Southern Idaho District III 4-H Ranch Horse Project Competition Guide

2012

Photo by Beuhla Baldwin, Fairfield Idaho

Ranch Horse Project piloted 2012

Southern District Horse and Pony Council.
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Southern Idaho District III 4-H Ranch Horse Project Competition Guide

The Southern Idaho District III 4-H Ranch Horse competition consists of three performance classes and a written/skills test. The Ranch Hose Competition is a division of the District Horse and Pony show. Members must compete in the following classes in their level.

- Ranch Horsemanship
- Cow Working
- Ranch Horse Roping
- Identification, knowledge and skills test.

General Project Requirements

Members and horses must meet all requirements listed in the District III Horse and Pony Guidelines, except where specified here.

For members participating in the Ranch Horse Project only, the requirement of Showmanship will be met in the groundwork portion of the Ranch Horsemanship class. Members participating in other classes must compete in their age division Showmanship class.

Safety First

In the Ranch Horse program (as in all areas of the 4-H horse program), safety is a serious concern. Counties that are just starting Ranch Horse may choose to have all participants begin at the novice level the first year and then add a level each year. For example, have new participants in roping begin with roping a dummy, move up to roping a simulator, and only rope a live animal, in later years. Members and parents will work with their leaders to determine which level the member should be in.

Not all current 4-H volunteer horse leaders are familiar with the skills needed in Ranch Horse classes. Therefore, we expect each county to call on experienced people in their communities to make sure each event and maneuver is as safe as possible. Members may, and are encouraged to, attend clinics sponsored within and outside their county. Known clinic schedules will be made available to counties as soon as possible.

It is important that:
- 4-H members learn proper techniques before attempting some of the Ranch Horse tests
- 4-H horses are completely comfortable with cows and ropes before competing

General Competition Features
- Exhibitors compete in all events as individuals.
- Events are designed to promote skills needed on a working ranch.

- Members are strongly encouraged to attend at least two clinics or club activities working with cattle.
- Leaders are encouraged to attend clinics.
- Clinics sponsored at the county level should be open for any Ranch Horse member from any county to attend.
- To be eligible to compete at the District show, members must receive district eligibility at the county show.

Judging
Exhibitors should receive score sheets with constructive comments for every event.
Each class has a maximum total of 100 points.
The scores of each class will be added to determine the placing for the Ranch Horse Division winners.

Levels
There are three levels within the Ranch Horse Division. Members and parents will work with their leaders to determine which level the member should be in. Members with disabilities will be accommodated. Level 1 has beginner skills, Level 2 has intermediate skills and Level 3 has advanced skills. See Levels Expectation Chart for the basis of judging for each class.

Awards
At the district show ribbons 1-6 will be awarded for each of the 4 classes in each level, then again for the overall placing of the Ranch Horse Division.

Clothing and equipment
4-H members should be neat and clean. Dress is Western-style to include boots, a long-sleeve shirt that buttons or snaps in front, jeans, belt and a western hat or an SEI certified helmet with chin strap. Chinks or batwing chaps, spurs and gloves are allowed.

Equipment should be Western style, safe, clean, and properly adjusted. All tack and equipment must be used properly and humanely.

Halter and Lead
 A safe halter should:
  • Be made of rope, nylon web, or leather
  • Fit correctly
  • Be acceptable for tying to a solid object
  • Be in good repair
 A safe lead rope should be:
  • Made of cotton or nylon
  • At least ½ inch in diameter
  • At least 6 feet long
  • In good repair
  • Easy to remove from the halter
  • Acceptable for tying to a solid object
 Chains are not allowed since it would not be used in a ranch situation.

Saddle
- Levels 2 & 3 should be properly fitted with a rear cinch (attached to the front cinch).
- Horns are to be wrapped any time dallying is required.
- A rope may be properly attached to the saddle.
- Hobbles may be attached to the saddle.
- A breast collar is required in Ranch Horse Roping and is recommended for Cow Working.

Headstall, bit and reins.

The horse may be shown in any of the listed equipment. There are no horse age limitations.

