

# Pinal County 4-H Horsemanship Program Rules

**2025-2028**

## **Introduction**

This section has been developed as rules and guidelines for the Pinal County 4-H Horse Program and does not take the place of the current Arizona State 4-H Horse Show Rules set forth by the State 4-H Advisory Committee. The Arizona 4-H Horse Show Rules are the official rules followed at our shows with these guidelines serving as a county supplement and reinforcement to our state rule book.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The primary purpose of our 4-H Horse Program is to provide members an opportunity to demonstrate abilities and horsemanship accomplishments which they have learned and are able to perform with their project horses. In doing so, safety, courtesy, participation, establishment of a good public image, and positive youth development are most important!

Specific objectives of the 4-H Horse Project are to help members:

1. Develop leadership, initiative, participation, self-reliance, sportsmanship, and other desirable traits of character.
2. Experience the privilege of owning/utilizing a horse or pony and being responsible for its care and management.
3. Develop and appreciate horseback riding as a healthy and wholesome form of recreation.
4. Learn skills in horsemanship and an understanding of the business of breeding, raising, and training horses.
5. Increase knowledge of safety precautions to prevent injury to themselves, others, and their horses.
6. Promote greater love for animals and a humane attitude toward animals.
7. Be prepared for leadership and citizenship responsibilities through working in groups and supporting the 4-H community club and horse activities.

## **Governance**

The Pinal County 4-H Horse Advisory Committee (HAC) is composed of all 4-H Horse project leaders and 4-H members enrolled in the Horse project in Pinal County. All 4-H Leaders shall be certified or in the process of certification per the requirements of Arizona 4-H Policy. The Pinal County 4-H Youth Development Agent shall provide guidance and oversight. The governance structure shall consist of:

Officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Member at Large, Back-up Member at large (whose vote will be used only if the Member at large is not present or there is a need for a tie breaking vote), and one (1) Youth Representative from each club. Offices may be held by adults or youth members of the committee, for a term of one year. See Appendix A for roles and responsibilities

1. The HAC will conduct an annual fall meeting. All 4-H members, leaders and parents are invited to attend.
2. The agenda shall include:
  - a. Adopt Pinal County 4-H Program Guidelines.
  - b. Determine numbers and dates of horse shows.
  - c. Elect officers.
  - d. Discussion of other issues as deemed necessary by the HAC and 4-H office.
  - e. Annual review of sponsorship program, show and arena fees

3. The HAC will conduct the program's business throughout the year. Voting members include the executive officers and the 2 mandatory representatives from each 4-H club.
4. The HAC has made it mandatory that 2 members from each horse and pony club attend every HAC business meeting. If two representatives are not present, at the set HAC Meeting dates, then members from that club will not be eligible for the End of the Year (Horse Show Season), High Point and Reserve High Point Horse & Pony awards. One meeting absence will be allowed per 4-H season, per club, additional absence(s) will be reviewed, and allowed or disallowed at the discretion of the HAC Officers prior to the next scheduled Horse Show.
5. Individuals serving as volunteers are expected to perform in the best interests of the 4-H program. Possible terminations of volunteers are covered by Arizona 4-H policy and procedures and implemented by the 4-H agent.
6. In the event that it becomes necessary to forbid attendance of a 4-H parent at 4-H Youth Development activities or events, for personal actions detrimental to the program, the 4-H Youth Development faculty member will give written notice to the adult. Any hearing requested will be handled by the state grievance procedure.

