



# The 4-H Horse Project:

## AN INTRODUCTION

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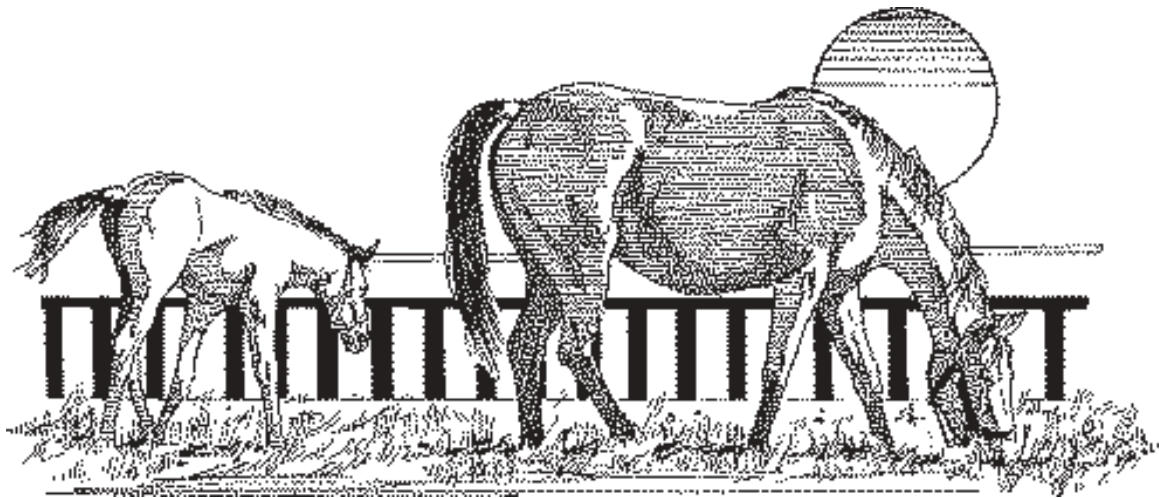
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## Introduction

The 4-H horse project is an exciting and educational opportunity for 4-H members, especially in Wyoming 4-H, because the horse business is such a large part of the agricultural industry in our state.

Owning a horse is a big responsibility for 4-H members because it requires much time, effort, dedication, and expense. A good quality horse that is well trained will easily cost a minimum of \$1,000 to \$1,200 and they can go about as high as you are willing to pay. Also, after the horse is purchased, there many other costs that must be accounted for, and these range from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year, which is about \$100 to \$150 per month. These costs include feed and hay, housing facilities, riding equipment, show tack, medical supplies, veterinarian bills, transportation expenses, management expenses, and other items such as shoeing.

A horse requires care on a daily basis. The most important of these daily care items are feeding and watering, grooming and brushing, hoof care and cleaning, stall cleaning, and exercising the horse for at least thirty minutes. This exercise is extremely important in maintaining the general health of the horse. The feet should be cleaned every day and the hooves should

be trimmed and shod every six to eight weeks. To maintain a healthy hair coat, the horse should be vigorously brushed and groomed for 10 to 15 minutes every day. This removes the dirt, dead skin, dandruff, and anything else from the skin and hair as well as promoting the production of the natural oils that protect the skin and give the hair a natural sheen.

Safety is also an important factor that needs to be evaluated when considering horse ownership. Basic safety practices include: (1) speaking to your horse when approaching or touching it; (2) never wrapping the lead strap, halter shank, or reins around your hand, wrist, or body; (3) wearing boots with proper heels to prevent your feet from slipping all the way through the stirrups; and (4) wearing Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) certified helmets when riding a horse. SEI certifies helmets that meet or exceed the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards for equestrian headgear.

As you can tell, owning a horse is a big responsibility and it requires much time, work, dedication, effort, and expense. However, if you take on this responsibility, all of this time, work, dedication, effort, and expense can be very fun and rewarding.

## Selecting a horse project

Yes, many 4-H members think of their horses as pets. However, the actual purpose of a horse is to work and perform tasks that make our lives simpler and easier. We use them for racing, herding cattle and sheep, branding cattle, jumping, packing, riding, and many other tasks. Therefore, horses are actually athletes and must be selected and judged on qualities that enhance their athletic ability. These qualities are divided into three categories: (1) conformation, (2) movement, (3) temperament, and (4) intelligence.

