

***Livingston
County 4-H
Horse Program
Policy Guide
Book
2026***

NOTE: Changes from last year are highlighted

Revised February 2026

General Program

The 4-H Horse Leaders Committee provides guidance, vision, and assistance on all aspects of the 4-H Horse Program. This is an ad-hoc advisory committee of the 4-H Program and will consist of all interested 4-H horse members, leaders, parents, teens, and volunteers. Meetings will be held monthly as needed, usually on the first Wednesday of the month.

The Committee will hear reports from the following committees which will do the bulk of the planning and execution for our programs:

- *Horse Bowl*
- *Hippology*
- *Horse Communications*
- *Horse Clinics*
- *English Day Fair*
- *Western & Gymkhana Day Fair*
- *Regional/State Horse Education Committee*

Educational Events

Educational events include Horse Bowl, Hippology, & Horse Communications. Educational events are open to all 4-H members. 4-H members are at least 8 years of age by January 1 of the current year and have not reached their nineteenth birthday prior to January 1 of the current calendar year.

- *Seniors:* Senior contestants must be at least 14 years of age but not yet 19 years of age by January 1 of the current calendar year.
- *Juniors:* Junior contestants must not have achieved their 14th birthday prior to January 1 of the current year.
Novice: Novice contestants must have never previously competed in the event. Contestants 9 years of age prior to January 1 of the current calendar year may compete as a Novice for a second year IF they have participated in the contest as an 8 year old. Contestants 10 years of age and older prior to January 1 of the current calendar year may compete as a Novice for only 1 year.
- *Cloverbuds:* Cloverbuds will be allowed to participate in all the educational events at the county level. Cloverbuds are youth ages 5-7. 5 year olds must turn 5 by January 1 of the current year. In order to be consistent with New York State rules in regard to Cloverbuds, we will not evaluate them. Instead, they will receive positive, reinforcing feedback and a rainbow participation ribbon to recognize their efforts.

Horse Bowl

The county will send as many youth to the regional competition as the region will allow. Teams with less than four (4) members will be combined to create as many multi-county teams of four (4) as possible at the discretion of the event chair(s).

Hippology

The county will send as many youth to the regional hippology contest as the region will allow.

Horse Communications

We will send as many youth to the regional horse communications contest as the region will allow. Regional qualifiers must participate in the county event if one is conducted.

Horseman of the Year

We will award three levels of achievement in the Horseman of the Year Program – Gold, Silver, & Bronze. The 4-H Horse Leaders Committee will advise the 4-H Educator on awarding these levels of achievement based on cumulative points earned. The top 2 members in the Beginner (ages 8-10), Intermediate (ages 11-13) and Advanced (ages 14-19) Divisions will be awarded plaques. All award winners will be announced and recognized at 4-H Achievement Day.

4-H Age (age as of January 1st of the current year) will be used to determine division level.

Ties will be broken first by community service, second by horse communications, and third by total non-mounted educational points.

If something is not listed below, it is not a qualified Horseman of the Year event without the approval of the Horse Leader Committee and the Livingston County 4-H Horse Program Educator.

<u>Non-mounted Educational Events</u>	Points
Clinics approved by the 4-H Horse Leaders Committee.	10
<i>*These will be listed in the 4-H Livewire and in email blasts</i>	
County 4-H Horse Bowl	10
County 4-H Hippology	10
County Horse Communications	15
NEW: NYS 4-H Horse Program Sponsored Educational Activities	10
<i>*May be in-person or Zoom activities, events, presentations, etc.</i>	
<i>*Contact 4-H Educator for details on how to receive credit/points</i>	
NEW: Independent Non-Mounted Educational Activity	10
<i>*Limited to an activity to fulfill state fair horse show qualification</i>	
<i>*Activity must have pre-approval of 4-H Educator</i>	
<i>*Contact 4-H Educator for details.</i>	
Regional 4-H Horse Bowl	10
Regional 4-H Hippology	10
Regional 4-H Horse Communications	10

