

2025 HORSE PROJECT

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Species Chair:

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IMPORTANT DATES				
Registration	May 1		Record Book	Required Due: 9/8/2025

Participating 4-H youth must abide by all general rules and regulations listed in the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council’s Policies & Procedures books and the Premium Book of the Northwestern Michigan Fair. This includes, but is not limited to, Code of Conducts, registration deadlines, showmanship and market requirements, record book and thank you letter requirements, etc.

Registration Requirements

- ❖ To participate in a 4-H horse project, youth must attain the age of five (5) or older by January 1st of that calendar year and be registered with 4-H Online 2.0
 - Members that are 5-7 years of age will participate in the 4-H Cloverbud program and will have their own Cloverbud classes.
- ❖ All horse participants, including Cloverbuds, MUST complete the online registration via the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council’s website NO LATER THAN midnight the first Monday of May.
- ❖ To participate in the 4-H horse shows at the fair, youth must follow all registration requirements listed in the Northwestern Michigan Fair’s Premium Book.

Fair Week Requirements

- ❖ General Requirements:
 - In order to unload any horse out of the trailer, a completed health form and a hard copy of a negative Coggins test for the current year must be presented to the Horse Species Chair or Barn Superintendent.
 - Youth may bring up to two horses; one per category out the following categories: Horse, Draft, Mini & Pony.
 - All horses brought to the Fair must be shown
 - Mini & Pony must be measured by the species chair to ensure they will be entered in the right classes, unless they have a registered breed card.
 - Youth must bring all necessary supplies including feed and water buckets and stall mats (if you choose to use them)

- No feed, buckets, wheelbarrows, pitchforks, etc will be provided
- The Northwest Michigan Fair cannot guarantee that the sawdust provided will not contain black walnut. If you are concerned, it is suggested that you bring your own sawdust/shavings
- Hay bags are allowed
 - In order to leave hay bags/nets up overnight, they must have openings less than 2” square.
- Youth are responsible for keeping their stalls clean all week.
 - Stalls, pens, and floors must be in neat and tidy condition by 8:00am and cleaned throughout the day.

❖ Animal Care Requirements:

- **Animals shall be treated humanely at all times. Any reports of unethical, inhumane, and/or abusive treatment or actions that cause distress and/or suffering to an animal will be evaluated by the Species Chair, Fair Superintendent, Fair Veterinarian, and/or other appropriate individuals and may lead to disqualification and removal from all 4-H and Open Livestock Shows held at the Fair.**
- Youth are responsible for providing enough grain and hay to care for their horse throughout the entire week.
- Youth are responsible for feeding, watering, and caring for their animal the **entire** week.
- Water should remain full and fresh at all times.

Show Day Policies:

- Any hoof dressings or paint must be done outside the barn with cardboard or carpet under the hooves.

Rider & Show Requirements

❖ Required Footwear:

- When riding, both in the show ring and when exercising your horse, participants must have a shoe/boot with a stepped heel
- Members must wear closed-toe shoes or boots while on barn duty, cleaning stalls, or handling horses.

❖ Helmet Requirements:

- ALL riders MUST wear an approved helmet at all times while riding, no matter the discipline.

❖ Novice riders are first year showing and is a walk/trot class.

- Year is based on rider, NOT horse. Cloverbud years do not count.
- Riders aged 8-10 may choose to ride in the Novice or Rookie division as their walk/trot option.

❖ Rookie classes are for riders who need additional years in walk/trot or who have switched horses and the horse needs to be in walk/trot.

- Rookies who earn Rookie Highpoint and Reserve do NOT qualify for a second year as a Rookie with the same horse, unless they have be evaluated by the species chair and

assistant and an additional year is deemed necessary.