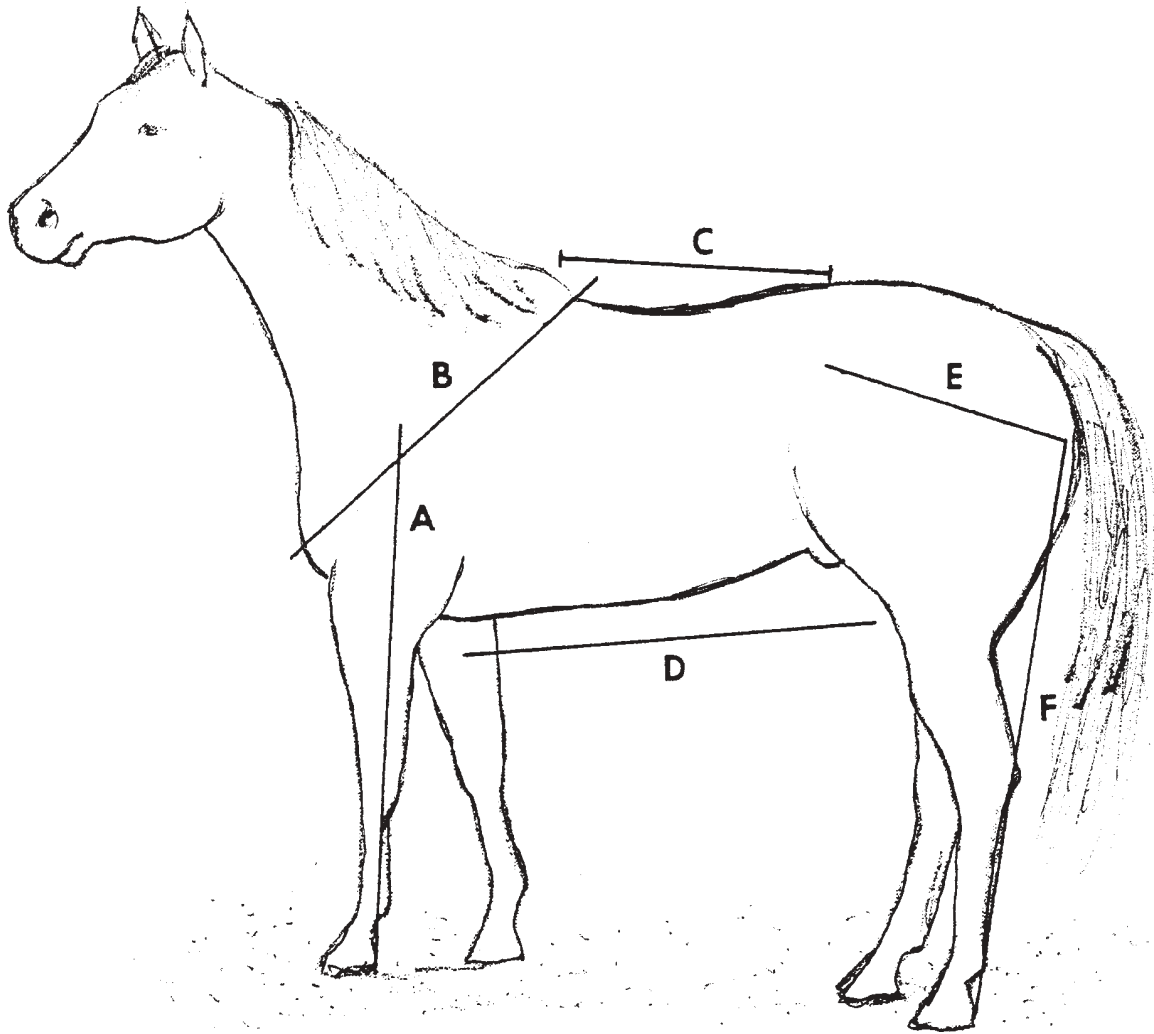
Evaluating a horse's intelligence is very difficult, because it depends on the horse's attitude and pedigree. A horse's pedigree is important because the degree of difficulty required when teaching and training the sire and dam is a good indicator of how their foals will teach and train. The pedigree is easier to obtain if the horse is registered. In order to register a horse, the names of the sire and dam are required, and in most instances, the names of the grand-sire and grand-dam are also required.

Horses, like other animals, have different temperaments. Horses that are nervous, spooky, or get mad and upset when being handled are much harder to teach and train. Also, horses that have bad habits like kicking and biting should be avoided. Choose a horse that is calm, does not get upset at usual activities or normal things, and with enough training to respond to the rider. The horse should be gentle, but willing (when asked) to go through the basic gaits of walk, trot, and lope. The gaits should be smooth and comfortable to the rider. Other indications of a gentle temperament include easy to lead, standing quietly, and not nipping or kicking at other

horses or people. Age is another factor to consider. Younger, sensitive, or nervous horses are not recommended for beginning riders. Green-broke horses are also not recommended for inexperienced riders. The beginning rider will usually do better with an older (at least eight years old) and gentler horse that will be patient with the unskilled hands, insecure seat, and inexperience of the rider.