State 4-H Horse Bowl	10
State 4-H Horse Communications	10
State 4-H Hippology	10
Non-mounted Educational Event Assistant	
<i>*For members who are ineligible to compete at an event listed above.</i>	
<i>*Contact 4-H Educator for details.</i>	
<i>*Points are equivalent to events listed above.</i>	

Mounted Educational Events

Hemlock Fair English Day	10
Hemlock Fair Western Day	10
State Fair Horse Show per Division Ridden (max of 30)	10
Mounted Educational Event Assistant	
<i>*Contact 4-H Educator for details.</i>	
<i>*Points are equivalent to events listed above.</i>	

County Wide Events

Fall 4-H Fundraiser	25
Spring 4-H Fundraiser	25
Community Service (max of 30)	10
Hemlock Fair Building Display	15
Horse Project Record	15

SAFETY REQUIREMENT FOR ALL MOUNTED EVENTS

All horses and/or riders are expected to maintain a level of control and safety while in the ring at all county events (shows, practice riding sessions, clinics, etc.). Horses and/or riders that pose a safety risk while in the ring will be excused from the ring by the volunteer event chair or show judge. Re-entry into the ring during the event will be determined on an individual case basis.

Rules for Horse Show Participation

- Cloverbud Riders** are youth ages 5-7. 5 year olds must turn 5 by January 1 of the current. Cloverbud riders will receive participation ribbons only. The judge will provide positive, encouraging comments to these members who represent the future of our 4-H program. No premiums can be paid to Cloverbuds. They will not be evaluated, only positively encouraged.
- *NEW***: All horses in Cloverbud Leadline classes **MUST** be led by an adult.

3. ***NEW***: One adult per rider is allowed in the ring for Cloverbud Classes only. Contact the 4-H Educator if a rider needs accommodation.
4. ***NEW***: Parents, guardians, trainers, etc. are not allowed in the ring for any classes other than Cloverbud Classes.
5. **4-H Member Riders** are at least 8 years of age by January 1 of the current year and have not reached their nineteenth birthday prior to January 1 of the current year.
6. All horses participating in 4-H Horse shows must meet health requirements including a current Coggins test and Rabies vaccination. Documentation of this, along with your 4-H Horse Certificate for the horse and rider, must be on file with the 4-H office by **June 1** of the horse show year.
7. **Substitute Horses:**

After June 1, a horse that is not on file may substitute for a horse that is on file ONLY under the following conditions:

- Written documentation from a qualified veterinarian is provided to the 4-H Animal Science Educator that the horse on file is unable to show due to health issues.
- The substitute horse/rider combination will participate in the show(s) *as exhibition only* receiving no show points or awards.
- The substitute horse/rider combination is not eligible to qualify for Hi Point Awards or state fair consideration.
- The horse/rider combination will wear exhibitor number 000

8. **NYS 4-H Helmet Safety and Concussion Awareness Policies:**

- All youth must wear helmets while mounted, driving, or in the show ring with an equine (e.g. showmanship at halter). Please see the New York State 4-H Horse Program Website for complete 4-H Helmet Safety and Concussion Awareness Policies: <https://cals.cornell.edu/nys-4-h-animal-science-programs/livestock/horses/helmet-safety-and-concussion-awareness>
- Any adults riding at 4-H events must wear helmets while mounted.
- It is highly suggested that helmets five (5) years or older be replaced based on manufacturer's guidelines.
- A helmet must be replaced after it has been involved in a significant head impact.
- A helmet that visibly looks as if has been involved in a significant head impact – cracked, dented, etc. is not an approved helmet.