Western Bit: References to a western bit means the use of a curb bit that has a solid or broken mouthpiece, has shanks and acts with leverage. Shanks may be loose or fixed and no longer than 8 ½ inches in length. Such bits include a curb bit, spade bit, or half-breed.

Curb Chain: A curb chain may be used on shank bits, but must be at least ½ inch wide or wider and lie flat against the jaw of the horse.

Snaffle Bit: Defined as having no shanks and no leverage action. The mouthpiece will consist of a jointed, smooth-metal round bar and not less than 5/16" measured one inch from the cheek. The rings may be loose or fixed, and should not exceed 4 inches in diameter. The reins attach directly to the rings above the chin strap. Types of snaffle bits include O-ring, D-ring, and Egg-butt. A leather chin strap must be used with all Western Snaffle Bits.

Hackamore: also known as Western Bosal: the use of a flexible, braided rawhide or leather, or rope hackamore, the core of which may be rawhide or flexible cable. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws or over the nose. Mecate reins with tie rein must be used with a hackamore.

Reins: While a single or roping rein is allowed, split or romal reins are best.

Split reins - When used with a western bit, only one hand is to be used and the hand shall not be changed. The tails of both reins are to be on the same side of the neck as the hand holding the reins. The index finger only is permitted between split reins.

Split reins- When used with a snaffle bit, two hands may be used with the reins crossed and the tails of the reins on opposite sides of the neck. If used with one hand, the tails of both reins are to be on the same side of the neck as the hand holding the reins. The index finger only is permitted between split reins.

Macate reins- with tie rein are required with a hackamore, and allowed with snaffle bits.

Romal - The rider's hand shall be around the reins with the wrists kept straight and relaxed, the thumb on top and the fingers closed lightly around the reins. The romal should fall out of the top and over the thumb of the reining hand. No fingers between the reins are allowed. Rider may hold romal with free hand at least 16 inches from the reining hand. The position of the free hand is optional, but it should be kept free of the horse and saddle and held in a relaxed manner.

Closed Rein - may be used with a snaffle or western bit.

Leg Protection: Skid boots, splint boots, protective boots, and bell boots are allowed.
Tie-downs, martingales, nosebands, and other training devices are allowed, yet are discouraged.
Members riding without training devices will score higher than equal rides that use them.
Rope
- Rope, fitted for the use and the individual
- Breakaway Honda is required for roping

Ranch Horsemanship Class

This will be a pattern class and will incorporate the elements of 1) groundwork, 2) equitation and 3) trail. In addition, the judge may ask the exhibitor questions related to the Ranch Horse project.

The pattern will be posted at least 1 hour prior to the class. Members will have the opportunity to walk the course and to ask for clarifications from the Judge prior to the start of the class. The score sheet will be specific to the pattern.

1) Ranch Horse Groundwork

Whatever your riding discipline, ground work is an essential building block. Most horse behavior problems that occur when riding can be traced back to problems with the horse on the ground. Training a horse properly in ground work helps you gain the horse's respect. It increases both your control over the horse and its confidence in you. Ground work helps build a rapport between you and your horse that will carry over into riding.

In Ranch Horse Groundwork, members show their skill at handling their horse safely and effectively from the ground. They show pride in their animal by how well it is groomed and cared for. They show pride in themselves by how neatly dressed, poised, confident, courteous, and knowledgeable they are.

Basis of judging

This portion of the pattern is judged on how well the tests are performed, as well as on the handler's attitude. A well-groomed animal and cleanliness of tack is important. The horse should be well-mannered and willing. The exhibitor will not be penalized for touching the horse, but will receive credit for maneuvers performed without having to do so.

Required tests:

- Lead from the near side at a walk and trot
- Back

Possible tests:

- Lead from off side at a walk and trot
- Turn on the haunches
- Turn on the forehand
- Yield from pressure
- Lead or send through a gate
- Lead or send over an obstacle

- Back up over/near/through various obstacles
- Clean out hoof
- Remove bridle, place halter.
- Hobble or ground tie your horse (Level 2 and 3 only)

2) Ranch Horse Equitation
In this portion of the pattern, 4-H members demonstrate horsemanship skills that may be used on a working ranch. The pattern may include, but is not limited to, walk, trot, lope, lead changes, rollbacks, and turn on the haunches. There is no rail work. Members should demonstrate their horsemanship skills at natural gaits and controlled speed when specified.