Movement is much easier to evaluate than temperament and intelligence. First, have the horse stand square to make sure that all four feet and legs are straight. Be sure to look from the front, rear, and both sides. Second, have the horse walk and trot straight toward you and then away from you. This lets you see if the feet and legs move straight and true. They should not sway or swing, in or out. Third, watch the horse walk and trot from the side. This shows the smoothness of stride, the freedom of movement, and the length of stride. The length of stride is also important, because the horse's back legs should not hit the front legs (this is called overstepping).

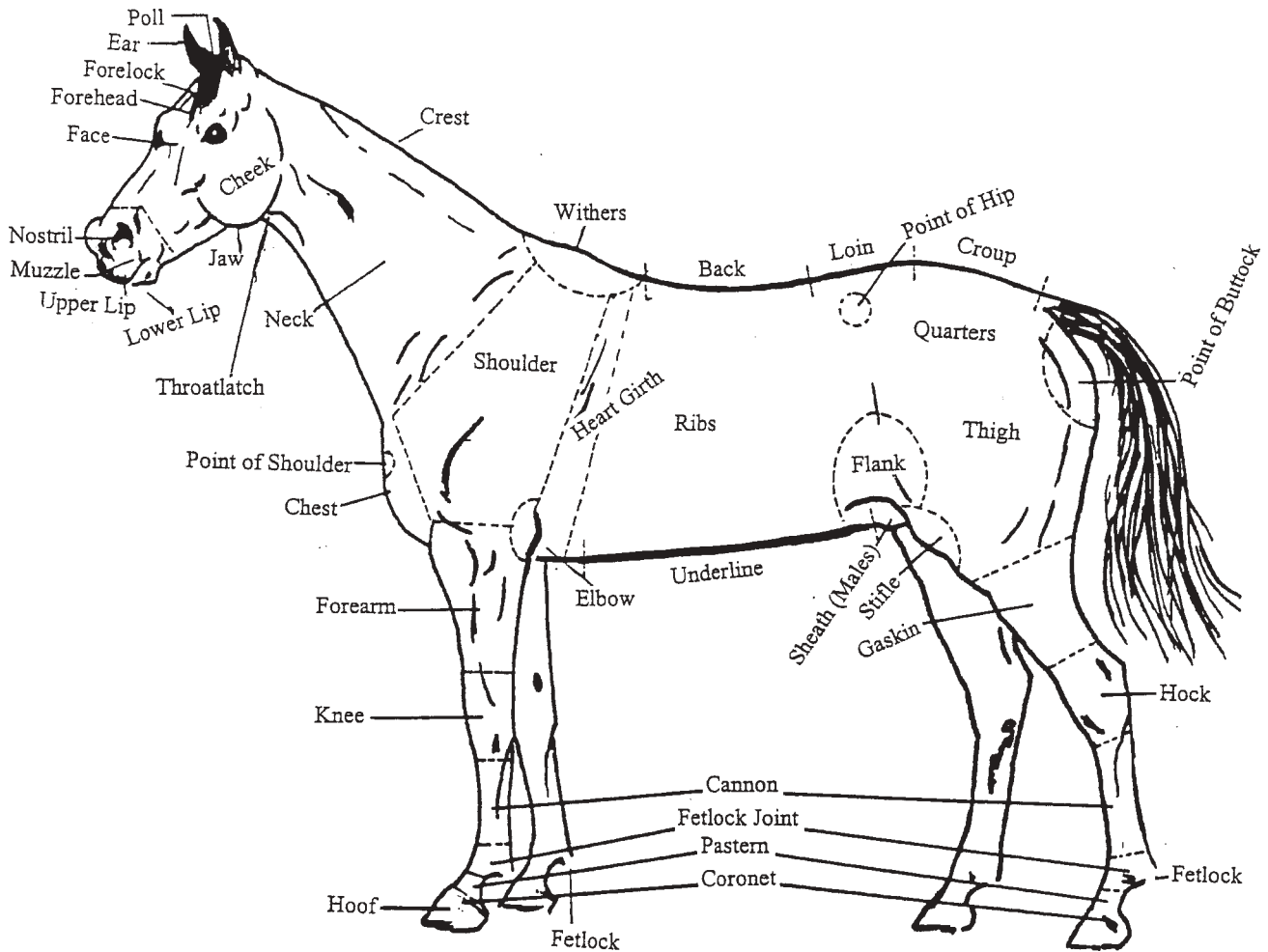
Conformation is the overall make-up of the horse. It is a blending of the skeletal structure, substance of muscle, body type, and the balance of all of these factors. A structurally correct horse has a long and sloping shoulder, a short and strong back, a longer and more level croup, a long underline, and straight legs. A correctly muscled horse will have a bulging gaskin and forearm, well-defined back muscles, and a well-developed hind quarter with the musculing being the widest through the stifle when viewed from the rear. Balance is how each part of the horse is developed in proportion to the other parts.



**Figure A - Conformation Lines**

It is important to understand how structure, muscle, type, and balance work together to produce the desired conformation which makes the horse a better athlete. The correct conformation lines are illustrated in Figure A.

