

4-H Horsemanship Proficiency Program A Member's Guide

OVERVIEW

The **4-H Horsemanship Proficiency program** helps more experienced members learn what you need to know about your 4-H project. Your project leader will assist you in setting and achieving your goals. Through your project, you will learn horse behavior, mounting and dismounting, proper and safe techniques when handling a horse and general riding techniques.

There are many resources to help you learn more about your project:

- ◆ The *4-H Publications Catalog* lists a variety of project materials and resources recommended for use in your project.
- ◆ The *4-H Educational Resources Lending Library* at your county 4-H office includes other books, videos and reference materials that can be checked out by members and leaders. This proficiency is based on the CHA, Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education: *Horsemanship Manual Composite*.
- ◆ Check to see if there are breeders or other organizations in your community that conducts educational activities and shows. Local breeders and equine clubs are excellent sources of help and information.

There are five levels in the Project Proficiency Program. Levels must be completed in consecutive order. You may choose how many levels you wish to complete:

- **Level I – “Explorer”**, you begin to learn about many different aspects of safe handling and horsemanship.
- **Level II – “Producer”**, you practice and refine the many skills involved in learning about horsemanship and the show ring.
- **Level III – “Consumer”**, you will learn proper riding position and become a more experienced Horseman.
- **Level IV – “Leader”**, allows you to show your own leadership potential.
- **Level V – “Researcher”**, you carry out a demonstration or experiment on some aspect of Horsemanship, and prepare a paper or portfolio.

As you work through the proficiency program, your leader will date and initial each skill item as you complete it. When all items in a proficiency level are completed, place the form in your record book, turn your record book into your leader, and your leader will notify your 4-H office. You will receive your proficiency award at the Annual 4-H Achievement Program

KEEP IN YOUR RECORD BOOK WITH YOUR PROJECT RECORDS

HORSEMANSHIP

Level I – Explorer

Initial & date as Completed:

- _____ 1. Give 5 safety rules and a reason why each is important.
- _____ 2. Explain how hand-feeding treats to horses can get your fingers nipped.
- _____ 3. Identify the parts of the horse from diagram or live animal.
- _____ 4. Identify the parts of tack (saddle, bridle, etc.).
- _____ 5. Explain the nutritional requirements of a horse (How, when, what, how much to feed).
- _____ 6. Demonstrate how to approach and lead a horse correctly and safely.
- _____ 7. Demonstrate 5 grooming aids and how to properly use them.
- _____ 8. Demonstrate how to properly tie a horse, including how to tie a quick release knot.
- _____ 9. Develop a feeding plan for a horse, explain the feed you chose.
- _____ 10. Demonstrate how to clean a stall, clean the stable area and stable chores.
- _____ 11. Demonstrate the proper basic attire for riding, and why each should be worn.
- _____ 12. Demonstrate how to properly and safely halter, bridle and saddle a horse.
- _____ 13. Demonstrate how to hold the reins when riding Western and/or English.
- _____ 14. Describe the four natural aids and how to properly use them.
- _____ 15. Submit management records for a minimum of 90 days that indicate how often you provided fresh water, clean feed, clean housing and general care for a horse.
- _____ 16. Share one aspect of your project with some one not in your project.
- _____ 17. Show how to check and adjust your equipment before riding, and explain why.

Member's Name & Signature _____ Date Completed: _____

Leader's Name & Signature: _____ Date Completed: _____

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HORSEMANSHIP

Level II– Producer

Initial & date as Completed:

- _____ 1. Give 5 safety rules for trail riding.
- _____ 2. Explain why you should not let a horse eat grass on trail rides.
- _____ 3. Design a simple Western, English or Dressage ring pattern.
- _____ 4. Describe or demonstrate how to sanitize equipment.
- _____ 5. Demonstrate competency in showmanship for your animal.
- _____ 6. Complete a tack check on both sides, explain why you are adjusting the tack.
- _____ 7. Identify three types of tack and explain when they are used and how they work.
- _____ 8. Display your animal outside of your project group.
- _____ 9. Clean a saddle and bridle.
- _____ 10. Mount with control and without disturbing the horse.
(Horse may be held by assistant. Very small riders may mount from a safe mounting block.)
- _____ 11. Dismount safely with control and prepare the horse to lead.
- _____ 12. Mount and adjust your stirrup to the proper length.
- _____ 13. Ride at a walk with proper position and control.
- _____ 14. Ride at a trot around the rail with proper position and control.
- _____ 15. Halt from the walk and the trot on command, with control.
- _____ 16. Ride turns, and reverse at the walk and trot, with control.
- _____ 17. Demonstrate proper control while:
 - A. Ride twice around the ring at a jog or trot without breaking the gait.
 - B. Keep the proper distance when riding in a group or on the trail.
 - C. Lead changes at a lope or canter.
- _____ 18. Show how to properly cool out a hot horse.

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- _____ 19. Demonstrate how to ride uphill and downhill.
- _____ 20. Explain what to do if you see a hazard like a hole or a fire.
- _____ 21. Demonstrate jumping position at a walk and trot in good balance.
- _____ 22. Ride over practice poles or cavaletti in jumping position.
- _____ 23. Jump a low crossrail (under 1 foot high) at a trot showing (optional):
A. Good jumping position B. Balance C. Correct release D. Good control
- _____ 24. Attend or audit a horseshow or educational equine clinic.
- _____ 25. Help someone else by sharing your knowledge or by giving away a product from your project to demonstrate positive citizenship.

