

**COLORADO 4-H HORSE  
ADVANCEMENT TEST GUIDELINES**

Information for Agents

*Revised January 2006*

**I. General**

- A. The Advancement Levels program is a logical step-by-step guide to teach youngsters horsemanship and horse care. The Advancement Level chapter in the 4-H Horse Members Manual serves as a leader's and member's guide. The chapter outlines horsemanship skills and knowledge needed for levels I and II. Additional reference materials are listed below.
- B. It should be recognized that not every youth will want to master all levels. However, it should be realized that the first two levels teach the basics of horse safety, care and riding for general pleasure and performance. It is therefore encouraged that all members participate in at least Levels I and II. Level III is for the serious horse person and Level IV is for the youth that is interested in a career in the equine industry or is very serious about his/her riding and training.

**II Program Use**

- A. The Advancement Level program is a teaching guide which combines many aspects of horsemanship and horse care. Reference material for the Advancement Level program include:
  - (1) 4-H Horse Project Members Manual (MA1500)
  - (2) Colorado State 4-H Horse Rule Book (LA1500)
  - (3) The Horse (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), by Evans, Borton, Hintz and Van Vleck
- B. The program is designed to apply to both English (Hunt Seat, Saddle Seat and Dressage), Western, and Ranch Horse riding styles.
- C. Since riding skills depend upon learned knowledge, **the Level 1 & 2 written tests must be given and passed before the riding test.** *Due to hiring out of county judges for Levels 3 & 4, it is not required, but strongly recommended that a member pass the written test before being given the riding test.*
- D. There is not a time or age limit for passing the levels other than those established for eligibility within the county 4-H Horse Program.
- E. Standardized written and riding tests have been developed for all levels and copies are filed with local county extension personnel.
- F. Successfully passing both written and riding tests for Levels I and II and the written, riding and oral test for Levels III and IV entitles the member to an official levels card issued by the County Extension Agent. These cards may be ordered by contacting Nancy Weiss at (970) 491-7604.

- G. Successful passing of written, oral and riding tests for Level III entitles the member to an official level card (issued by County Extension Agent) and a token of recognition at county expense. This award may be ordered by contacting Nancy Weiss at (970) 491-7604.
- H. Successful passing of written, oral and riding tests for Level IV entitles the member to an official level card (issued by County Extension Agent) and a silver-plated buckle. Belt buckles may be ordered by contacting Nancy Weiss at (970) 491-7604.

### **III Level I and II**

- A. Written and riding tests are available for Levels I and II.
- B. Agents and/or appointed assistants may administer and grade the written tests for both levels. Agents and/or appointed assistants may administer riding tests for Level I. **Level II riding tests must be administered by state certified levels raters.**
  - (1) These early stages provide the knowledge, confidence and safety required to establish good habits while working around horses.
  - (2) Caution should be exercised in advancing youth through the first two levels too quickly. Although the requirements appear to be relatively simple, they are critical to both the youngster and the horse in later levels.
- C. After the written test has been scored, the 4-H member may review the test; however, all tests should be collected by the agent or appointed leader. (Length of time kept on file, method of storing and disposing of the written test is up to the discretion of the local extension office).
- D. After successfully passing both the written and riding tests for these two levels, county extension personnel can issue the 4-H member an official level card. Additional cards may be obtained by contacting Nancy Weiss, Department of Animal Sciences, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO 80523; phone: (970) 491-7604.

### **IV Levels III and IV**

- A. Two different written tests are available for Level III and should be used in alternating sessions to maintain the integrity of this program. Currently, only one version of the written test for Level IV is available.
- B. The written test should be administered and scored by the county agent. Questions asked on the Level IV written test are taken from the previously mentioned sources. After the tests have been scored, the 4-H member may review the test; however, all tests should be collected by the agent.
- C. Riding score sheets for Levels III and IV are filed with the local county extension personnel. Only state certified rating judges (updated annually and found at [www.equineextension.colostate.edu](http://www.equineextension.colostate.edu)) should judge the riding skills of the 4-H member for these levels. At these levels, rating judges should be from outside the county.

## V. Changing Divisions

- A. Members completing a level in one division (English, Western or Ranch Horse), may decide to gain the skills in a different division. For example, if a member completed Level III in Western, but then wishes to train in Dressage, he/she must begin with Level I in English and proceed through the Dressage subdivision. A member may not move laterally from one division to another.
- B. The written test for each level is identical for English, Western, and Ranch Horse. Therefore, it will not be necessary for the 4-H member to retake the written test once he/she has passed it for a certain level.

<b>Western Levels</b>	<b>Ranch Horse Levels</b>	<b>English Levels</b>		
1 Novice		1 Novice		
2 Intermediate	2 Intermediate	2 Intermediate		
3 Performer	3 Performer			
4 Horsemaster	4 Horsemaster	Dressage Levels	Hunt Seat Levels	Saddle Seat Levels
		3 Performer	3 Performer	3 Performer
		4 Horsemaster	4 Horsemaster	4 Horsemaster

## VI Administering Tests

- A. Each level requires the member to pass a written and riding test. A 4-H member must pass the written test with a score of 80 percent or better. The member must also pass the riding test with a score of 80 percent or better on each of the riding test performance maneuvers or requirements. Members will use their project horse to take levels tests.
- B. An oral interview is part of the riding test for Level III and IV. It is conducted during or after the riding test. The member will be asked to answer three questions (of the five or six designated) and score 8 out of 10 possible points on each. If the member passes the riding test, but not the interview, he/she will not receive a passing score and must reschedule the oral interview. The member must pass each section of the level test - written, riding and oral interview - with a score of 80 percent or better before the judge can pass the rider in the level.
- C. County Extension Agents in each county may appoint raters/leaders to administer written tests for Level I and II as well as riding tests for Level I. Completed written tests must be returned to the Extension Office. Written tests for Level III and Level IV should not leave control of the Extension Office and should be administered and corrected by Cooperative Extension

personnel. Use only state recognized rating judges for Levels II, III and IV riding tests. Raters/Leaders should use discretion if testing members of their own 4-H club or family (**this should be done only at Level I, if at all**).