## **Section 1 - GENERAL RULES**

1. SAFETY COMES FIRST
2. All competitors must be a 4-H member who is properly enrolled and in the ACTIVE status on ZSuites, in a Horse Project.
3. When mounted or driving all members MUST wear ASTM or SEI approved equestrian protective headgear with three-point harness.
  - a. An approved equestrian helmet must be worn by members while participating in ANY 4-H event, including club riding meetings, pre-point shows, clinics, etc.
  - b. Helmet must be fitted and chin strap properly used.
4. Riding Etiquette
  - a. Do not cut off other riders; look before making turns.
  - b. All horses should be moving in the same direction.
  - c. If you are having problems with your horse, ride to the center of the arena. Stand until excused, the class is over, or someone assists you.
5. At no time will an expensive outfit or tack be given merit over a neat, clean outfit or tack in good repair.
6. The exhibitor must prepare his/her own animal(s) at a show without the assistance from any adult, professional attendant or trainer, except where there is a question of safety.
7. From the time the horse enters the grounds; no trainer or person other than a 4-H exhibitor may ride the horse and/or assist the exhibitor.
  - a. This rule does not apply to shared project horses or an adult co-contestant in team roping classes.
  - b. The only time assistance is allowed is when the safety of a horse or rider is at risk.
8. The decision of the judge is final.
9. Poise, Alertness and Merits
  - a. Keep alert and be aware of the position of the judge at all times.
  - b. Do not be distracted by persons or things outside the ring.
  - c. Respond quickly to requests from the judge and officials.
  - d. Recognize quickly and correct faults of your horse.
  - e. Keep showing until the entire class has been placed and excused from the ring, unless the judge has instructed otherwise.
  - f. Judging begins when the exhibitor enters the arena or ring and ends when the class is dismissed.
10. The use of drugs in horses participating in the Show is prohibited unless the drugs are

prescribed, for therapeutic reasons, by a licensed veterinarian and do not pose a safety hazard. Violations of this rule may result in disqualification from the show or the revocation of awards and placings.

11. No bare feet or open-toed shoes will be permitted at any time while working around or in the vicinity of a horse.

12. Junior riders shall not be required to dismount in the ring unless required by the specific discipline.

13. The judge may take an award away from any contestant for unsportsmanlike conduct even after the class has been placed.

14. Consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, or illegal drugs is prohibited in and around all 4-H Horse Shows. Violation of this rule will result in the parent or leader being asked to leave the grounds for the duration of the show.

## **Section II- ELIGIBILITY AND CERTIFICATION**

1. **Participation** - Pinal County 4-H Horse Shows are open to all members and must be properly enrolled and ACTIVE status in ZSuites, in the Horse Project.
  - a. A family member or exhibitor must volunteer at every show and in each discipline the member is participating in.
2. **Age Requirements** - Riders must be at least eight (8) years of age and not have passed their 19th birthday by 11:59 pm on December 31st of the current year (October 1 - September 30) in order to be eligible for a 4-H membership. Junior members and Senior members are defined as follows:
  - a. Junior Members: 4-H age 8-13. Youth cannot have passed their 14th birthday on December 31st of the current 4-H year.
  - b. Senior Members: 4-H age 14 to 18. Youth in this age range may enroll in the projects, events and activities open to senior members. Youth cannot have passed their nineteenth birthday on December 31 of the current 4-H year.Members stay within the same age division throughout the 4-H club year.
3. **Horse Eligibility**-Any family-owned or properly leased horse, pony, or mule, regardless of training, may be used as a project horse by a 4-H member who is properly and actively enrolled in an Arizona 4-H Horse Project.
  - a. Four exhibitors may use the same horse as long as:
  - b. The classes are individual work classes and no more than 2 exhibitors/discipline.
  - c. In roping classes - no more than 4 exhibitors per horse.
  - d. Tack changes do not delay the show.
  - e. Exhibitor notifies show management of joint use on entry form to allow for more appropriate scheduling.
  - f. No stallions will be allowed in the show.
4. **County Required Documents**-
  - a. Each 4-H project horse, whether owned or leased, requires a Pinal County 4-H Horsemanship Project Identification Card (Horse ID Card) to be completed and returned to the Pinal County Horse Advisory Committee.
  - b. The Project Horse(s) must be in the care of a 4-H member at least 30 days prior to participation in any County show. The member may petition the HAC Officers for approval of any exception to the 30- day requirement.
5. **Sponsorships** – In order to be eligible for end of the year awards and the State Horse show, each participant must provide a \$150 sponsorship fee with half being due by November 15th and the balance due by February 1st. Sponsorship information may be found on the [pinalhorse.blogspot.com](http://pinalhorse.blogspot.com)
6. **Record Books** - All members are strongly encouraged to complete a 4-H Record Book and submit it to the 4-H office by the county deadline. Advanced Junior/Senior members and Ranch Sorting members who qualify for the State Horse Show are required to submit a Record Book.