- Riders age 8-10 may choose to ride in the Novice or Rookie division as their walk/trot option.
- ❖ Novice, Rookie, and Walk Only riders may NOT canter during Fair.
- ❖ Walk Only riders:
 - May be on a lead. A halter must be used in addition to the bridle and the lead must be attached to the halter, not the bridle. The handlers may assist the rider but should NOT have sole control of the horse. In the lineup, the rider (not the handler) should back the horse.
 - May have a current Gold 4-H Adult Volunteer or parent/guardian next to the horse with no attachment
 - May be riding alone
 - Side-walkers are allowed.
- ❖ Cloverbud, Novice, or Rookie may use any legal bit that the parent, guardian, or 4-H Leader feels is safe for the child regardless of the horse's age.
 - Bit must be appropriate for the discipline the youth is participating in.
- ❖ Rules not discussed in these Policies & Procedures will follow the [Michigan 4-H Horse & Pony Project Show Rules & Regulations](#).
- ❖ Showmanship, Trail, Equitation, and Horsemanship will run patterns.
 - An order of go will be used in pattern classes if needed to keep the flow of the show.
- ❖ Exhibitors may ride in ONE division (Walk Only, Miniature Horse/Small Equine, Novice, Rookie, Gymkhana, Ages 8-12, Ages 13-15, Ages 16-19) per horse/rider or handler combination for the entire show with the exception of the Timed Events division.
 - Riders may enter Timed Event classes in addition to their normal division. High Point awards will be offered in each division. The following classes will count towards the High Point in each division:
 - Walk Only – Showmanship, English Equitation, Western Horsemanship, Trail
 - Miniature Horse/Small Equine – Showmanship, In Hand Trail, Mini Driving
 - Novice (Walk/Trot) – Showmanship, English Equitation, English Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, Western Pleasure, Trail
 - Rookie (Walk/Trot) – Showmanship, English Equitation, English Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, Western Pleasure, Trail
 - Gymkhana* (Walk/Trot/Canter) – Showmanship, English Equitation, English Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, Western Pleasure, Trail
 - Ages 8-12 (Walk/Trot/Canter) – Showmanship, English Equitation, English Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, Western Pleasure, Trail
 - Ages 13-15 (Walk/Trot/Canter) – Showmanship, English Equitation, English Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, Western Pleasure, Trail
 - Ages 16-19 (Walk/Trot/Canter) – Showmanship, English Equitation, English Pleasure, Western Horsemanship, Western Pleasure, Trail
 - Timed Events (Walk/Trot) – Indiana Flag Race, Cloverleaf, Keyhole, Pole Bending, Speed & Action
 - Timed Events (Walk/Trot/Canter) – Indiana Flag Race, Cloverleaf, Keyhole, Pole Bending, Speed & Action

* Gymkhana: This division is designed for horses that do not typically fit into the “pleasure horse” category. Riders may ride in their gymkhana attire and equipment with the exception of a tie down. Patterns may be used in equitation and horsemanship classes, but are not mandatory.

- Gymkhana riders must enter a minimum of two (2) timed event classes or one (1) ranch riding/reining and one (1) timed event.

After Fair Requirements

- ◆ Youth are required to turn in one completed record book (showmanship or market). If youth are exhibiting in market or in multiple species, you are required to complete the record book for your market project.
 - **Examples:** Jane shows beef cattle in showmanship and market; Jane completes a record book in beef cattle. John shows swine, horses, and goats, and markets his hog; John completes a record book for hogs. Sally shows chickens, rabbits, and dogs all showmanship only, and decides to complete the record book for rabbits.
- ❖ Failure to submit a completed, hard copy record book at the September Livestock Council meeting WILL result in suspension from the 4-H Livestock classes held during the NWMI Fair the following year. Suspended youth who complete their record book and submit it to the 4-H Livestock Council by the November meeting that same year will again be eligible to register for 4-H Livestock classes held during the NWMI Fair the following year.

Important Information & Tips for a Successful Horse Project

- ❖ Participants will benefit from attending at least one (1) horse show prior to the Fair. Species chair and assistant can supply a list of horse shows if needed.
- ❖ Horses should be up to date on vaccinations and deworming as recommended by their veterinarian. Rhino-flu and Strangles vaccines are HIGHLY encouraged. It is best to talk to a veterinarian for the best vaccine plan for the horse.

Cloverbuds

- ❖ Cloverbuds, ages 5 & 6, may be involved with a horse project, but they must be directly assisted one-on-one by a current Gold 4-H Adult Volunteer who is on the ground holding the horse's lead to maximize safety.
 - A halter must be used in addition to the bridle, and that the lead be attached to the halter and not the bridle.
 - Handlers may assist the rider but should not have sole control of the horse.
 - In the lineup, the rider (not the handler) should back the horse.
- ❖ Cloverbuds, age 7, may be involved with a horse project, but they must be assisted by a current Gold 4-H Adult Volunteer or parent/guardian who is in the ring with the participant at all times, for shows and exercise.
 - Walk/Trot experiences may be an appropriate activity for participants in this age group.
- ❖ Cloverbuds may utilize exercise times throughout Fair Week if the current Gold 4-H Adult Volunteer, using their best judgment, deems it safe for the child to do so.
 - Species chair or barn superintendent have the right to limit activities due to safety concerns at any time.
- ❖ Cloverbud members MUST wear ASTM or SEI approved helmets for all 4-H horse experiences, including showmanship.