Lines A & F---straight legs  
Line B---long and sloping shoulder  
Line C---short and strong back  
Line D---long underline  
Line E---longer and more level croup



**Figure B - Horse Parts**

### **Parts of the horse**

Selecting a horse to show is as important as the feed and care that you give the horse once you bring it home. The horse project should begin with a healthy and high quality horse.

Before you can identify and select a high quality horse, you must know what one looks like. The first step in this process is to learn the important parts of the horse. The important parts of the horse are illustrated in Figure B.



## Horse terms

Understanding the vocabulary used by horse breeders, exhibitors, and judges is also a necessary step in learning about horse selection and production. Knowing the terms listed below will greatly assist you when communicating with people in the horse business.

**breed:** a group of animals with common ancestry and with similar characteristics that are passed on from generation to generation

**breeder:** owner of the parents of the foals when they were mated

**castrate:** to remove the testicles

**colt:** a male foal

**dam:** the mother of a particular animal

**farrier:** a person who shoes horses

**filly:** a female horse up to three years old

**foal:** a newborn

**gelding:** a horse that has been castrated

**hand:** a measure of horse height, one hand equals four inches

**mare:** a mature female horse

**purebred:** an animal with same-breed parents and that could be recorded in an association registry

**registered:** an animal whose name and assigned number have been recorded in the record books of its respective breed association; this record also includes the name and assigned numbers of the horse's sire and dam

**sire:** the father of a particular animal

**stallion:** an uncastrated male horse

**yearling:** an animal between one and two years old

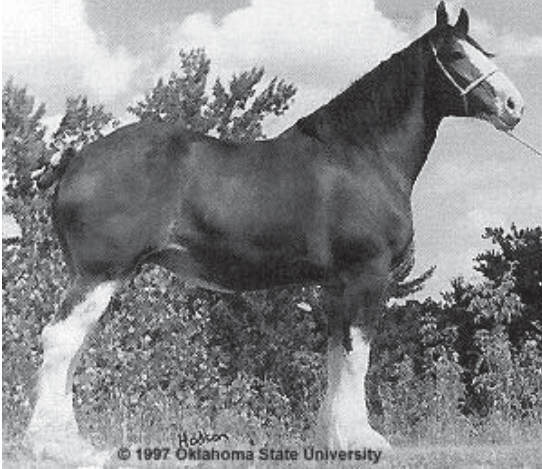
## Horse breeds

There are more than five million horses in the United States. Until the early 1900s, their primary purposes were transportation and work. However, today they are mostly used for recreational and pleasure activities such as showing, packing, riding, and racing. As a result of the various needs, uses, and preferences of people; many breeds have evolved or been developed. Each breed emphasizes the specific traits that were needed, wanted, or otherwise deemed desirable by the original breeders. As a result, horse breeds have developed and evolved based on four specific categories: (1) speed, (2) work, (3) color, and (4) show qualities.

**Speed Breeds** were developed either for stamina (Thoroughbred and Standardbred) or as sprinters (Quarter Horse). As a result of this selection criteria, the Thoroughbred has developed into a tall and long-legged horse that can run very fast over long distances. The Standardbred is



in the same mold as the Thoroughbred, but it was selected for speed at the trot. Therefore, it is also long and tall, but has the ability to trot extremely fast. Quarter Horses are very fast at short distances, because they were actually bred and developed to work cattle, which requires short bursts of speed and agility.



*Clydesdale*



*Appaloosa*



*Arabian*

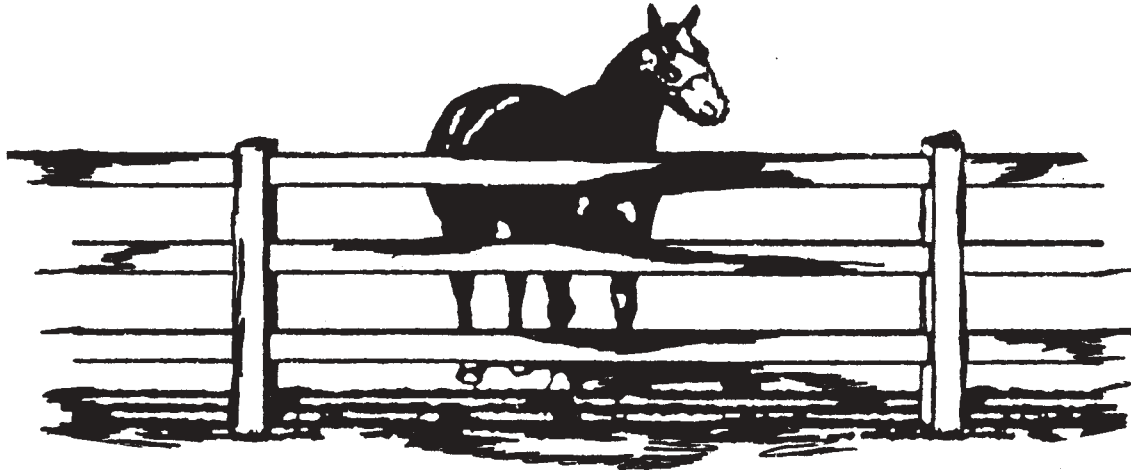
**Work Breeds** are also called draft horses. These breeds emphasize the ability to pull or carry extremely large and heavy loads. As a result, they are built like human weight-lifters. They have very large bodies, which are big framed and very bulky because of the muscle development. Belgians, Clydesdales, and Percherons are examples of work or draft horse breeds.