It is the responsibility of the rider, and parent or guardian of the exhibitor to ensure that the exhibitor is in compliance with the NYS 4-H Helmet Safety Policy

9. All classes will be conducted under the NYS 4-H Rule Book and the Livingston County 4-H Horse Program Policy Guide Book. Both are available on the Livingston County 4-H Program Website:
<http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/livingston>.
10. All exhibitors must wear their numbers either on both sides of blanket or rider's back. Numbers must be clearly visible at all times. Game exhibitors may attach their number to the saddle. Driving division numbers are to be attached to the seat of the vehicle.
11. All exhibitors must have an Acknowledgement of Risk signed by a parent and on file with the 4-H Office prior to their first show. This is included when completing the 4-H enrollment/re-enrollment form
12. All exhibitors must have a parent or adult guardian present while showing.
13. No coaching from the rail.
14. Only one entry per class, per exhibitor. Where the same animal is used by more than one member, the horse or pony cannot be used in a specific class more than once.
15. Severe Weather Protocol:
 - *Thunder/Lightening: In the event that lightening or severe weather is noticed in the distance or announced by the weather station the show will immediately be delayed and all riders and spectators must head for cover. Riders and spectators will be notified about any weather delay and procedures by the P.A. announcer. When the storm has cleared (15 minutes after the last lightening sighting) the show will continue.
 - *Extreme Heat: In the event that the heat index at show time is 90-94 degrees F., all non-high point classes will be cancelled. If the heat index at show time or any time during the show is 95 degrees F. or higher the show will be canceled. Any canceled show will not be rescheduled.
 - *The Show Chair has the right to cancel non-high point classes or an entire show based on weather conditions that pose safety issues or danger to riders and spectators.
16. In the event of a class cancellation the class will not be rerun. Points for the class will be removed from the total possible points that may

be earned for the division.

17. Exhibitors may lease more than one project horse for county events but only one for the New York State Fair 4-H Horse Show.
18. Equine support and protective boots will be allowed in all classes at judge's discretion. (Refer to state rule book for state fair.)
19. Riders are allowed to use English Tack in the Gymkahnna Division and only at the county level. These rides will not count towards qualify for the State Fair 4-H Horse Show.
20. Half chaps may be allowed for the English Division as long as they match boots. (Refer to state rule book for state fair.)
21. All classes, except pony classes, will be placed 1st to 10th place. Points, regardless of the number of exhibitors in a class will be awarded as:
1st = 11 points 2nd = 9 points 3rd = 8 points 4th = 7 points
5th = 6 points 6th = 5 points 7th = 4 points 8th = 3 points
9th = 2 points 10th = 1 point

Sportsmanship

- Sportsman-like conduct is expected by all involved (4-H'ers, parents, and all other adults alike).
- There will be a consequence for inhumane and irresponsible treatment of horses at our 4-H shows. Examples include:
 - * Horses without water all day.
 - * Excessive use of spurs, crops or reins
- *Consequence:* Not allowed to finish the horse show. This policy will be enforced by the show chair and show committee.
- The committee for each show will be responsible for assigning the duty of Technical Delegate to double check the tack for safety and conformity to the rules as the riders enter the ring. The New York State 4-H Horse Show Rule Book will be used as our guideline. Clip on Spurs are not allowed in our county shows.
- The decisions of the judges are final and represent a non-protestable expression of individual preference, unless a decision is in violation of the 4-H rulebook.
- The judge has the authority to dismiss from any class or the show any horse judged to be unsound.
- The judge or the show day committee has the authority to dismiss any exhibitor from a class or the show for un-sportsman like conduct.
- Serious grievances should be put in writing and passed on to the 4-H Educator.

Riding Divisions and Evaluations

- Exhibitors will not be allowed to ride in divisions that they have not been evaluated for.
- Exhibitors will show at only one level – Cloverbud Leadline, Cloverbud W/T, W/T, Novice, Junior or Senior.
- Exhibitors may move up a level during the show season if a riding evaluation has been completed for that level. Evaluations will be done at the club level.
- A rider that is deemed unsafe or unable to handle the requirements of the next division in sequence will not be required to move up.
- ***NEW***: Exhibitors participating in Halter Classes must have the following pages/sections of the riding evaluation form completed and on file: Pages 1 & 2 and Member-Rider and Horse Management Sections on page 3.
- Once a rider shows at a certain level, they may not show at a lower level. Exceptions will only be made for safety reasons by the 4-H Educator or Show Chair.

