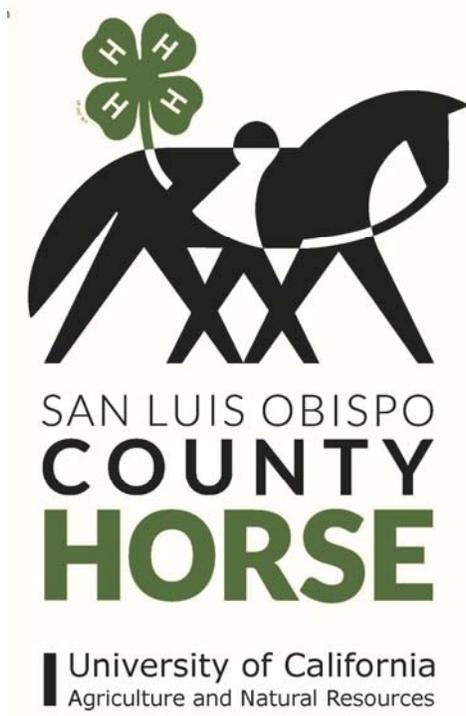


SLO County 4-H Youth Development Program

HORSE PROJECT POLICY GUIDE



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University of California
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4-H Youth Development Program

CONTENTS

Sec. 1.0	INTRODUCTION	P. 2
Sec. 2.0	REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION	P. 2
Sec. 3.0	CONDUCT AND HANDLING	P. 4
Sec. 4.0	SAFETY	P. 5
Sec. 5.0	EQUIPMENT	P. 7
Sec. 6.0	ATTIRE	P. 8
Sec. 7.0	LEVEL TESTING	P. 9
Sec. 8.0	PROTESTS	P. 10
Sec. 9.0	FUNDRAISING AND FUNDRAISING	P. 11

This policy guide may be viewed online at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/slo4-h/> .

1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook was developed to serve as a guide for the San Luis Obispo County 4-H Horse Project. The rules set forth in this book have been established to ensure the safety of 4-H members and volunteers, as well as promote positive youth development.

The *West Coast Horse Show Rulebook* (current edition) will be used as a guideline unless otherwise addressed in this policy guide. It can be found on the California State Horsemen's Association website at https://www.californiahorserider.org/Rulebook/WEST-COAST-HORSE-SHOW-RULEBOOK_2016_corrected.pdf.

The *CGA Rule Book* will be used for Gymkhana Field Days and can be found on the California Gymkhana Association website at www.calgymkhana.com.

Whenever the term "horse" is used in this policy guide, it applies to all equines including mules, donkeys, ponies, and miniature horses.

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

In order to participate in a 4-H sponsored show, Field Day, Level Testing, or other mounted horse event, 4-H members must meet ALL of the following requirements:

- 2.1. Be a member in good standing in a San Luis Obispo County 4-H Club Horse Project for at least 60 days prior to the event.
- 2.2. Be at least nine years of age or in the 4th grade by January 1 of the program year.
- 2.3. Have owned or leased the project horse for at least 60 days prior to the event. This 60 day requirement does not apply for county wide clinic or riding level testing participation, only for county Horse Field Days. Our local fairs often require a 120 lease prior to their 4-H shows.
 - 2.3.1. If the horse is leased, an approved *Horse Lease Agreement Acknowledgement* must be on file in the SLO County 4-H Office. In addition, the horse project leader and member must have a copy of the *Horse Lease Agreement Acknowledgement* with them at all times during a 4-H event and must be able to produce this document if asked to do so.
 - 2.3.2. If the horse is owned, proof of ownership may be requested at any time during a 4-H event.
- 2.4. Have been responsible for at least 80% of the care of the project horse.
 - 2.4.1. A project horse that must be boarded at a location away from the 4-H'er's home may be fed by another person but must be ridden and otherwise cared for by the 4-H'er.
 - 2.4.2. A project horse receiving training from any adult (parent, trainer, relative, etc.) must be ridden and cared for 80% of the time by the 4-H member.

EXAMPLE: For every hour a trainer or other adult rides a 4-H project horse, the 4-H'er must ride for a minimum of four (4) hours.
- 2.5. Two or more 4-H'ers may share a project horse, but each member must agree on the care duties for which they will be responsible, and each must perform 50% of the care.

