

# 4-H Horsemanship Proficiency Program A Member's Guide

## OVERVIEW

The 4-H Horsemanship Proficiency program helps you 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 University of California Davis has free resources available online by visiting: <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/4HYouthDevelopment/>. This site lists a variety of project materials and resources recommended for use in your project.
- The Shasta County 4-H Resources and Lending Library at our county 4-H Office includes other books, videos, and reference materials that can be checked out by members and leaders.
- Check to see if there is a breeder's organization in your community that conducts educational activities and shows. Local breeders are excellent sources of help and information.

There are five levels in the Project Proficiency Program. 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 each skill item as you complete it. When all items in a proficiency level are completed, your leader will sign the Certificate of Achievement.

# HORSEMANSHIP

## Level I - Explorer

Date  
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 a horse from a 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 a management record 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 someone not in your project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Show how to check and adjust your equipment before riding, and explain why.

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**HORSEMANSHIP**  
**Level II - Producer**

Date  
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 with your horse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Complete a tack check on both sides; explain why you are adjusting the tack.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Identify three types of tack and explain why they are used and how they work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Display your animal outside of your project group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Clean a saddle and a 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.  
Demonstrate proper control while: Ride twice around the ring at a jog or trot without breaking the gait; Keep the proper distance when riding in a group or on the trail; Lead changes at the lope or canter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Show how to properly cool off a hot horse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Demonstrate how to ride uphill and downhill.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Explain what to do if you see a hazard like a hole or a fire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Attend or audit a horseshow or educational equine clinic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Help someone by sharing your knowledge
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Help someone by sharing your knowledge

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# HORSEMANSHIP

## Level III - Consumer

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Completed \_\_\_\_\_

1. Identify the parts of the hoof, and explain hoof care.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Demonstrate how to ride over or through 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: walk without stirrup; sitting trot or jog without stirrups; posting trot on correct diagonal, demonstrating change of diagonals; 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:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Leading rein
  - Indirect rein
  - Pulley rein
  - One leg aid used in normal position
  - Seat aid (weight aid)
  - Direct rein of opposition
  - Neck rein or bearing rein
  - Both leg aids used in normal position
  - One leg aid used 3 or 4 inches behind the girth
8. Show proper form and control while riding through the following movements:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Circle at sitting trot or jog
  - Smooth transitions, all gaits
  - Change of direction on the diagonal
  - Figure 8, large or small
  - Serpentine or alternate riding pattern
  - Turn back on the rail
9. Ride with proper position and balance at the walk and trot or jog: Jumping position or standing.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Demonstrate good trail gaits at a: long striding walk, jog/trot, long striding trot, canter.  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Demonstrate how to pass another rider and how to handle your horse when being passed.  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Explain and demonstrate:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Direct flexion (getting the horse to flex at the pole)
  - Correcting a faulty head set or head position
  - Proper use of artificial aids (crop, 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:
- Plan an overnight trail ride, including what to take.
  - Secure a horse for an overnight campout (using a picket line or other method approved by instructor, showing tying safety).
  - 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 horse project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Execute the following, using the correct aids:
- Stop from the lope
  - Roll back
  - Back one horse length in a straight line
  - Pivot on the hindquarters
  - Figure 8 with simple lead change
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Complete a 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.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Design an advertisement or a marketing strategy for your animal or animal by-product.

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**HORSEMANSHIP**  
**Level IV - Leader**

Date  
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 or 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 progress, plan the activities, analyze successes and problems, and report on your accomplishment to your club.

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**HORSEMANSHIP**  
**Level V - Researcher**

Date  
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 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Certificate of Achievement

*This certifies that*

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*has completed the Horsemanship Proficiency  
in Shasta County.*

*Explorer*

*Producer*

*Consumer*

*Leader*

*Researcher*

\_\_\_\_\_  
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