Basis of judging
This portion of the pattern is judged on the rider's control of the horse and the horse's suitability as a ranch horse. The horse should respond to a light rein and show little resistance. Speeds should be distinct, and the horse should be under total control at all speeds. The pattern should be ridden as diagrammed and deviations marked down.

Required tests:
- Walk, trot, lope

Possible tests:
- Walk, trot, lope both directions at various speeds
- Back up
- Turn on the haunches
- Turn on forehand
- Rollback
- Balanced stop
- Interrupted, simple, or flying lead changes (Level 1 are not required to perform flying changes.)
- Circles, serpentines, straight lines

3) Ranch Horse Trail
In the trail portion of the pattern, 4-H members demonstrate skills necessary to ride the trail looking for lost cattle or moving herds, including overnight stays. Riders are asked to negotiate tight spaces and perform tests of skills that may be needed on the trail or ranch. Ideally, this class would be held in a real outdoor trail setting with brush, rocks, uneven ground, trees, etc. When held inside, the use of natural obstacles is encouraged whenever possible.

There should be a minimum of 6 obstacles and a maximum of 10. Obstacles should be more spread out than in a regular trail class, so the horse can demonstrate various gaits between them.

Basis of judging
The horse should approach each obstacle calmly and willingly. Credit should be given to a horse with ground-covering gaits between obstacles. Riders and horses should negotiate obstacles effectively and safely.

Time is not a criterion for judging. This is not a speed event. However, if the exhibitor cannot complete the tasks in a reasonable time, he or she may receive zero points for the unfinished obstacle(s).

Required tests:
- Walk, jog or lope over, near or through various obstacles

Possible tests:
- Back over, near or through various obstacles
- Cross a bridge
- Carry various items, including weighted bags, buckets, coats, or others
- Open, pass through and close a gate
- Walk past or near unusual items, including live animals, hides, tents, signs
- Dismount
- Drag hides, trees, logs or similar items
- Negotiate challenging terrain such as step up and step down.
- Negotiate a safe water obstacle
- Put on or take off a slicker or coat

Cow Working Class

In this event, youth demonstrate their ability to sort, hold, and/or move cattle effectively as if working them on a ranch. Contest procedures may vary.

Setting up the contest

Facilities Cattle may be worked or sorted out of a pen or arenas of various sizes; however, cow working is best
exhibited in a small to mid-size arena. If your arena is large, pattern design must consider this challenge.
Non-competing "holders" may be necessary to keep the herd from scattering.

Cow work requires more than the competition area. You must have one or two pens in which to store, separate, or house extra herds depending on how you're using the cattle. If you're numbering or marking, you need a chute. You must have enough experienced volunteers to open and shut gates, move and load cattle, and number or mark herds.

Cattle: Depending on the course or pattern used and the number of entries, you may need 12 to 24 cattle. Weanling to yearling calves (500 to 800 pounds) usually work well. It's best not to use full-grown cows. They may work, but remember that they can take a horse down. Cattle should not have horns (muley) or only very short horns (2 inches or less). Roping steers would not be the best choice. Be sure you know who your provider is and that he or she is bringing safe animals.

You should not use the same herd for every exhibitor. Depending on how they behave, change cattle after every 5 or 6 contestants. Be sure changes are at constant intervals.

The best cattle to use have previous horse experience. If they are inexperienced ("fresh"), consider "settling" them. This means getting them used to horses and riders before turning them over to the exhibitors. Ask experienced non-exhibitors to do this.

Basis of judging
Contestants are judged on how willingly and quietly their horse can work the cow(s). They should show proper position and understanding of the flight zone and point of balance, and maintain control of the animal.

Although, there will be an allotted time for the member to complete the pattern, time <u>will not</u> be used as a criterion for judging. Time limits help provide a stopping point for inexperienced exhibitors and keep the show moving. However, we DO NOT want to promote pushing cattle in a rush or too hard. So, be sure time limits are reasonable for the expected pattern or maneuvers.