The following members will require a riding/driving evaluation:

- All first time riders/drivers and riders/drivers who are moving to a new division which requires a change in skill.
- New Cloverbud riders who have never been evaluated
- Any child who is a first time rider/driver in the county program.
- Cloverbuds who rode in Leadline last year and want to ride in walk trot cloverbud
- Cloverbuds who will be moving out of cloverbud and into any division except walk trot. *It is not necessary to re-evaluate a member moving from walk trot cloverbud to regular walk trot.*
- Any child who showed in walk/trot and wants to cantor or lope.
- Cloverbuds are not permitted to drive.

Evaluations must be turned in by the entry date for the shows at which the youth will be riding. Copies of the evaluation can be printed off the web at: <https://cals.cornell.edu/nys-4-h-animal-science-programs/livestock/horses/riding-and-driving-evaluation-guidelines> or contact the 4-H office and we can send you one.

Cloverbuds

Cloverbuds who are riding in the walk trot class will not be allowed to participate in the Cloverbud Lead Line classes. The classes will include:

Cloverbud Walk/Trot Equitation

Cloverbud Walk/Trot Horsemanship (Can be ridden English or Western)

Cloverbud Walk/Trot Cloverleaf Barrels

- Cloverbuds **are not** permitted to participate in showmanship halter classes.

- Cloverbuds **are not** permitted to participate in in-hand classes.

Walk/Trot & Novice Divisions

- Once a rider has achieved a champion or reserve champion at the Walk/Trot or Novice level, regardless of division, he/she may not show at that same level *the following year or in subsequent 4-H years*. Exceptions will only be made for safety reasons by the 4-H Educator or Show Chair.

Danish Ribbon Guidelines

The following are guidelines for all divisions of Livingston County 4-H Horse Shows

	Blue Danish	Red Danish	White Danish
Overall	Generally <i>"Excellent"</i>	Generally <i>"Satisfactory"</i>	Generally <i>"Fair"</i>
Rider's Aids, Seat and Position Equitation	Rider uses proper aides, is able to maintain consistent balance and has a secure independent seat	Rider lacks precision in use of aids, has some faults in position and position is not consistently balanced	Rider has little ability to perform requirements of a class, position has significant faults and/or lacks a balanced position for the majority of the class
Rider's Control	Rider has complete control of the horses direction, gait, and speed	Rider, at times, lacks control of either directions, gait or speed	Rider is consistently unable to control the direction, gait or speed.
Rider's Presentation	Rider exhibits confidence and shows mount to its best advantage. Tack and attire are appropriate for class, clean and properly adjusted	Rider appears somewhat confident, tack and/or attire are suitable but in need of cleaning, adjustment or attention	Rider appears unsure or lacks confidence, tack and/or attire, is in need of major repair, large adjustments, or significant attention
Horse's Behavior	Horse is willing, well mannered and puts forth a good effort	Horse anticipates, wrings tail, is above the bit, mouths bit or shows other signs of unwillingness	Horse clearly unwilling to complete the rider's requests or shows blatant unsafe behavior
Pattern/Course Completion	Pattern/course completed well and with much precision	Pattern/Course completed with two significant errors or a series of minor mistakes	Pattern/course is incomplete, rider is off course or is disqualified as per 4-H rules
Performance	Performance has	Performance has	Several major

	no major flaws	at least one major error or successive minor ones	deficiencies in performance such as repetitive breaks of gait, wrong leads, or lack of forward motion.
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State Fair Qualification

Objective: For 4-H youth to have a quality learning experience while challenging themselves as representatives of the Livingston County 4-H Horse Program to develop positive life skills, leadership experience, and good sportsmanship.