7. **4-H Horse Advancement Program** -Utilizing the Pinal County 4-H Horse Advancement Program criteria, each member must be designated as a Beginning Horseman, Intermediate Horseman, or Advanced Horseman in all classes. You will find the criteria packet on the [pinalhorse.blogspot.com](http://pinalhorse.blogspot.com) website. In order to compete in the Junior or Senior division at the State 4-H Horse Show, the member must have achieved the Advanced Horseman level. Determination of skill levels may be based on the following:
  - a. If, at any event, a member demonstrates that she or he cannot perform safely at the exhibitor's requested skill level at the exhibitor's 1<sup>st</sup> show, the show officials reserve the right to adjust the skill level as appropriate. The 4-H leader will discuss the member's appropriate skill level with the HAC. Junior and Senior Advanced Ropers will be assessed on the Intermediate Sled to determine appropriate skill level.
  - b. A member's certification designation will apply separately to Western Horse Shows, English Horse Shows, Gymkhana, and Roping. *For example, a person may be certified as Advanced in Western, Intermediate in English, and Beginning in Roping.*
  - c. If an individual has won at least two (2) high point or reserve high point awards the preceding year(s), the member may be advanced to the next level of certification at the option of the HAC using the skills certification criteria.
  - d. The HAC may advance a member who demonstrates skills beyond the current level criteria, after the first show and before the second show.

### Section III -HORSE SHOWS

1. Entry fees must be paid at the time of registration and before participating. A \$15.00 late fee will be assessed if the exhibitor is not pre-entered. Books close once the show starts. Scratches are accepted, but refunds will not be issued. No additional registrations will be accepted after books have been closed.
2. Exhibitors will be assigned a predetermined show number. You will use that number throughout the current show season, should you lose your number, please notify the show secretary prior to registration of the next show. Numbers are to be pinned on the back of the exhibitor or on both sides of the saddle pad.
3. **All beginners and intermediate riders only:**
  - a) Are allowed to ride with two hands without being penalized. If the rider chooses to ride with one hand, she or he must ride with one hand during the entire class in Western.
  - b) It is only permissible to change hands to work on obstacles in trail classes.
4. Tack for **beginner and intermediate riders only:**
  - a) May use bosal type hackamore or snaffle type bits on horses of any age.
  - b) Romal reins or split reins are required. Beginners only are permitted to knot their split reins.
  - c) English- Bridles and bits shall be of standard English type, i.e.: English snaffle, Pelham (with four reins) or Kimberwick, all with a cavesson/noseband and browband.
5. Dragging at gymkhana: **Beginner/Intermediate-** to be determined by show management the day of show based on necessity for safety. **Junior/Senior Advance-** every 5 riders
6. In order to receive a score in goat tying, the run must be completed within one and half minutes.
7. Junior and Senior Advance riders must abide by State rules for age of horse, bit, tack, and hand usage rules.
8. Each class shall be called at least two times prior to entering the gate and *no contestant will be permitted to enter the arena after this time.* The gate will close following the second announcement and the next contestant will be called to the arena.
9. For the safety of horses and participants, no dogs are allowed at horse shows and on horse show property.
10. NO leader shall be permitted inside the arena, unless asked to assist in some manner by the HAC Committee.