Possible tests
You can design patterns for contestants to work single cows or herds of cows. Following are three possible scenarios and two sample patterns, but these are simply examples. There is an endless variety of ways to demonstrate cow working.

A. 4-H'er enters a marked herd (6 to 8 cattle), pulls out 1 or 2 designated animals and moves past or around a marker, holds them, and then returns them to the herd. This scenario requires herd holders. However, it also allows for varying degrees of skill level by inviting less experienced participants to get any animal(s) rather than specifically marked ones, or by lengthening the time they have to complete their tasks, or by reducing the number of animals.

B. Sort and move cattle from one pen to another. Again, the herd would be marked, and participants would be asked to move specific cattle through an opening to a second pen or arena. Or, they may be asked to move them in order through a hole or gate. Depending on the size of the pen, this could also require a herd holder, and may also be adapted for various skill levels.

C. Move cattle out of a pen into a larger area where they are held in designated areas and moved between or around cones or other obstacles, following a prescribed pattern. For this test, the 4-H'er takes all the cattle, so a herd holder would not be necessary.

When designing cow working patterns, consider:

• Experience level of the contestants
• Facilities you have available
• Number of cattle you have

Roping Class

Contestants need to start at the beginning level with roping a dummy. They can work their way up to roping a simulator and then an actual animal.

Required equipment
- Rope, fitted for the use and the individual
- Breakaway honda
- Wrapped saddle horn
- Saddle with front and back cinch
- Roping rein or single piece reins
- Breast collar

Basis of judging
As with other 4-H endeavors, roping's goals are long-term: to be safe and consistent with every throw. In "real-life" ranch roping, catching may be the only consideration. However, in 4-H Roping, catching is only a part of the score.
Whether roping a simulator from the ground or roping a calf from horseback, emphasis is placed on positioning of the horse/roper to the "calf," safe building, dallying, and throwing the loop. Of equal importance is treating the animal humanely with as little disturbance as possible. Catching will be the last consideration.
Here is what judges will specifically look for in each section of the roping score sheet.

Build a loop
- Member is comfortable handling rope
- Member can quickly and fluidly build a loop
- Loop is correctly sized
- Member is able to handle extra coils
- Correct amount of spoke
- Member is knowledgeable about how to measure spoke
- Member can quickly and fluidly adjust coils and loop

Correct position
- Coils and loop are correctly held on approach
- Member approaches dummy or calf correctly

Swing and form
- Swing is relaxed and stable (no wobbling)
- Arm is in correct position
- Release and follow-through are timed correctly

Success of catch
- Cleanness of catch
- Slack is pulled correctly
- Proper use of dallying or breakaway honda

Possible tests:
- Rope a calf head or bale of hay/straw.

- Rope a simulator. This can be a pull dummy that participants can follow, rope, catch, and dally with. Contests will need an experienced person to "run" the dummy.
- Rope a cow. When roping cattle, the pen size depends on size of cattle, number of cattle in the pen, skill of participants, and available facilities. Cattle must not be able to escape. An arena approximately 75 x 60 feet may be a good beginning size.

Use breakaway hondas. Remember, when roping cattle, breakaway hondas are required for the exhibitor's safety and the benefit of cattle.

Identification and Skills Test Class

In this class, contestants demonstrate their knowledge of tack, equipment, and supplies that might be used on a ranch. They also show their skill at various ranch tasks.

The class consists of 10 items to identify, 10 questions to answer, and 2 tasks to perform.

• Items to identify must come from the equipment list in the District 4-H Ranch Horse Manual or any pieces of tack described in the 4-H Horse Project or the Ohio 4-H Horse Learning Lab.
• Questions may come from the District 4-H Ranch Horse Manual, the 4-H Horse Project, or the 4-H Beef Resource Handbook (Ohio State University Extension Service, 4-H 117R; Oregon series number 4-H 1410) or the Ohio 4-H Horse Learning Lab.
• Tasks could include such things as tying knots, branding, ear tagging, pulling a shoe, applying hobbles, or giving a shot. Many of these could be simulated.