- 2.5.1. Members who share a project horse and are in the same age group may have to decide who will ride in a given class, because the horse cannot compete against itself.

EXAMPLE: Suzie and Martha are both 10 years old and share the horse *Kool Dude*. Suzie rides in English classes at Horse Field Day and Martha rides in Western classes—no problem. But if Suzie and Martha both ride Western they would have to choose which classes in which to ride. Martha could compete in Showmanship and Pleasure, and Suzie could do Equitation and Trail. Both girls could not ride in Trail, even though it is an individual event, because Trail is judged on the horse, and *Kool Dude* would be competing against himself. If one of the girls were eligible for Novice, one could ride Novice and one in her age group division. The same would apply for any performance class (jumpers, gymkhana, horsemanship and obedience).

2.6. Successfully pass an *Entry Level Test* using their project horse(s) and submit the *Entry Level Test Certification Form* to the 4-H office.

- 2.6.1. The *Entry Level Test* is administered by 4-H Horse Project Leaders at the club level, and members must pass this test with **their own project horse** and submit the corresponding *Entry Level Test Certification Form* to the 4-H office before they can bring that horse, pony or mule to **any county** mounted event. The *Entry Level Test* and corresponding certification form are available on the county web site, <http://ucanr.edu/sites/slo4-h/>, or by calling the 4-H office at 781-5943.
- 2.6.2. The *Entry Level Test* is horse and rider/handler specific; therefore, **if a member uses more than one project horse, they must successfully pass the *Entry Level Test* with each horse** and submit their *Entry Level Test Certification Forms* to the 4-H horse resource leader or 4-H office prior to bringing that animal to any county event.
- 2.7. Have ALL entry forms approved by their 4-H Horse Project Leader testifying that the 4-H member meets eligibility requirements and has sufficient ability to safely participate.

3. CONDUCT AND HANDLING

- 3.1. 4-H members must groom, clip, or otherwise prepare their own project horse for 4-H events.
- 3.1.1. Although this task can not be verified because it usually done the day before the show, if the judge suspects that the member did not prepare their own horse, he or she may ask them to demonstrate a particular grooming or clipping technique. Failure to demonstrate properly may result in a penalty or disqualification.
- 3.2. 4-H members must be responsible for their own horse when participating at 4-H events.
- 3.2.1. No adult (parent, trainer, or project leader) may ride, train, groom, or tack a 4-H project horse for the duration of the event, with the following exceptions
- 3.2.1.1. Parents and 4-H leaders may assist a 4-H'er by holding an animal while they groom or saddle it.
- 3.2.1.2. A taller 4-H member, leader, or parent may assist a shorter member by helping them lift a saddle onto the back of a horse.
- 3.2.1.3. Leaders are encouraged to check riders' cinches for safety purposes.
- 3.3. All participants are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship behavior. The decision of the judge or show committee is final.
- 3.4. Project horses must be serviceably sound. Lame animals may be excused from competing/participating.

4. SAFETY

The following safety rules apply to all 4-H equestrian activities (including project group meetings), not just county wide events.

4.1. All youth *and* volunteers, regardless of riding seat, shall wear a properly fitted equestrian helmet that meets ASTM/SEI standards when mounted on a horse or in a vehicle being pulled by one or more horses as part of any 4-H equestrian activity.

