



4-H Ranch Pleasure or Western Pleasure?

A guide to help decide which class is the best fit for your horse and rider team!

Ranch Pleasure is a new addition to the horse show lineup this year in Minnesota 4-H. Members can choose to participate in either Ranch or Western Pleasure, **but not both**. These classes have similarities, but are not the same. If they aren't the same, why can't you participate in both you ask? Each class is designed for a specific type of horse and for that type of horse to be successful in achieving what is asked of it in that class. So let's see where you feel you and your horse fit best!

You can register for Ranch Pleasure in FairEntry this year under Horse - Ranch Pleasure - your age division.

The details for any 4-H horse class can be found in the [Minnesota 4-H Horse Program Rule Book](#). It is important that as a horse project member, you review the Horse Program Rule Book each year, prior to your 4-H show.

Western Pleasure

Type of Horse: Western Pleasure is an event judged on a horses' ability to be a pleasure to ride. To be a pleasure to ride a horse must be broke and quiet, soft and smooth, and go with little restraint. In addition the horse must meet the requirements of the class.

The class routine includes:

1. **Gates: walk, jog and lope**
2. Rail work is done both ways of the ring at all gaits. Gaited horses should move with the comparable gait according to their breed standard.
3. Horses may be asked for extended gaits.
4. The order to reverse may be executed by turning either towards or away from the rail. Riders may be asked to reverse only at the walk or jog.
5. Light contact with the horse's mouth is required.
6. Entries shall then line up upon command and any or all riders may be required to execute any appropriate tests included in class requirements.

Here is a demonstration of a Western Pleasure Class at z.umn.edu/WPDemo. Notice the gaits, head carriage, movement, etc. versus that in the Ranch Pleasure demonstration.

Ranch Pleasure

Type of Horse: A good ranch horse has a free-flowing stride of reasonable length in keeping with its conformation and covering a reasonable amount of ground with little effort. The motion should be balanced and flowing with the

head carried in a natural position, keeping with the horse's conformation as dictated by breed standards. The horse should be soft in the bridle and yield to contact. The ideal ranch horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait. The horse should work at a forward speed while remaining under control at all times.

The class routine includes:

1. **Gates: walk, trot, extended trot and lope.** An extended lope is encouraged but not required
2. Rail work is done both ways of the ring at all gaits.
3. The order to reverse may be executed by turning either towards or away from the rail. Riders may be asked to reverse at the walk or trot.
4. The walk and trot should be free moving and void of a short-strided motion. The rider is to sit at the trot. It is permissible to sit, 2-point or post at the extended trot. Touching or holding the saddle horn is also acceptable at the extended trot. The lope should be a definite three-beat gait, performed on the proper lead, and showing good use of the hindquarters.
5. The horse's expression should be alert and mannerly without the appearance of a dull, sullen, lethargic drawn or overly tired attitude. Maximum credit should be given to the flowing, balanced and willing horse that gives the appearance of being fit, alert, and a pleasure to ride.

Other differences: General requirements, attire and most equipment requirements are the same as in Western Pleasure. However, note that tail extensions are prohibited in Ranch Riding as well as hoof black, mane bands and braids are discouraged.

Here is a demonstration of a Ranch Pleasure class at z.umn.edu/RPDemo. Notice the gaits, head carriage, movement, etc. versus that in the Western Pleasure demonstration.

Which is for you?

Does Ranch Pleasure seem like it would be a good fit for you and your horse? Or are you more compatible with the Western Pleasure style? The choice is yours! If you would like more feedback on your specific horse and rider combination, reach out to a 4-H Horse Project Volunteer near you.

Questions?

Contact your local Extension Educator or 4-H Horse Project Leader for more information.

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