Member's Name: _____

Date: _____

Project Leader's Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Level III – Consumer

Initial & date as Completed:

- _____ 1. Identify the parts of the hoof, and explain proper hoof care.
- _____ 2. Demonstrate how to ride over or through a simple trail obstacle (a creek, stepping poles or a muddy spot.)
- _____ 3. Explain how to recognize colic and founder and how to treat both.
- _____ 4. Give 5 rules for being a responsible trail rider.
- _____ 5. Design an advertisement or a marketing strategy for your project or animal by-product.
- _____ 6. Ride with good position, balance and control for:
- A. Walk, without stirrup or bareback.
 - B. Sitting trot or jog, without stirrups or bareback.
 - C. Posting trot on correct diagonal, demonstrating change of diagonals. (optional western)
 - D. Canter or lope in both directions on the correct lead, identifying lead.
- _____ 7. Demonstrate the following aids and what they ask the horse to do.
- A. Leading rein
 - B. Direct rein of opposition
 - C. Indirect rein (optional western)
 - D. Neck rein or bearing rein (optional English)
 - E. Pulley rein
 - F. Both leg aids used in normal position near the girth.
 - G. One leg aid used in normal position near the girth.
 - H. One leg aid used three or four inches behind the girth.
 - I. Seat aid (weight aid)
- _____ 8. Show proper form and control while riding through the following movements:
- A. Circle at sitting trot or jog
 - B. Figure 8, large or small
 - C. Smooth transitions
 - 1. Walk to trot or jog
 - 2. Walk to canter or lope
 - 3. Trot or jog to stop
 - 4. Canter or lope to walk
 - D. Serpentine or alternate riding pattern
 - E. Change of direction on the diagonal (optional western)
 - F. Turnback on the rail (western only)

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- _____ 9. Ride with proper position and balance at the walk and trot or jog:
A. Jumping position (English) or standing (Western)
- _____ 10. Demonstrate good trail gaits at a:
A. Long striding walk B. Jog trot C. Long striding trot D. Canter
- _____ 11. Demonstrate how to pass another rider and how to handle your horse when being passed.
- _____ 12. Explain and demonstrate:
A. Direct flexion (getting the horse to flex in the pole and jaw).
B. Correcting a faulty head set or head position.
C. Proper use of artificial aids (crop or bat, dressage whip, spurs).
- _____ 13. Complete a ring evaluation, dressage evaluation, program ride, or one of the western performance patterns.
- _____ 14. Create a conditioning and feed program for a horse. If possible, carry out the conditioning of a horse according to your program.
- _____ 15. Explain (demonstrate if possible) how to:
A. Plan an overnight trail ride, including what to take.
B. Secure a horse for an overnight campout (using a picket line or other method approved by your instructor, showing tying safely).
C. Demonstrate or explain the care of horses and equipment on arrival in camp for an overnight stay.
- _____ 16. Alone or with your group, plan and complete a community service activity related to your project.
- _____ 17. Execute the following, using correct aids (optional English):
A. Stop from the lope (need not be a sliding stop). B. Pivot on the hindquarters
C. Roll-back D. Figure 8 with simple change of leads at center.
E. Back one horse length in a straight line.
- _____ 18. Complete a gymkhana pattern. (cloverleaf barrel race, pole bending, keyhole pattern or flag race or other gymkhana pattern)
- _____ 19. Demonstrate two training methods of holding the reins.
- _____ 20. Invite a guest speaker to one of your meetings and introduce them to the group.
- _____ 14. Design an advertisement or a marketing strategy for your animal or animal by-product.

Member's name & Signature: _____ Date completed: _____

Leader's name & Signature: _____ Date completed: _____

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HORSEMANSHIP

Level IV – Leader

Initial & date as Completed:

- _____ 1. Serve as Junior or Teen leader in this project for one year.
- _____ 2. Assist younger members in designing and constructing needed equipment or learning proper riding techniques.
- _____ 3. Prepare teaching materials for use at project meetings.
- _____ 4. Develop and put on a demonstration, judging event or train a junior team for a judging activity.
- _____ 5. Speak on a project-based subject before an organization other than your 4-H group.
- _____ 6. Assist at a show as a clerk, secretary, recorder, assistant to the judge, ring master or with set-up, registration, etc.
- _____ 7. Teach younger members about learning a specific topic in the project.
- _____ 8. Develop your own special project related activity. Chart your own progress, plan the activities, analyze successes and problems, and report on your accomplishments to your club.

Member's Name & Signature: _____ Date completed: _____

Leader's Name & Signature: _____ Date completed: _____

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Level V – Researcher

Initial & date as Completed:

- _____ 1. Report on the results of a demonstration comparing measurable differences in management procedure. (experiment)
- _____ 2. Prepare a paper of 300 words or more on one of the following topics:
- Management of horses.
 - Feeds, feeding, and nutrition.
 - Diseases, prevention and control, and general sanitation.
 - Markets and methods of marketing.
 - Reproduction, breeding, and genetics.
 - By-product preparation for market, how marketed, and used.
 - Keeping and using records as a basis for improving your animal project.
 - Other
- _____ 3. Prepare a speech or illustrated talk to orally summarize your findings and present at a club, project meeting or other educational event.

Member's Name & Signature: _____ Date completed: _____

Leader's Name & Signature: _____ Date completed: _____

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