**Color Breeds** have developed based strictly on the color or color pattern of the horse. With selection preference being solely dictated by color or color pattern alone, improvement of other traits (conformation, agility, speed, and etc.) has been greatly reduced. Breeds that have evolved, developed, and otherwise been selected primarily on color or color pattern include: Appaloosa, Paint, Palomino, and Pinto.

**Show Breeds** were developed for the show ring. Their selection was based on “showy” qualities and “stylish” characteristics. Breeds that have developed along these lines include: Saddlebred, Arabian, Tennessee Walking Horse, Morgan, and Hackney Ponies.

Since most horses are now used for pleasure, the distinction between these four breed categories has become much less definable. Quarter Horses, Paints, Pintos, Thoroughbreds, Appaloosas, Arabians, and most other breeds have all crossed the line of their intended purpose and have made significant contributions in their new direction of use.

Along with availability, other important considerations are quality and the intended purpose for the horse. Make sure that you evaluate the overall quality (conformation, movement, temperament, and intelligence), rather than just one or two charac-



teristics. There is a wide variation of quality within each breed, so selection should be made based on sound judgment and knowledge – not on impulse or haste.

### **Housing, care, and feeding**

Successful horse breeders must take care of many details to ensure that their animals are comfortable. After all, a comfortable horse is more likely to be healthy and grow efficiently. There are five main items that influence or affect the comfort level of the horse: (1) high quality housing, (2) environmental control, (3) clean feed, (4) fresh water, and (5) the company of its owner because of the tender loving care (TLC) provided.

The housing for horses may be simple and inexpensive, or it may be as elaborate and as expensive as you want to make it. Either way it must be functional – both for you and for the horse. The housing must provide protection from the heat and sun, as well as protection from the wind, rain, and cold. It should also be large enough to accommodate both the horse and the people who need to enter the pen to care for it. Some key items to remember when building the shed and pen are:

- The horse will spend most of its time in the pasture, so the main purpose of the shed is to provide shelter.
- The shed should provide both ventilation in the summer and protection from the cold winds and drafts of winter. It should also be well drained. If these conditions are not met, the horse will not be as comfortable, not eat properly, and not be as thrifty or healthy.
- Dirt floors that are well bedded and dry are preferred for horses. Wood and other materials are also acceptable, but make sure that plenty of bedding is provided. Regardless of the floor you choose, or already have, change the bedding at least once a week.
- The shed, stall, and penning area should be dog-proof.
- Design the shed to allow for easy feeding and watering and to keep the area as clean and dry as possible. This helps lessen the chance of bacteria buildup, resulting in a healthier horse.
- A young horse will grow, so build the shed tall enough to allow for future

growth. Also, put latches and locks where you can reach them, but not where the horse can get to them.

No matter how old or how healthy the horse is, it will not do very well without a proper place to live. A horse needs a proper home as well as proper care, feeding, and watering.

As previously discussed, environment control tends to go along with housing. Since horses prefer temperatures of 50 to 60 degrees, there are two areas of concern when discussing environmental comfort: (1) cold and/or wet weather and (2) hot and/or dry weather. In cold and/or wet weather, a place to get out of the weather (the shed) must be supplied. In extremely cold weather, a source of heat may also be required. Perhaps the easiest and most effective way to do this is with additional bedding and the use of heat lamps.

*Safety note: To avoid a possible fire hazard, an adult should set up the heat lamps.*

In hot and/or dry weather, a source of shade (the shed) must be provided – especially if the pasture does not have any trees. Also, double-check to make sure that

the drinking water is cool, clean, and fresh. If the shade and drinking water are not providing enough relief, additional cooling must be provided. Usually an electric fan is all that is needed. However, if this is insufficient, a sprinkler or mister system used in conjunction with the fan should provide enough cooling.

*Safety note: Water and electricity are not a good mix. Therefore, an adult should set up the fan and sprinkler or mister system.*

Cool, clean, and fresh drinking water must be available at all times. If you use an automatic watering system, check the system daily. After all, if it isn't working, it isn't automatic. As a result, the horses would not be getting the water they need. If you use a bucket, pan, or tank; make sure that you change the water several times each day. The drinking water should never be allowed to get hot.

