. Horses for the versatility class do not have to be registered.
3. 4-H members may nominate more than one horse to the three-year-old Versatility Classes. However, only one horse may be shown.
4. 4-H members may nominate their horses for the three-year-old Versatility Class by completing the nomination form. A \$20 nomination is due in the State 4-H Office on or before May 1st.
5. AQHA class and equipment rules (see Section 2) for the three-year-old Versatility Classes (Western Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, and Ranch Trail) will be used.
6. It is suggested that each 4-H show offer classes for the versatility prospects.

B. Procedures for the 3-year-old Versatility Classes.

1. Class procedure will consist of three separate classes: western pleasure, western horsemanship and ranch trail. These classes will be their own separate classes for versatility entries.
2. Points will be kept on the places of all three classes. Winner of the versatility champion award will be the horse with the greatest number of points. In case of a tie, the winner will be decided by a coin toss.
3. The point system for each go-round will follow Section 4 above.

This document is available online at: <https://nm4h.nmsu.edu>. Comments and suggestions for future revisions of this document should be submitted in writing to the Agriculture & Natural Resources State Agent, State 4-H Office, PO Box 30003, MSC-3AE, Las Cruces, NM 88003.