- D. Carefully select raters for their area of expertise. Do not expect a person to rate all divisions or subdivisions.
- E. Members may take written and/or riding tests as many times as necessary to advance. Testers may wish to rotate between Test A and Test B if a member must take the written test a second or third time.
- F. Proper tack and attire (English or Western) for tests should meet show standards (boots, hat or helmet, long sleeved shirt, long pants, long hair tied back, etc). The horse should be properly groomed.

## **VII State 4-H Horse Show**

- A. All members wishing to participate at the State 4-H Horse Show must have passed the written and riding tests for Advancement Level II prior to State Show entry deadline.
- B. Members wishing to participate in **Reining, Western Riding or Over Fences** classes must have passed the written and riding test for **Advancement Level III** prior to the State Show entry deadline.

## **STUDY GUIDES FOR 4-H LEVELS WRITTEN TEST**

These sheets are to be given to youth preparing to take the 4-H Levels Written Tests

Reference material for the Advancement Level program include:

4-H Horse Project Members Manual (MA1500)

Colorado State 4-H Horse Rule Book (LA1500)

The Horse (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), by Evans, Borton, Hintz and Van Vleck

**Level I - Novice (all seats)**  
**Test A or B**

(There will be at least one question from each of the following on test A or B.)

*The 4-H member can request a reader, signer or any other assistance if required. All possible effort will be made to accommodate all youth. Spelling of answers will be provided. The test will be mostly made up of matching, true and false with some fill in the blanks.*

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Equipment                               | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| A. English <b>and</b> Western bits         |                                      |
| B. Parts of the English or Western Saddle  |                                      |
| 2. Aids used when riding                   | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 3. Common breeds of horses                 | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 4. Horse colors and markings; face and leg | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 5. General terms                           | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 6. Gaits - walk, trot, canter/lope         | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 7. Parts of the horse                      | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 8. Parts of the hoof and hoof care         | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 9. General safety                          | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 10. Basic nutrition                        | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 11. General 4-H show class descriptions    | Source: Colorado State 4-H Rule Book |
| 12. Basic health                           | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| A. Normal body temperature                 |                                      |
| B. Height in hands                         |                                      |
| C. Parasite (basic)                        |                                      |
| 13. Need for shelter for the horse         | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 14. Universal birthday for all horses      | Source: 4-H Member Manual            |
| 15. Age a member must be to be in 4-H      | Source: Colorado State 4-H Rule Book |
| 16. Saddling and bridling                  | Source: Colorado State 4-H Rule Book |

**Level II - Intermediate (all seats)**  
**Tests A or B**

(There will be at least one question from each of the following on test A or B.)

*Most answers and spelling will be provided, however, some recall is required. The 4-H member can request a reader, signer or any other assistance if required. All possible effort will be made to accommodate all youth.*

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Conformation and Judging          | Source: 4-H Member Manual                               |
| A. Identify horse breeds             |   |
| B. Horse colors                      |   |
| C. Gaits, number of beats, movements |   |
| D. Blemishes and unsoundness         |   |
| 2. General terms and Definitions     | Source: 4-H Member Manual, Colorado State 4-H Rule Book |
| 3. Safety and Fire Prevention        | Source: 4-H Member Manual                               |
| 4. Equipment - English or Western    | Source: 4-H Member Manual, Colorado State 4-H Rule Book |
| 5. Brand inspection                  | Source: 4-H Member Manual                               |
| 6. Posting trot, diagonals           | Source: 4-H Member Manual, Colorado State 4-H Rule Book |
| 7. Nutrition                         | Source: 4-H Member Manual                               |
| A. Energy levels of feed             |   |
| B. Minerals (Ca:P)                   |   |
| C. Good feeding tips                 |   |
| D. Quality hay and pasture           |   |
| 8. Health                            | Source: 4-H Member Manual                               |
| A. Diseases (basic)                  |   |
| B. Teeth (basic)                     |   |
| 9. Tack and bits                     | Source: 4-H Member Manual, Colorado State 4-H Rule Book |



## Level IV - Horseman (all seats)

*There will be at least one question from each of the following on the Level IV Test. Most answers and spelling will be provided, however, some recall is required. The 4-H member can request a reader, signer or any other assistance if needed. All possible efforts will be made to accommodate all youth.*

1. Judging Source: 4-H Member Manual, The Horse (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)
  - A. Unsoundness
  - B. Breeds
  - C. Colors
  
2. Health Source: 4-H Member Manual
  - A. Disease (advanced)
  - B. Reproduction
  - C. Vital signs
  - D. Organ function
  - E. Parasites - internal & external
  
3. Nutrition (advanced) Source: 4-H Member Manual, The Horse (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)
  - A. Minerals and vitamins
  - B. General horse nutrition
  - C. Protein levels
  - D. Poisonous Plants
  
4. Safety Source: 4-H Member Manual
  
5. Show procedures Source: Colorado State 4-H Rule Book