In the winter, make sure that the water does not freeze. This is important because horses, like other animals, will not grow properly without sufficient water. Regardless of the season all watering equipment should be checked and cleaned on a regular basis to ensure that it is providing plenty of cool, clean, and fresh water.

Proper nutrition and feeding of the horse are the primary areas of concern for most 4-H members. However, with the commercial feeds that are available today, nutrition is not as much of a concern as it used to be. The biggest issues with feeding are making sure that the feed is clean and fresh, as well as making sure that the feed pans and feeder are clean.

To evaluate rations, you must first understand a few simple concepts and terms about feeds and rations. Ration is the total



combination of foods that the animal is consuming. Feed is a mixture of feedstuffs. Feedstuffs are classified as either a concentrate or a roughage. Roughages are forages such as clover, alfalfa, and other grasses. Concentrates are grains such as corn, oats, wheat, etc and they have more energy or calories when compared to roughages, which are higher in fiber. Properly harvested legume hays (clover and alfalfa) have a protein content of 12 to 20% and when used as a complete ration will provide adequate to surplus protein for most horses.

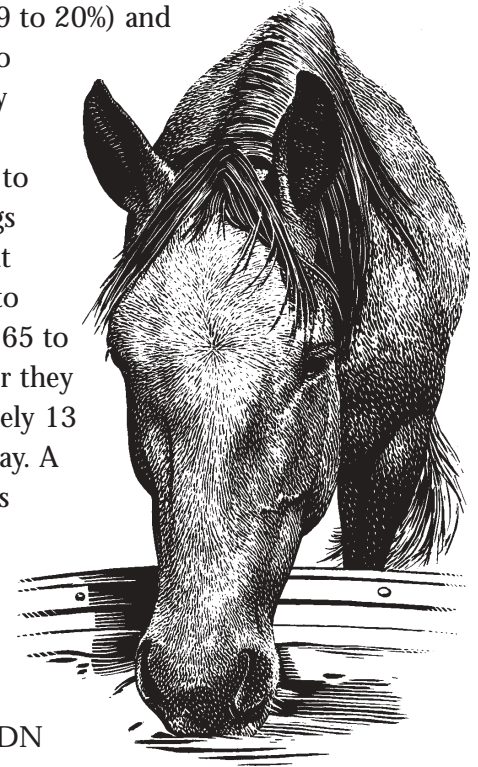
The Crude Protein (CP) content of horse rations is the most practical and common measurement available to evaluate and compare the quality of horse feed. However, Crude Protein (CP) is not the only factor that must be considered, Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) must also be evaluated and compared. TDN is a measure of energy or calories in the feed. TDN is a more accurate measurement of the concentrates or grain in the ration because these feedstuffs are relatively low in CP (8 to 11%), but are relatively high in TDN (70 to 90%).

Therefore, in order for a horse ration to provide a complete diet, it must have the correct balance of crude protein and total digestible nutrients. Thus, both roughages (hay and/or pasture) and concentrates (grains) must be provided to ensure proper nutrition. Most horse breeders also provide a mineral block as a safe-guard against possible nutritional deficiencies.

The feed requirements for the horse depend on its age, size, and the amount of work or exercise performed. Foals (under three months old) require a ration that is

very high in CP (19 to 20%) and high in TDN (70 to 75%), but they only require a small amount per day (8 to 9 pounds). Yearlings require a ration that contains about 11 to 12% CP and about 65 to 70% TDN, however they require approximately 13 to 14 pounds per day. A mature horse that is worked or ridden about two hours a day requires a ration that is about 10% CP and about 65 to 70% TDN and it needs approximately 17 to 18 pounds per day. A mare in heavy lactation needs a ration that contains about 13% CP and about 70% TDN. She needs 21 to 23 pounds a day because she is producing 30 to 40 pounds of milk per day for her foal.

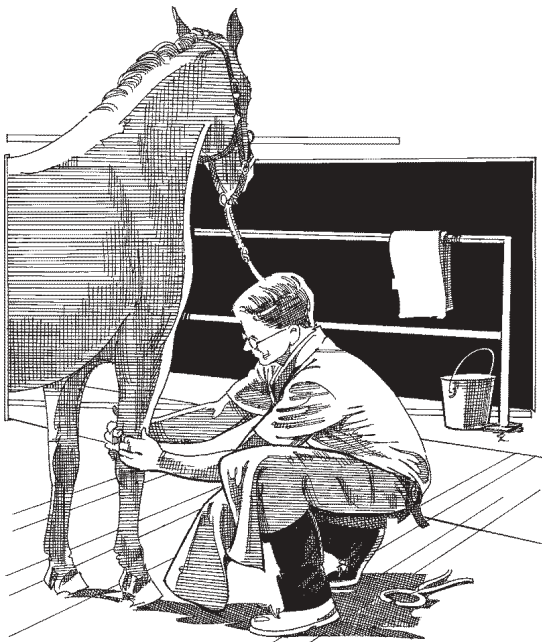
As you can tell, there is a wide variation in what and how much to feed—and it depends on each horse's situation. However, a good rule of thumb to follow is to use a high quality hay or pasture and supplement with a good quality feed. The amount of supplementation depends on how much or how hard the horse is being worked or ridden. A horse that is being ridden or exercised lightly each day should receive an additional 5 to 6 pounds of feed to maintain its body weight, energy, and health. A horse that is being ridden and/or worked hard each day may need as much as 10 to 12 pounds of additional feed to maintain its body weight, energy, and health.