- 4.1.1. It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian of the minor rider, to ensure that the headgear worn complies with ASTM/SEI standards, carries the proper seals, and is in good condition. It is also the responsibility of the rider, or parent or guardian of the minor rider, to ensure that the helmet is properly fitted, and the chinstrap is securely fastened. 4-H YDP staff and volunteers are not responsible for checking headgear for compliance.
 - 4.1.2. The University of California makes no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, about such headgear and cautions riders that serious injury may result despite wearing headgear, as no helmet can protect against all unforeseeable injuries in equestrian sports.
 - 4.1.3. At any time during a 4-H equestrian activity, the 4-H activity volunteer (e.g., horse show manager, clinic organizer, club volunteer) may check a participant's equestrian helmet for proper standards. Individuals found to be wearing an unapproved, improperly fitted, or defective helmet will not be permitted to participate in any mounted or driving activity until a proper helmet is acquired.
 - 4.1.4. The 4-H Youth Development Program recommends that helmets be worn at all times when handling any horse (i.e., grooming, leading, or lunging), not just when mounted or in a horse drawn vehicle.
- 4.2. No alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the area of a 4-H horse event or any 4-H activity.
- 4.3. A ribbon, typically red, must be placed in the tail of any horse that is known to kick. Kicking will not disqualify a horse from a 4-H event unless the problem is severe.
- 4.4. No galloping horses on the event or meeting grounds.
- 4.5. No crowding the gate, riding double, or riding bareback.
- 4.6. **No riding in halters.** A properly fitted bit and bridle or hackamore must be used when riding a 4-H project horse (refer to section 5 for details).
- 4.7. Unruly or ill-mannered horses causing unsafe situations will be excused from competing/participating and may be asked to leave the event grounds.
- 4.8. Riders using excessive or inhumane force to control their horse will be disqualified from competing/participating and may be asked to leave the event grounds by the Judge or Event Coordinator in accordance with The West Coast Horse Show Rulebook in Section 1.0.
- 4.9. Stallions are **not** permitted at 4-H events and may not be used as 4-H project horses.
- 4.10. **When working with or near horses, 4-H members must wear long sleeved shirts, long pants, and**

boots at all times (refer to section 6 for show attire).

- 4.10.1. Short sleeved and sleeveless shirts are **not** acceptable regardless of the weather, as they do not protect against abrasions in the event of a fall.
- 4.10.2. Boots **with heels** must be worn when mounted to prevent the foot from slipping through the stirrup. Flat-bottomed boots are unacceptable.
- 4.11. **NO DOGS ALLOWED** at any county-wide 4-H equine event (except service dogs).

5. EQUIPMENT

- 5.1. In county events, all horses must be ridden in discipline appropriate tack in accordance with the West Coast Horse Show rulebook or the CGA rulebook.
- 5.2. The judge and/or event chair may prohibit the use of any equipment that he or she considers to be cruel, inhumane, or dangerous.
- 5.3. As stated in the West Coast Horse Show rulebook, **mechanical hackamores are not permitted except in Gymkhana classes or timed events.**
 - 5.3.1. Mechanical hackamores will also be permitted for Mounted Level Testing (refer to section 7), providing that the project horse is primarily used for Gymkhana or timed events.
- 5.4. In accordance with the West Coast Horse Show rulebook, rawhide bosal style hackamores are not permitted *except* in Western classes on horses 5 years of age and under, and in Gymkhana classes or timed events.

6. ATTIRE

- 6.1. Required Attire for all Disciplines and Events: **Helmet, long pants, long sleeved shirt, and boots with heels** (refer to section 4.9). Chaps are **not** permitted.
- 6.2. Show Attire
 - 6.2.1. Western and Gymkhana Classes: Helmet (refer to section 4.9); long sleeved, button-down or snap-down shirt; long pants; belt; Western boots. **No** full chaps.
 - 6.2.2. English: Helmet (refer to section 4.9); long sleeved button-down or snap-down shirt; appropriate breeches or jodhpurs; belt (if pants have belt loops); English boots.
 - 6.2.2.1. Full chaps are not permitted, but half chaps (ankle to the knee) may be worn with paddock boots.
 - 6.2.3. Seat-specific show attire is also appropriate (with the exception of chaps for Western riders). However, *neatness and proper fit of a member's clothing is always more important than wearing a complete "seat-specific" outfit (i.e., hunt coat, saddle suit, or Western jacket/vest).*
 - 6.2.4. Members may choose to wear whites and their 4-H scarf in mounted classes, but it is **not** required. Members may also choose to wear their 4-H hat in showmanship (halter) classes, but this too is not required.
- 6.3. Non 4-H Events: Open shows, fairs, and other events outside of 4-H have their own dress codes, which may require 4-H members to wear 4-H uniforms or "whites". Therefore, special attention should be paid to

premium booklets and event guides.

- 6.3.1. It is sometimes suggested that members wear their 4-H caps during showmanship (halter) classes but wearing a helmet will not be penalized. If members have hats with many hanging medals, they may choose to wear a hat without their awards.