Requirements: To be eligible for riding in the NY State Fair 4-H Horse Show participants must:

- **June 1st Deadline: Must have obtained ten (10) qualifying non-mounted educational points, as specifically outlined in the county rule book, will be required in order to qualify to ride in a mounted event at the state level but NOT at the county level. Approved list of qualifying events with points:**

<u>Non-mounted Educational Events</u>	Points
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Clinics approved by the 4-H Horse Leaders Committee.	10
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**These will be listed in the 4-H Livewire and in email blasts*

Horse Bowl	10
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Hippology	10
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Horse Communications	15
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<u>*NEW*</u>: NYS 4-H Horse Program Sponsored Educational Activities	10
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**May be in-person or Zoom activities, events, presentations, etc.*

**Contact 4-H Educator for details on how to receive credit/points*

<u>*NEW*</u>: Independent Non-Mounted Educational Activity	10
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**Limited to an activity to fulfill state fair horse show qualification*

**Activity must have pre-approval of 4-H Educator*

**Contact 4-H Educator for details.*

Non-mounted Educational Event Assistant

**For members who are ineligible to compete at an event listed above.*

**Contact 4-H Educator for details.*

**Points are equivalent to events listed above.*

- Show in the county fair 4-H show with their designated 4-H project horse which was on file as of **June 1** of each show season year.
- Agree to ride in at least 4 classes at the State Fair that they have qualified in (except for dressage which limits riders to 3 classes total)

- Receive a “blue-excellent” award, or its equivalent, in 4 of the 5 classes intended to be entered at the State Fair. Riders may enter one class in which they have received a “red – good” award rating or its equivalent. Consecutive order placing ribbons may be used to determine “blue-excellent” and “red-good” awards. The 4-H leaders group reserves the right to review/override/determine Danish awards through a majority vote on an individual basis. The vote will be reflected in the minutes of the meeting to be valid as well as have the support of the 4-H Educator.
- The 4-H Horse Leaders Committee will review the point totals after the county fair and will review the recommendations for candidates. It is the 4-H Horse Educator who makes final decisions regarding who qualifies for state fair entry.
- There is an expectation that all 4-H participants should have a parent or guardian volunteer commitment for at least one *County Level* 4-H horse activity throughout the year.

4-H Horse program participants do not have to gear their activities towards qualifying to go to the State Fair. Some children may wish to focus on Horse Project records, riding without showing, or participating only in horse science or other educational events. Owning/leasing a horse is not a requirement for being a part of the 4-H Horse Program. Have fun learning!

We are able to send 4 representatives to the New York State Fair for each of the following divisions:

Gymkhana Hunt Seat Western

The following individuals will represent Livingston County at the New York State Fair

Top two Juniors per division by points earned
Top two Seniors per division by points earned

The higher score from the two shows will be used to determine state fair representatives

Pointed Classes per divisions are as follows:

English

Showmanship
 Working Hunter
 Equitation over Fences
 Hunter Hack
 Equitation on the Flat
 Hunter Under Saddle
 Hunt Seat Pleasure

Western

Showmanship
 Pleasure
 Equitation
 Road Hack
 Horsemanship
 Discipline Rail
 Trail

Gymkhana

Pole Bending
 Texas-T-Barrels
 Cloverleaf Barrels
 Quadrangle Barrels
 Barrel Keyhole Race
 Sweetheart Barrel Race
 Figure 8 Race
 Straight Line Barrels

Western Ranch Horse: Showmanship, Riding, Pleasure, Trail

Please refer to the NYS 4-H rulebook for allowed bits and equipment

Ties in the English and Western Divisions will be broken by the Equitation on the Flat class placing. Ties in Gymkhana will be broken by Cloverleaf Barrels.

Alternates to represent the county at the Region II state fair selection meeting will be chosen by using their best score from either the qualifying show or the fair. They will be ranked in this order. Rankings combined with Danish awards and committee member's input will be taken into consideration in selection of classes for each Livingston County representative to state fair. Representatives and alternates can petition the committee to ride in a class at state fair even if they have not received a blue Danish ribbon in that class.