The key to developing the proper ration is to obtain the correct balance between the feed, hay, and pasture which will meet the horse's daily needs. Also, it is important to realize that horses, like other animals, vary in their ability to digest food. Some will get fat on a smaller amount of feed, while some will stay thin on a larger amount of feed. Therefore, each horse needs to be fed on an individual basis.

Another item to consider is that horses have a rather small stomach for their body size. Their stomach only holds about two gallons, which is why horses are continuous grazers. Therefore, two or three feedings per day rather than one large feeding are recommended.

What does all this mean to the 4-H member? It means that horses will do quite well on good quality pasture and hay. It also means that they will require a feed supplement based on the amount of work or exercise that they are being asked to do. The nutrition requirement also goes up as the air temperature goes down. This is to help



keep the horse's body temperature at the normal level. Each horse is different and thus adjustment of feeding practices and procedures must be made according to the condition of the horse. If a horse is thin, increase the amount being fed. If a horse is overweight, decrease the amount being fed. Adjustments of feeding practices and procedures should be done on a continual basis because the condition of the horse and the amount of exercise it is or is not receiving also changes on a continual basis.

If you feed according to these guidelines and recommendations, and keep an eye on the horse's health and body condition, you should have very few feeding and nutritional problems and a more successful and enjoyable horse project. If you have questions or concerns regarding the care and feeding of the horse, contact your County Extension Office for assistance and advice.

### Health care

In order to have a successful horse project, it is extremely important to start with a healthy horse and to maintain the health of the horse throughout the project. Therefore, you must be able to identify the difference between a healthy horse and an unhealthy horse.

A healthy horse will be bright-eyed, alert, and happy to see you. A healthy horse will drink plenty of water and eat with eagerness. The stool (manure) will be firm and moist. The breathing will not be loud or labored. When resting, the breathing rate should be approximately 12 to 15 respirations per minute and the pulse rate for a healthy horse (at rest) is about 30 to 40 beats per minute. The normal body temperature of a horse is about 101 degrees.

An unhealthy horse will have a decreased appetite. It will not drink as much and will not be frisky or happy to see you. The horse will also appear dull-eyed, listless, depressed, shrunken, and it will most likely be standing away from the rest of the herd. The stool may be very dry and hard (constipated) or just the opposite – very watery and loose (scours). The breathing may be hard, fast, and labored. The body temperature may be higher than normal (any temperature higher than 103 degrees is considered a fever).

If you think the horse is sick, there are two very important steps to follow: (1) tell your parents and (2) separate the sick animal from the other horses. After getting advice from a veterinarian or other professional, follow that advice very carefully.

Many diseases and health problems may affect the horse. Most of these are fairly easy to control, once you know what the problem is and provide the proper treatment. Also, most health problems can be avoided or kept to a minimum by following these eight steps:

- Buy only healthy horses from healthy herds.
- Keep all vaccinations up-to-date.
- Maintain a de-worming program.
- Maintain a hoof-care program.
- Clean the stall and pen, at least once a week.
- Clean the waterers and feeders at least once a week—twice a week is much better.
- Watch the horse closely and on a daily basis for signs of sickness and ill-health.

- Inform your parents if you think that the horse is sick.

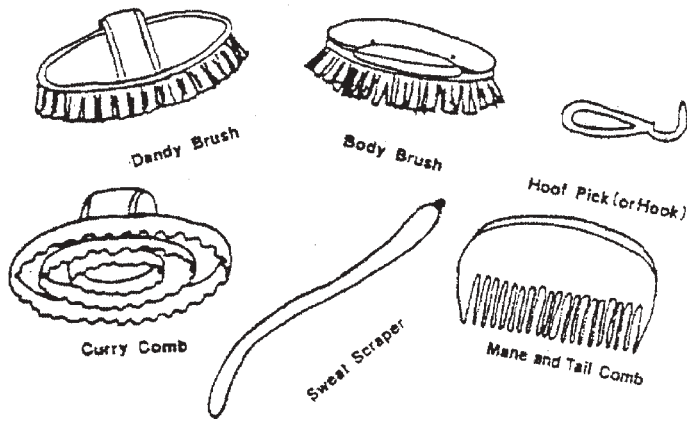
## **Fitting and grooming**

Fitting and grooming does not start at the show or even during the week of the show; it starts the day you bring the horse home. Fitting the horse means feeding, watering, halter breaking, and otherwise caring for the horse so that it achieves and maintains proper condition.