11. Injuries or Accidents -Any injury, accident, or damage to property which is the result of the 4-H Horse Show activities must **be** reported as soon as possible to the Pinal County 4-H Extension Office.
12. The gatekeeper or designated person is the only person allowed to lead or give assistance to beginner and intermediate riders only into the arena. This person must be a certified or resource volunteer on file with the 4-H office – no parent volunteers.
13. NO horse is to be exercised except in assigned areas. If no separate warm up area is available you will be notified at the morning meeting day of the show, of which area to warm up in. **No horse will be permitted in the spectator area. Violators may be disqualified by Show Officials.** NO riding faster than a walk in any areas other than the show or practice rings. Only one (1) rider is allowed on any horse at one time.
14. No horses, other than 4-H exhibitor's horses, can **be** present on the premises except for foals not weaned and roping events. Adult roping partners will comply with appointed rules. (See Western General Rules, State Rule Book) An eligible parent in team roping must be at least 18 years of age and a non 4-H member. Only the performance and manners of the horse being judged will be considered.

## **Section V -GENERAL GROUNDS FOR DISQUALIFICATION**

1. There will be no refund of entry fees when exhibitors are disqualified for any reason.
  - a. Refunds may be allowed at the discretion of the HAC Committee for reasons that are not disqualifications.
2. Misrepresentation of a horse or exhibitor in any way will be grounds for forfeiture of all prizes won and disqualification of exhibitor for this show. (such as but not limited to: entering in class not in exhibitor's classified level, exhibiting a horse not listed on exhibitor's project/show registration, age of horse, etc.).
3. In all disciplines: ABSOLUTELY NO coaching toward any exhibitor in the show ring, verbal or otherwise will be permitted. This could result in the disqualification of the exhibitor by the Judge and/or Show Officials.
  - a. Cheering or general encouragement is acceptable. Specific direction to an exhibitor or horse is not allowed.
  - b. EXCEPTION: partners in Roping or Sorting events may give specific direction to each other inside the arena or during their run.
4. Any horse that becomes unmanageable, endangers the safety of the rider, other exhibitors, spectators, or other horses (in the opinion of the Judge and/or Show Officials) will be disqualified from the class and excused from the arena.
  - a. If the horse remains unmanageable, it may be disqualified from the show.
5. All lame, sick, or underweight horses may be excused from any or all classes at the discretion of the Judge and/or Show Officials.
  - a. A non-contagious (e.g. allergies, etc.) or underweight horse may be accepted with a properly documented medical certificate from a veterinarian provided prior to the show to the show management.
  - b. Exhibitors may substitute any other horse on their project registration papers to continue showing in the event.
6. The judge will have the authority to disqualify any exhibitor for any appointments that, in the judge's opinion, are inhumane.
7. Any exhibitor who is assisted past the gate opening will be disqualified.
8. Unnecessary roughness and abuse of animals will not be permitted. Unnecessary spurring, striking or beating of the horse in any manner at any time on the show grounds will be cause for disqualification of the rider/exhibitor by the Judge and/or Show Officials for the remainder of the show. This decision will be final.

- a. Whipping, batting or spurring in front of the cinch, except for proper use of English crops or bats.
9. Any discourtesy or acting unmannerly towards any Judge, Show Official, spectator(s) and other exhibitors by exhibitors, spectators, and/or leaders will NOT be permitted. Such behavior reported to a show official may result in the exhibitor being disqualified for the remainder of the Show. Additionally, spectator(s) may be asked to leave the Show Grounds.
10. Entering the ring without appropriate dress.
11. Entering the ring without a number card.
12. Entering the ring with inappropriate tack for the class.
13. Any fall from a horse is a disqualification from the class.

## Section VI – Skillathon Criteria

1. Skillathon is an event to test knowledge of specific subject matter using the experiential learning model of exploring, reflecting, and applying that knowledge.
2. A facilitator is present at each station to offer directions without helping the member perform the task or offer answers. Station scores are recorded by the facilitator and entered into a computer system that will accumulate points.
3. In the event of a tie – the contestant with the highest placings at each event will be the winner.
4. Skillathon will be held at each horse show. The fee is \$5.00 for each Skillathon.
5. You are required to attend 3 of 4 of the events in order to be eligible for awards. High Point will be awarded a championship buckle. Skillathon entry fees will pay for the championship buckle. Skillathon will not be subject to discipline sponsorship fees. (ie: must attend 2 out of 3, or 1 out of 2 if less than four events)
6. Scores at each event will be used to determine placings. Highest score wins 1<sup>st</sup> and so on. Points will be awarded based on placings and these points will be used.

