

Wood County 4-H Horse Groom and Clean Contest

****** Attention – Top winners of Jr. and Sr. classes are eligible for the State Groom and Clean contest to be held August 23, 2025. Commitment for the state contest must be made by the end of fair week. If a team commits to go and does not show at the state contest, they will forfeit participation at the following fair! ******

Sunday, Aug 3

10:00 a.m. sign-up and horses presented to be dirtied.

Please provide people to help dirty the horses!!

11:00 a.m. Showmanship patterns will be posted

11:30 a.m. Class Start

Rules:

- Teams will be made up of three (3) members from a club. Teams may use a member from another club if needed to fill a team.
- The contest will consist of a Junior (8-13) and Senior (14-18) division. A junior member can be on a senior team, but a senior can not be on a junior team.
- Each club may enter two teams. The two teams can be both Junior or both Senior or one of each.
- All team members must wear boots or heavy leather shoes and long pants. No gloves or coveralls may be worn. No team (or county) identification may be exhibited by clothing or tack. Outfits should match, English or Western, hats are optional. Safety Helmets are acceptable throughout the competition.
- Back numbers that are large enough to be seen from a distance must be worn at all times during the competition.
- Each team will provide its own grooming tools (see grooming kit). No electric or battery powered equipment may be used.
- Each horse/pony must arrive wearing a properly fitting nylon or leather halter (no silver show halters) and a tie rope. The horse/pony should be reasonably groomed. No show sheen is to be used before mud is applied.
- The horses/ponies should arrive at the contest site at least one hour prior to the contest starting time so that the management can uniformly dirty them.
- The horses/ponies will be dirtied using mud.
- A team member may work on a horse/pony provided by his/her team for the contest if it is acceptable with the judges.
- Each team will provide a handler. Handlers will have control of the horse/pony at all times and line the teams up in numerical order. They will maintain a safe distance between horse/pony and move horse/pony (after telling team members) only as needed for safety.
- Handlers will not coach the team members in any way. They will speak to team members only when necessary to maintain safety.
- No gum allowed.
- Any coaching from the handler or spectators will result in the disqualification of the team.

Required Grooming Kit

Equipment does not have to be new but should be clean, dry, and in good condition.

1. Curry Comb (hard rubber or plastic)
2. Stiff Bristle Brush
3. Body Brush (medium stiff bristles)
4. Dandy Brush or Soft Bristle Brush
5. Mane and Tail Comb or Regular Hairbrush (not both)
6. Hoof Pick (standard type)
7. Grooming Cloth (no larger than a hand towel)
8. Quart of water (can be bottle or spray bottle or bucket) (no glass)
9. Ground cloth (bath or beach towel or use your good judgment on size)
10. Fly spray can be used if needed. (no show sheen or horse finish)
11. Chain Lead – a chain lead must be displayed on the ground cloth which will be used during the showmanship part of the class. Another chain lead may be used to hold the horse during the grooming.

** This kit should be tripled for numbers 1-7 to give each team member his/her own set of equipment to use. However, when these items are tripled, they need to be identical in type and appearance. The team should have one each of items 8-11.

Schedule of Events:

- 3 ½ hours before the scheduled start, the “Dirt Demons” will uniformly dirty the horses/ponies.
- The contestants will take a written test at the beginning of the contest.
- Total time for written test is 15 minutes.
- The teams are to place their grooming equipment 10 feet behind the horse/pony they are to groom and then stand behind the tools.
- Judge will inspect the horses/ponies and equipment.
- Timed portion of grooming begins. Grooming time is 30 minutes.
- After timed grooming is complete, the judge evaluates the groomed horses/ponies.
- Teams are then given 10 minutes to work with their groomed horse/pony to prepare for showmanship. There is no time limit for this section.

Contest Scoring:

Equipment:

(5 points)

1. Placed well behind horse/pony on the ground cloth.
2. Three complete sets are desirable, only one bottle of water, fly spray and chain lead.
3. Tools need not be new, but should not be ratty, dirty, or wet.
4. Tools should be placed on ground cloth with bristles facing up. If hats are worn, they should be removed before grooming and placed with tools.

Teamwork and Methods:

(35 points)

1. Teams should work smoothly together.
2. Members should not stop grooming until time is called – unless there is a question of safety.
3. Do not rush at horse/pony.
4. Groom from front to back and top to bottom.
5. Use tools in proper order – curry first, then stiff bristle brush, then body/medium bristle brush, then dandy/soft bristle brush and rag.
6. Do not tear at mane and tail.
7. Use one tool at a time – free hand can steady the horse/pony.
8. Curry – do not use on head or below the knees and hocks or on tender parts or on mane and tail.
9. Body brush – do not use on head.
10. Stiff bristle brush – do not use on head. May use on lower legs, mane and tail.
11. Dandy brush – may use on entire horse/pony except hooves.
12. Hoof pick – may use edge to scrape mud from outside of hooves. Carefully. Pick feet in order, starting with near front, then near rear, off rear, and off front.
13. Water – use on cloth. Do not spray or apply directly on the horse/pony.
14. Fly spray – use with care. If it is absolutely necessary to use while grooming, all grooming should stop. Try to wait to spray until the ten-minute practice time.
15. Cloth – may use on entire horse/pony. Do not shake near horse/pony.
16. No trimming allowed – Hair will not be clipped or cut.
17. Halter cleaning will be part of the finished animal condition score.
18. Notify judges when picking hooves.

Safety:

(40 points)

1. 4-H rules of safety handling should be observed.
2. Do not kneel or squat.
3. Do not crawl under horse/pony.
4. Do not reach across to other side.
5. Do not go under neck.
6. Do not put head or face where it can be kicked.

7. Do not put tools on ground, under or on horse/pony. If tool can't fit in pocket, it should be returned to ground cloth.
8. If tool is dropped, use foot to move it to a safe distance from the horse/pony before picking it up.
9. Someone should stay near the head.
10. If horse/pony is upset, calm it before continuing.
11. If it becomes obvious that a certain procedure cannot be safely completed, such as handling rear legs, notify the judges.
12. Never get into a position that you can't get out of immediately.
13. Don't all bunch up at one end or one side of the horse/pony.
14. When feet are being cleaned, all should be aware. Unless there is a problem, it is not necessary to stop grooming.

Written Test

(30 points, 10 points per team member)

- All three members of each team will take a written test covering information from the appropriate 4-H books.
- *Junior resources: Basic Horse Management (174) and Horse Safety (191R)*
- *Senior resources: Same as Junior and Light Horse Selection (175) and Uniform Rules 4H Horse Shows (179)*

Finished Animal Condition

(10 points)

Showmanship

(15 points, 5 points per team member)

1. Showmanship will follow 4-H rules. No attire change will be allowed. You must start and finish the competition in the same outfit. Hats may still be optional during showmanship. However, must not be work during the grooming portion.
2. The only equipment changes allowed for the showing will be a chain lead strap to replace the tie rope used while grooming. No halter changes.
3. All three members will be judged on their ability to show the horse/pony. Each member will show the horse/pony as instructed by the judge. The team members will decide which one will do each part of the pattern.
4. The showmanship pattern will be determined by the judge and posted one hour prior to the contest.

Total Points Possible for Contest = 135

The team with the highest score wins. The top three teams will be placed in each division.