Written February 2012

RANCH HORSE PROJECT - Level Expectations

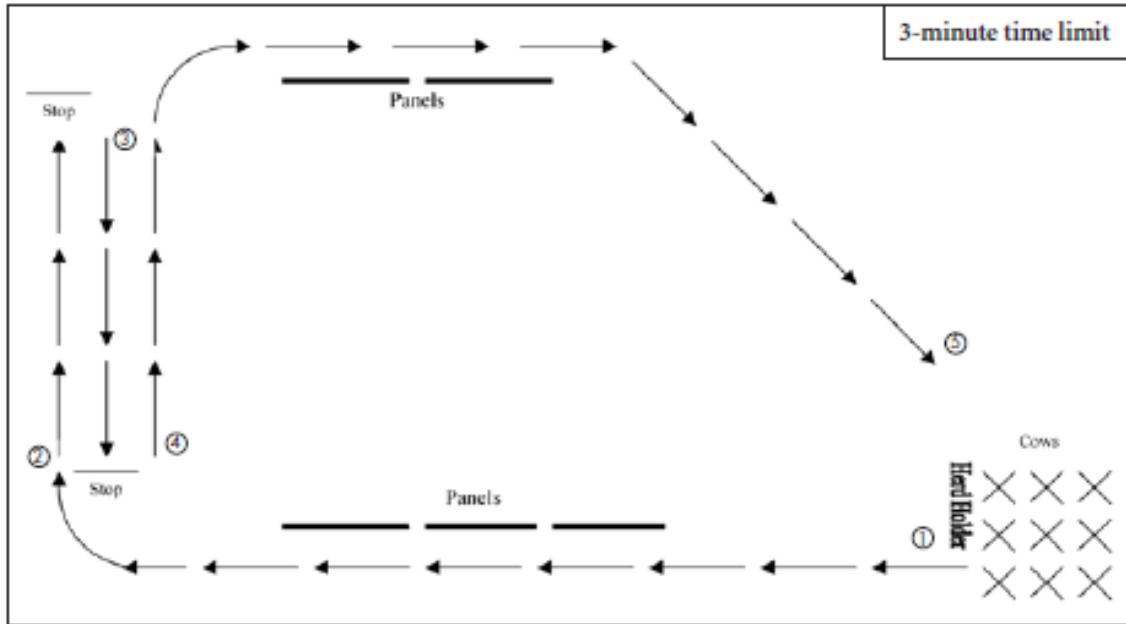|	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Groundwork	• Lead at walk, trot. • Stop • Back • Horse will stand quietly • Able to move on either side of horse • Able to pick up all 4 feet, clean hooves. • Properly fit a halter • Tie horse securely	• Basic lounging • Yield hip • Yield shoulder • Horse moves with member's body movements, not just with the lead rope. Able to apply hobble to one leg • Able to drop rein/lead and horse will stand.	• Send through gate • Send over obstacles • Send into trailer • Hobble • Ground –tie.
Horsemanship	• Walk, trot, lope, stop, back • Smooth transitions of gaits.	• Rollbacks, 2 handed • Simple lead changes • Side pass • Yield to leg,: hip, rib, shoulder • Basic collection	• Perform maneuvers with single hand (regardless of bit) • Flying lead changes. • Horse responds to leg and seat more than reins. • Able to work in collection.
Trail	• Open gate	• Open and close gate One approach • May lose touch with gate.	• Open and close gate, multiple approaches, without letting go of gate.
Roping	• Able to build loop • Able to swing loop • Able to catch dummy from ground • Able to dally • Able to throw loop at dummy from horse.	• Able to catch dummy from horse • Able to track and throw at moving dummy • Able to dally and drag	• Able to track, throw and catch cattle in pen • **For contest, use breakaway only. • • As members advance, will learn how to dally, hold and pull cattle •
Cows	• Able to work a single cow	• Able to move the herd, as into another pen • Able to move into the herd, • Able to separate 2-3 cows (unspecified)	• Able to separate specific cow • Keep separate from herd and move to different pen