## Section VII- Points and Scoring for State/County 4-H Horse Show

1. Points will be earned at 4-H "pointed" county-wide Horse Shows as follows:
  - a) Points earned in each class will be credited to the 4-H exhibitor. NOT to the exhibitor's horses.
  - b) If a member entered in the wrong skill level or is moved up after the first show, points will follow the member in the new level and times will be used to place member in gymkhana events for points.
  - c) Points earned by an exhibitor will accumulate until the end of the current 4-H year to determine who qualifies from the Junior and Senior Advance divisions for the Arizona State Horse Show. Exhibitors will be selected and approved by their respective County Extension Office after meeting county criteria.
  - d) Points earned in each class will be:
 

1st place = 10 points	4th place = 7 points	7 <sup>th</sup> place = 4 points	10 <sup>th</sup> place = 1 points
2nd place = 9 points	5th place = 6 points	8 <sup>th</sup> place = 3 points	
3rd place = 8 points	6th place = 5 points	9 <sup>th</sup> place = 2 points	
  - e) Total points will be maintained by a HAC Vice President
  - f) State 4-H Horse Show eligibility shall be determined by the points scored per event at pointed County Horse Shows. All County exhibitors gaining points from one (1) show will be eligible to attend the State 4-H Horse Show-
  - g) In the Junior and Senior Advanced Classes, the top four (4) exhibitors who have

accumulated the most points in each class will be eligible to compete at the Arizona State 4-H Horse Show in that class. If exhibitors tie for the top four (4) placing, the following system will be used to determine who represents Pinal County in the State event:

- h) Ties for High Point and Reserve High Point awards shall be handled as follows:
    - i. The person who participates in the most classes shall receive the award.
    - ii. In the event they have equally participated, the person who has the most 1<sup>st</sup> places shall receive the award, if no 1<sup>st</sup> place, then most next highest placings.
    - iii. If neither is eligible for another event, the individual who has participated in the most shows during the past year wins the tie.
    - iv. If one (1) exhibitor is going in another event, the other contestant not yet going wins the tie.
    - v. If both exhibitors are going to State in other events, the one with the least classes wins the tie.
    - vi. At the discretion of the HAC.
  - i) An incorrect pattern is not grounds for disqualification in Western and English Events. Failure to complete a pattern is grounds for disqualification in Western and English Events.
  - j) In Ranch Sorting, if a point tie exists, then the largest number of cows sorted in a single run will break the tie.
2. Ranch Sorting Qualifications for State:

County Quotas for Ranch Sorting Discipline for the Arizona State 4-H Horse Show is:

- 1. Mixed class may be offered at the discretion of the Superintendent.
    - a. This class will consist of 1 Senior and 1 Junior sorting as a team.
  - 2. Ranch Sorting team entries will be allotted as follows:
    - a. Each county will be allotted a minimum of 4 per class offered
  - b. If a county has 50 to 80 competitors who have competed at the county level that 4-H year, they can send an additional 2 teams per class.
  - c. If a county has 81 to 110 competing members who have competed at the county level that 4-H year, adds an additional 2 teams per class.
  - d. If a county has 111 and up competing members who have competed at the county level that 4-H year, adds an additional 2 teams per class.
3. If a county has more qualified teams than allotted, they may apply to the Superintendent to use unused slots of other counties within each class.
4. Sorting competitors are allowed to enter on a maximum of five (5) different teams with different partners.

