

Oklahoma 4-H Horse Project Member Self-Evaluation

Horse Shows: How I Practice

4H-ANSI-413

Showing at competitive events is one of the most popular horse activities that people enjoy. You and your horse are a team, and it is rewarding to lead the team to victory in competitions. Shows are also a great place to visit with friends and meet people with similar interests. As with any competitive event, success requires practice and preparation. This 4-H member guide provides questions for you to answer about how you prepare for competition at shows. Hopefully, you'll have the chance to discuss your answers with others and identify some of the common and various ways others prepare themselves and their horse for horse shows.

Question 1

Think about your last show or the one you may be preparing for currently, and ask yourself, how often within the past two weeks have I worked with my horse?

- Everyday before the show.
- More like every other day before the show.
- One or two times per week before the show.
- Didn't have the time or desire to work with my horse at all before the show.

Thoughts and discussion: Do you think that the frequency of practices you completed was too often or not enough? How well did your horse respond to the frequency of practice? Did this frequency of practice seem to pay off? Do you usually practice more or less frequently than your answer?

Question 2

When practicing with my horse before a show, I usually:

- Spend more than an hour during each session.
- Spend about 30 minutes to an hour during each session.
- Spend about 15 to 30 minutes during each session.
- Sometimes spend only a few minutes, other times much longer, so it varies too much to say.

Thoughts and discussion: Why do you practice this length of time during each session? What determines how long a practice session lasts? Do you feel that your usual length of practice is long enough? Do you feel that you have ever practiced too long in one session? Does how your horse responds affect how long a session lasts?

'Evaluating Myself'

Being able to objectively evaluate your actions is an important skill for success. This guide contains a list of questions to help you develop self-evaluation skills. Some questions may not have a single, correct answer. Some follow-up questions for your own thought and possible group discussion are provided for each question.

By completing this guide you will learn more about yourself and your actions to help in future decision making. Completing this with a group will allow you to learn from others experiences. Group discussions should be positive, encouraging and non-judgmental, so you and others will feel comfortable speaking with one another. Remember, different methods and actions are not necessarily wrong, and there isn't necessarily only one right or wrong answer to all the questions.

Question 3

Before I start my practice sessions, I usually:

- Think about what I need to accomplish and have an idea of how long I'm going to work on different tasks.
- Don't have much of an idea of what I'm going to work on, I let the horse's behavior guide me.
- Don't think about what I need to accomplish, I rely on someone else to tell me what I need to work on before I begin working.

Thoughts and discussion: How does knowing what you plan to do before starting a practice session help your success? What are the advantages or disadvantages to relying totally on someone else to decide what you are going to work on?

Question 4

When preparing for the last show, I'd describe my training sessions as:

- a. I did a lot of different skills for short periods of time.
- b. I found myself working on one or two skills for most of the practice time.
- c. I didn't have a set pattern, some days I worked on one or two skills, other times I worked on many different skills for short periods of time.

Thoughts and discussion: Does your horse respond positively when you do a lot of different skills for short periods of time or when you work on one skill for a relatively long period of time? What advantages are there to varying practice and working on many different skills for short periods of time? What about advantages for working on one or two skills for a long period of time? Do you purposely schedule set times for you or your horse to relax during a training session?

Question 5

During the two weeks before my last show I participated at, I'd describe my level of success as:

- a. I improved my and my horse's skills during each session.
- b. I couldn't see much improvement with our skills throughout the weeks of preparation.
- c. I felt like we worked well together to prepare our skills, but some days we ended worse than we started.

Thoughts and discussion: Do you find yourself working for shorter periods of time when things go well or when things go wrong? Who seems more frustrated when things don't go well, you or your horse?

Question 6

When I practice for a show, I usually:

- a. Begin practicing with my horse on my own without persuasion from a family member or a coach.
- b. Enjoy practicing with my horse in preparation for a show, but usually need some encouragement from a family member or coach to actually go and practice.
- c. Dislike practicing and without pressure from a family member or coach I wouldn't practice.
- d. Do not practice and just go and enjoy the show without preparation beforehand.

Thoughts and discussion: Are there some shows that you seem more interested in preparing for than others? Do you have trouble finding time to practice because of other activities and jobs? What stands in your way of practicing?

Question 7

In general, I find that:

- a. I look forward to practice sessions more than actually showing.
- b. I don't like to spend time with the practice sessions; I know that the shows won't be as fun or successful unless I do.
- c. I don't like to spend time with practice sessions because I really don't think it helps me or my horse.
- d. I don't like spend the time with practice sessions, and am not that concerned if showing is not enjoyable or successful.

Thoughts and discussion: As a follow-up, do you like practicing by yourself or with others? What are some advantages to working by yourself? How about working with others?