Identification and Skills Test Scoring Sheet

Identification items
        10 items   3 points each   _____   30 points total

Questions
        10 questions   3 points each   _____   30 points total

Skills test #1
                                            _____   20 points total

Skills test #2
                                            _____   20 points total
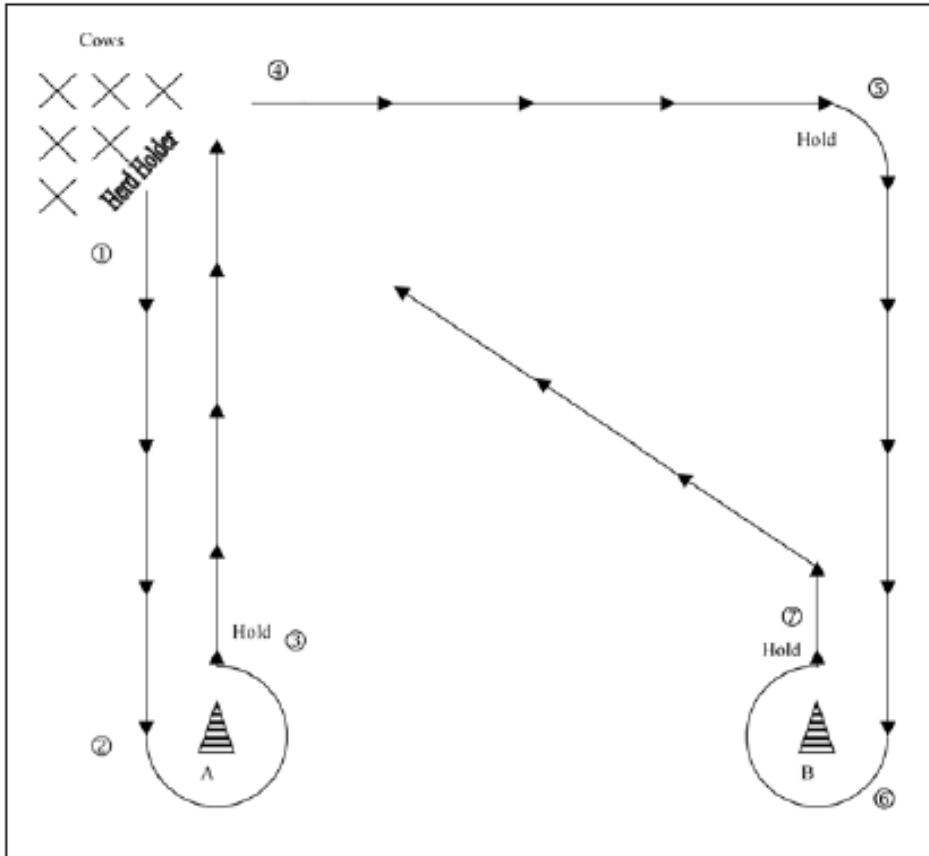
                            TOTAL _____   100 points total

Sample pattern

COW WORKING

All Levels

1. Pull your cow/calf out of the herd and move down alley
2. Push about ⅔ of the way down next wall and stop/hold
   (just a few seconds)
3. Push back towards where you came from and stop/hold
   (just a few seconds)
4. Push toward opposite side again and down alley
5. Release cow/calf to herd

COW WORKING

Level 2 and Level 3

1. Take first calf out
2. Go down and around cone A
3. Hold; and return calf to herd
4. Take second calf out
5. Go to corner and hold
6. Then go around cone B
7. Hold; and return calf to herd

4-H RANCH HORSE COW WORKING SCORE SHEET

Novice   **Junior**   **Intermediate**   **Senior**

	Score	Comments
Proper positioning to move cow 25		
Control of cow 25		
Completeness of pattern 25		
Horsemanship 25		
Other comments		
Judge's initials	Total score⎯⎯⎯⎯➤	

4-H RANCH HORSE ROPING SCORE SHEET

Novice   **Junior**   **Intermediate**   **Senior**

	Score	Comments
Build a loop	25	
Correct amount of spoke	20	
Correct position	20	
Swing and form	25	
Success of catch (3 throws)	10	
Other comments		
Judge's initials	Total score ⟶	

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