#### **Eligibility for Year End High Point and Reserve High Point Awards**

- 1. 4-H Members must compete in a discipline at the 2 shows to be eligible for Year End High Point and Reserve High Point Awards for that discipline.
- 2. A family member or exhibitor must volunteer at every show (discipline) the member is participating in. Credit will be given for one show (discipline) if a family member or exhibitor works in a show (discipline) that they are not participating in.
- 3. Two representatives from the youth's horse and pony project club must attend all HAC meetings scheduled for the year. One meeting absence will be allowed per 4-H season per club, additional absence(s) will be reviewed and allowed or disallowed at the discretion of the HAC Officers prior to the next scheduled Horse Show. (See Governance 3.)
- 4. Ranch Sorting will be awarded high point from all teams.

5. In order to be eligible for end of the year awards and State Horse show eligibility, each participant must provide a \$150 sponsorship fee with half due by November 15th and the balance due by February 1st. Sponsorship information may be found on the [pinalhorse.blogspot.com](http://pinalhorse.blogspot.com)
6. Depending on annual budget and participation, additional awards may be presented based on HAC committee recommendations.

### **Section VIII-Protests and Appeals -**

Show officials shall select three (3) members of the HAC to serve as Grievance Committee at each show.

1. Write a complete statement concerning facts, including:
  - a. Date
  - b. Time
  - c. Problem
  - d. Signature and phone number of interested parties
2. The written protest must be given to the show superintendent before the end of the show.
3. A \$40.00 fee must accompany the grievance statement.
  - a. NOTE: ONLY if the grievance is upheld, the money will be returned.
4. All grievances resulting from the judge's decision (e.g. judged outside of 4-H rules) must be made to the grievance committee within one hour after the class.
  - a. At no time shall anyone other than a show official(s) approach the judge with any grievance or complaint.
5. No grievance or appeal based upon the statement that the judge or judges are incompetent or have overlooked an animal or article will be considered by the grievance committee.
6. All questions in dispute, or differences not covered by these rules, shall be referred to the grievance committee, whose decision shall be final.
  - a. If the grievance is filed – and the pre-determined grievance committee is no longer on site - the grievance will be heard by a committee composed of the following; the extension representative, the discipline coordinator, the show superintendent and the president or vice-president of the Horse Advisory Board.



## **Appendix A**

### **Pinal County 4-H HAC Officer Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **President**

- Coordinate & facilitate events and meetings, communicate policy & process changes for Horse Project
- Horse Show Event Tasks - class listings, program, sponsors, patterns, judges
- Voting Member on policies and Horse Project activities
- Create and distribute judges show and rule packet
- Coordinator for Horse skill-a-thon
- Project newsletters and communications county wide
- Update website with announcements, horse show results
- Coordinate county members for State Fair qualification

#### **Vice President**

- Coordinate horse show facilities with President
- Find Judges/Cattle (maintain judges docs on Dropbox)
- Voting Member on policies and Horse Project activities
- Ensure horse show ribbons/awards are available
- Audit horse show results spreadsheet and maintain annual points (electronic copy maintained @ every event)

#### **Secretary**

- Take meeting minutes - link on website and send notification to Maria they are available
- Update event schedule on website (roll older stuff to bottom)
- Send meeting notification form to extension office
- Create and distribute agenda for HAC meetings
- Keep up to date member listing from extension office - required prior to horse shows
- Update pattern book and send show patterns to President prior to show
- Ensures sponsorship tax eligible letters go out from the office by Jan 31

- Voting Member on policies and Horse Project activities

### **Treasurer**

- Keep an up to date electronic ledger of account balance and all debit/credits
- Create a budget for the year - year end award and horse show estimates
- Provide horse show event reports at each meeting- how much received/expenses, etc.
- Reconcile HAC ledger with extension office Ledger
- Withdraw/deposit funds with Extension Office
- Responsible for paying for purchase orders, etc. (Ribbons, Buckles, Awards, Horse Show Expenses)
- Voting Member on policies and Horse Project activities

### **Member at Large**

- Voting member
- Knowledge source
- Responsible for volunteer sign up and tracking for each show
- Responsible for managing and posting for social media accounts
- Securing sponsorships (both members at large sponsorship committee)
- Coordinate equipment to shows (if we do not purchase a trailer)