

2024 VIRGINIA 4-H STATE HORSE JUDGING CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

OBJECTIVES: The primary objective of the Horse Judging contest is to provide, in a friendly but competitive setting, an opportunity for youth enrolled in 4-H to demonstrate their knowledge of judging conformation and performances classes of a variety of breeds and disciplines. It is hoped that this contest will generate new friendships and be a rewarding experience for the contestants.

I. ELIGIBILITY & GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Each contestant must be an enrolled, eligible member of Virginia 4-H and enrolled via the 4HOnline enrollment system.
2. Enrollment will be verified via the 4HOnline Enrollment System.
3. Each county or unit will be eligible to enter all junior and senior 4-H members. A team must be comprised of at least three members to be considered for team awards. Teams cannot be a mix of juniors and seniors. One or two individuals from a county may compete if a team of 3 or 4 cannot be assembled. Team members must be enrolled via 4HOnline in the Unit that they represent/compete for during the contest. Teams may not be a mix of junior and senior age contestants, and youth enrolled in different Units may not combine to create a team. All contestants are eligible for individual awards and recognition.
4. Individuals 19 years of age or older before January 1st of the contest year are ineligible. **Junior** contestants must turn 9 years of age on or before September 30 of the year in which the contest is held. **Senior** contestants are those 14 years of age or older before January 1st and junior contestants are under 14 years of age as of January 1st of the contest year. This age eligibility conforms to the National 4-H Horse Contest Rules and Regulations.
5. 4-H contestants may compete in one of 4 divisions. **Junior** and **Senior** are explained above, and are based on age.
 - **Senior Regular** contestants are not required to give reasons.
 - **Senior** contestants will give 3 sets of reasons (2 on halter classes, 1 on a performance class). Competition for Seniors is both individual and team, with the top 3 scores on a team being used to calculate team totals.
 - **Junior** contestants will give 2 sets of reasons (1 halter, 1 performance). This is not optional. Competition for Juniors is both as team and individual, with the reasons score being added into the total score, and the top 3 scores on a team will be used to calculate team totals.
 - **Junior Regular** contestants are not required to give reasons.

6. Contestants may dual-enter and compete in both 4-H and FFA division. Contestants must be enrolled, eligible members of both organizations to dual-enter. Note eligibility for 4-H members stated above. The two contests will be scored independently and will run concurrently. Contestants must be pre-entered separately for each contest.

7. The State 4-H Horse Judging Team will consist of up to 8 top-placing **senior advanced** individuals in the State Contest. These individuals will be required to attend training sessions during the summer. Contests in which they will compete are held in late summer and during the fall. Four Senior members of the state horse judging team will be invited to represent Virginia in the Eastern National 4-H Roundup Horse Judging Contest at Louisville, KY, with the entire State team being invited to participate at the Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championship Horse Judging Contest. This team requires participation, practice, and commitment. Funding levels are dependent upon fundraising, further details are available in the team letter. After members have competed at Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup, they are ineligible to further compete in 4-H Horse Judging.

8. Units should encourage all interested 4-H members to study and compete for the Unit teams on an open participation basis.

II. STATE CONTEST

The State 4-H Horse Judging will be held as part of the Equismartz events on a date and locations established by the State Youth Animal Science Team.

III. AWARDS

1. Awards will be presented to the top ten individuals in the Halter division, Performance division, Reasons division and Overall.
2. Each member of the top five teams in the Halter division, Performance division, Reasons division and Overall will receive awards.

V. RULES

All rules, contest conduct, results, questions, etc. are final and non-protestable at the conclusion of the contest and all inquiries will receive the answer as noted in this sentence. All participants accept these rules upon entry and involvement in the program.

VI. THE CONTEST

Judging Classes

1. 4-6 Halter and 4-6 Performance classes are used trying to use several different breeds of horses. Halter horses are judged as sound of limb, eye, wind, mouth and reproductive organs, Performance horses judged as they go in the class and all tack and attire is considered legal.
2. Rules for placing the classes are United States Equestrian Federation rules or the respective breed rules.
3. Final placing for each class and the cuts for the class are determined by the official judges for the contest. Three judges and a referee judge are suggested as an appropriate number. If additional reasons takers are needed, they should be in the ring observing the class that they will be listening to.

4. Possible Halter and In Hand Classes:(Not limited to this list)

Saddlebred Plantation Horses	Hunter Ponies
Morgans	Hunter in Hand
Quarter Horse	Miniature Horses
Appaloosa	Walking Horses
Stock Horses	Sport Horse in Hand
Draft Horses	Hackney Ponies
Ponies of America	Mules
Friesians	
Connemara	

5. Possible Performance Classes (under saddle): (Not limited to this list)

English Pleasure	Hunter Pleasure
Western Pleasure	Country English
Plantation Pleasure	Pleasure
Hunter Under Saddle	Mountain Pleasure
Driving	Trail Racking
Horsemanship	Ranch Riding
Racking	Reining
	Hunter hack
	Equitation

Reasons

1. Are given to the official judges/reasons takers by each contestant. Three sets of reasons are required of Senior 4-H youth (*2 halter / 1 performance*), two sets by Juniors (*1 halter / 1 performance*), Jr. and Sr. Regular do not give reasons. FFA Seniors will give three sets of reasons (*2 halter / 1 performance*) and FFA Juniors will give one set of reasons (*halter*).
2. Reasons are not timed and time penalties are not assessed.
3. Youth have a minimum of 20 minutes to prepare each set of reasons.

4. The reasons room is controlled to keep a relative equal time interval between each set of reasons a youth gives (i.e. If one set of reasons is moving faster, there will be a time out called to allow other reason sets to catch up).
5. At the end of the contest Judges will give the official placings and comments on the classes to the youth.

Tabulation and Tie Breaks

Scoring drops the low person from the team in each division (halter, performance and reasons) and the low person from the overall total score.

HALTER DIVISION

Tabulations:

- Team scores calculated by dropping the team member with the lowest total score in the halter division.

Tie Breaks:

1. Highest reasons score in halter division
2. Lowest placing scores for halter reasons classes
3. Highest performance total score
4. Highest reasons score in performance division
5. Lowest placing scores for performance reasons classes

PERFORMANCE DIVISION

Tabulations:

- Team Scores calculated by dropping the team member with the lowest total score in the performance division

Tie Breaks:

1. Highest reasons score in performance division
2. Lowest placing scores for performance reasons classes
3. Highest halter total score
4. Highest reasons score in halter division
5. Lowest placing scores for halter reasons classes

REASONS DIVISION

Tabulations:

- Team Scores calculated by dropping the team member with the lowest total score in the reasons division

Tie Breaks:

1. Lowest placing in all reasons classes
2. Highest placing score for all non reasons classes
3. Highest reasons score in performance division
4. Lowest placing in performance reasons classes

OVERALL AWARDS

Tabulations:

- Team Scores calculated by dropping the team member with the lowest overall score

Tie Breaks:

1. Highest overall reasons scores
2. Lowest placing in reasons classes
3. Highest placing score for all non reasons classes
4. Highest reasons score in performance division
5. Lowest placing in performance reasons classes