

Oklahoma 4-H Horse Project Member Self-Evaluation

Horse Shows: Showing in Showmanship at Halter

4H-ANSI-415

Showmanship at Halter class is designed for you to exhibit how well you show your horse at halter. Because it doesn't require riding, it is a popular class for many that are inexperienced with showing. The condition, grooming, and the performance are evaluated along with the appearance and actions of the exhibitor. The class procedure is designed to measure how responsive your horse is to your cues while you lead, stop, turn, back and present your horse to a judge. As with any competitive event, success requires preparation, practice and self-evaluation. This 4-H member guide provides questions for you to answer about how you prepare for and perform the showmanship class. Hopefully, you will have the chance to discuss your answers with other members and identify some of the common and various ways others prepare for and perform during shows. You will likely find that a rulebook will be needed, so ask your leader or parent for a copy before you work through the questions.

Grooming the Horse

Preparation to condition and groom your horse will require several months prior to showing. Which of the following grooming activities do you do on a routine basis?

- I routinely brush my horse's hair coat more than two to three times per week through the year.
- I personally trim the long hair on my horse's face, legs and bridle path when I'm preparing for a show.
- I try to be present when the horse-shoer works on my horses' feet.

Thoughts and discussion: Would you identify yourself as someone who likes to brush and groom your horse or someone that doesn't enjoy it? Do you have a normal routine when cleaning and brushing a horse in preparation for practice? If so, describe it. How long does your normal routine take? What special grooming actions do you do the day of a show?

'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.

Your Horse's Body Condition

Aside from having a shiny hair coat and long hair trimmed, your horse's body condition is important. Body condition refers to how fat or skinny your horse appears. Generally speaking, a horse should be exhibited in a moderate condition, trim but not skinny. How would you rate the current body condition of your horse?

- My horse is fairly skinny right now. I can see the ribs and backbone, and he/she doesn't have much fat on the rump or anywhere else.
- My horse is pretty fat right now. There is so much cover on the ribs that I can't feel them. There is a lot of fat on the rump, a crease runs down the back, and there is a lot of fat on the side of the neck and behind the shoulder.
- I'd say my horse is in the middle: Fit, but not skinny. I can feel ribs but there is fat in between so the ribs don't show (even with short hair). The backbone doesn't stick up, but there isn't a big crease either.

Thoughts and discussion: If your horse is too skinny, in addition to feeding it more, what might a veterinarian recommend? How long do you think it would take for your horse to gain 100 pounds of weight? How much exercise, how often and how long do you think it would take for your horse to lose 100 pounds?

Tack and Attire

How well do you know the rules for attire (your clothes) and tack for showmanship at halter? Which of the following is (are) not allowed?

- a. Rope or nylon halter
- b. Leather halter
- c. Spurs
- d. Chaps

Thoughts and discussion: Describe how a properly adjusted halter fits on the horse's head? Which is preferred to show in, a leather or rope halter and lead? Are you the type of person who thinks a lot about what to wear in a showmanship class, or one that doesn't really care too much? Are you the type of person that routinely cleans tack and makes sure your clothes are clean and neat, or one that doesn't really care?

Your Horse's Performance

There are several skills that you might be asked to demonstrate when exhibiting in showmanship at halter. Rate your horse's ability to accomplish the following skills as really good, sometimes good, average, doesn't do it very well or beyond hope.

- a. Walk and trot along side me in a straight line
- b. Stop beside me
- c. Back up
- d. Stop and turn so his body is in the same line but facing the opposite direction
- e. Moving and setting his feet in the desired position with little cueing with the halter

Thoughts and discussion: Can you explain to someone what a really good ability for each of the skills listed above would look like? If you rated your horse's skill below really good on one or more of the skills, describe what needs to be better. Can you explain how a horse should move his front and hind legs when turning?

Practicing

How often do you work on skills related to showmanship at halter?

- a. Nearly every practice, and with specific routines
- b. Not often with special routines, but I make sure I work around my horse when leading and handling just like I would when showing
- c. Not very often, I don't have the desire to or my horse really doesn't need it

Thoughts and discussion: What may be the advantage to following the same routines, like leading your horse when you are at home and showing in showmanship at halter? Is your horse able to tell the difference when you are 'serious' about showing verses just leading around the barn?

Your Performance

There are several skills that you might be asked to demonstrate when exhibiting in showmanship at halter. Identify the following as desirable or undesirable when exhibiting at showmanship at halter? (You may answer 'it depends' but you need to explain).

- a. Facing forward when backing your horse
- b. Standing on the same side of the judge
- c. Kicking or pointing your feet to help the horse stand correctly
- d. Leading in front of your horse
- e. Setting the horse's hind feet before the front feet when setting up in front of a judge

Thoughts and discussion: Can you describe when you should stand on the left or right side of your horse when presenting it to a person? When standing beside your horse, is it best to face the horse, face the person you are presenting it to, or kind of both?

You and your horse's behavior

Would you describe your horse as being nervous, a little out of control or skittish when showing? How about sleepy or slow moving? How about you? Are you nervous or do you act differently when you are actually showing in showmanship at halter as compared with when you are just practicing or handling your horse at home?