7. LEVEL TESTING

SLO County 4-H Horse Project members are encouraged to advance their skills through a process called “Level Testing,” a system of standards used to train, educate, and test horsemanship. Participation is completely voluntary. The Level Testing Program adopted by the SLO County 4-H Horse Project is adapted from the Certified Horsemanship Association’s *Certified Horsemanship Manual, Levels 1-4*, which can be ordered directly from the CHA. A reference copy is also available in the 4-H office or from your project leader.

- 7.1. Each Level Test consists of two parts. Part One is a written exam that combines essay and multiple-choice questions. Part Two partners the member and their horse in a mounted skills exam and demonstration. Only those members who get a passing grade on the written exam may choose to participate in the mounted portion.
- 7.2. After successfully completing the written portion of Level Testing, members are awarded a Level Pin for their 4-H hat. Those who go on to successfully complete the mounted portion of the exam receive an additional “special” hat pin for their outstanding achievement. In this way, members who do not own or lease a horse may progress through the four levels of written level testing (one per year) and receive recognition for their accomplishments.
- 7.3. Members typically advance one riding level each 4-H year, corresponding to the written level test passed during that same 4-H year. Exceptions to this rule may be granted for several reasons, allowing for members to advance two riding levels in one year.
 - 7.3.1. When a member is unable to take a riding level test in one season after passing the corresponding written level, due to an injury to their project horse or a personal injury, they may choose to test for two riding levels in one year. For example: Susan passed the level 1 written test in the previous year but was unable to attempt the riding level 1 test because her horse Peanut was injured at the time of the riding level testing. Susan can ride for both levels 1 and 2 this year, once she passes the written level 2 test. A letter from the treating veterinarian must be submitted to the County Horse Resource Leader when the horse is injured. A letter from a physician may be required if a rider is injured.
 - 7.3.2. Should a member acquire a new horse at a later date, they will need to begin the mounted testing at level one on their new horse, regardless of what level they have completed on the written portion of the test. In the case of a rider with a new project horse, they may choose to test for two riding levels in one year, if they have passed those levels previously. For example: Susan has previously completed 3 riding levels on her first project horse Peanut. Susan now has a new project horse, Joe. She can ride for both riding levels 1 and 2 this 4-H year on Joe. Next year she could ride levels 3 and 4, assuming she passes the written level 4 test.
 - 7.3.3. Members who are Junior or Teen leaders in their clubs’ horse project may choose to test for two riding levels in one year, if they have passed two corresponding written levels. For example: Susan passed written level 2 in the previous year but did not take or pass the riding level test 2. This year, if Susan serves as a junior/teen leader, she can make up the riding level test she missed or did not pass the previous year and she can take the riding level 3 test as well, once she passes the written level 3 test.
 - 7.3.4. English or Western tack may be used for the mounted portion of Level Testing (refer to section 5). Mechanical hackamores are only permitted on horses that are used primarily for gymkhana or timed

events. Regardless of tack, Mounted Level Testing evaluates members on their ability to use natural aids (seat, legs, voice, and body position) to effectively communicate with their horse.

8. PROTESTS

Protests will be considered only if there has been an alleged violation of SLO County 4-H Horse Project rules. All protests must be presented to the 4-H Horse Resource Leader in writing within 24 hours of the event. The protest must be accompanied by a \$50 deposit, which will be returned if the protest is determined to be valid.

The Large Animal Science Key Leader (or other individual designated by the 4-H office) will lead an impartial committee formed specifically for protests. If the committee determines that the protest is valid, the 4-H'er against whom the protest was made will forfeit all improper winnings from that event and the \$50 deposit will be returned. If the protest is found to be invalid, the \$50 deposit will be put into the General Horse Fund.

9. FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEERING

All Horse Project Groups are encouraged to raise funds to help pay for their members' entry fees for county events such as Horse Field Days and for sending their members to the California state 4-H horse show. Funds are needed for county events to purchase ribbons, buckles, and other awards, to rent arenas, and purchase or rent necessary equipment.

All Horse Project Leaders are encouraged to volunteer for at least one county horse event per year. This helps to ensure that all the project groups work together as one unit, improves communication between the various clubs, and more fairly distributes work among individuals. If you are available to help out with an event, contact the Horse Resource Leader or call the 4-H office at (805) 781-5943.



Happy Riding!