Proper condition means that the horse is neither too fat nor too thin. Through experience and the daily care that you give the horse, you will learn what varying amounts of condition (fat or finish) look and feel like. To ensure that proper condition is achieved and maintained, it is important that you learn this before adjustments are made in the horse's feed, feeding, or exercise routine.

Even though fitting deals with the condition of the horse and grooming deals with the care of the skin, hair, mane, and tail – they both begin with the horse being properly fed and cared for. Without proper care and feeding, the horse will be in poor condition and poor health as well as have a dull hair coat and poor skin tone. Therefore, good nutrition and proper care are important to fitting and to grooming.

Grooming the horse properly and regularly will result in clean and healthy skin, a shiny hair coat, better muscle tone (due to the stimulation received), and a gentler horse (due to more contact with you). Grooming also provides time to check for cuts, bruises, swellings, hoof and foot problems, or other situations that might otherwise be overlooked.



The basic tools used to groom your horse include a curry comb (rubber or metal), a dandy brush (coarse bristle brush), a body brush (fine bristle brush), mane and tail comb, sweat scraper, hoof pick, small animal clippers, scissors, and a cloth. Two other very useful items are a sponge to clean muddy legs or other dirty areas and a shedding blade to remove loose and shedding hair.

It is recommended to establish a routine when grooming the horse. By following an established system, you (and the horse) will know what next step is. As a result, you will be more thorough, efficient, and less likely to skip a step. Brushing starts with the curry comb, followed by the dandy brush, and finishing with the body brush. The rubber curry comb and dandy brush are used in a circular motion. The body brush should be used with a swiping motion. Using the curry comb and brushes stimulates the natural oils that protect the horse's skin and hair, gives a sheen to the hair coat, and helps promote muscle tone.

The horse's head, legs, and feet are more difficult to groom, because there is no muscle or fat on the horse's face or on the legs below the hocks and knees. Therefore,

it is very important to be gentle on these areas. Thus, do not use a metal or rubber curry comb, dandy brush, or anything else hard on these sensitive areas.

The mane and tail comb is used to remove dirt and tangles. Different horse breeds have different preferences regarding the length and texture of the mane and tail, so be sure to check the guidelines for your particular breed. However, regardless of the breed preferences; the mane and tail should be clean, free of tangles, and free flowing. To use the mane and tail comb, start at the bottom of the mane or tail and gently remove the tangles and snarls as you work your way to the top. The mane and tail comb should also be used on the forelock.

The next step in the grooming process is simply to wipe down the horse (in the direction that the hair lays) with a clean rag. This cleans off any loose dirt or lint and gives a shine to the hair coat.

The final step in the grooming of the horse is to clean the feet. To properly clean the horse's foot, it must be picked up. Every foal should be taught to consent to having its feet picked up. This should result in less trouble when they become adults. This is an introductory manual designed for the beginning horse-person, so the specifics of how to hold the horse's leg and hoof will not be discussed. This information will be detailed in the intermediate manual designed for junior high age horse-persons. However, you might help with hoof cleaning, so it is important to explain that when using the hoof pick, always use it so that you are working it away from you – that way you will not be as likely to accidentally stick yourself.



*Safety note: When you move from leg to leg or are otherwise not using the hoof pick, it should be in your back pocket.*

Clean the hoof from heel to toe, and be sure to pay special attention to the area around the frog. The cleft and commissaries should also be thoroughly cleaned because this helps to prevent thrush and other foot or hoof infections. Look for rocks, nails, injuries, and loose shoes. Also, check the growth of the hoof as this is an excellent indicator of the time to change the shoes (which is about every six to eight weeks).

Clipping and washing, do not need to be done on a daily basis. Clipping only needs done when preparing for a show, special occasion, or similar situations. All excess hair should be clipped from the horse, especially around the face, ears, legs, and feet. Normally, a horse has about a six inch bridle path that extends from behind the ears and down the neck. This area should be clipped clean to have a nice smooth area for the head stall. Next, clip all the hair from around the muzzle and nose area, under the chin, and around the eyes (but not the eyelashes). Finally, clip the excess hair on the back of the legs, pastern, and around the cornet band. When clipping the legs, clip in a downward direction because this will result in a cleaner, smoother, and more attractive appearance.

Washing the horse (with or without soap) removes dirt, stains, and sweat that cannot be removed by brushing. However, washing too often removes the natural oils that give protection to the skin and hair. To help avoid this problem, only wash when brushing isn't getting the job done, when

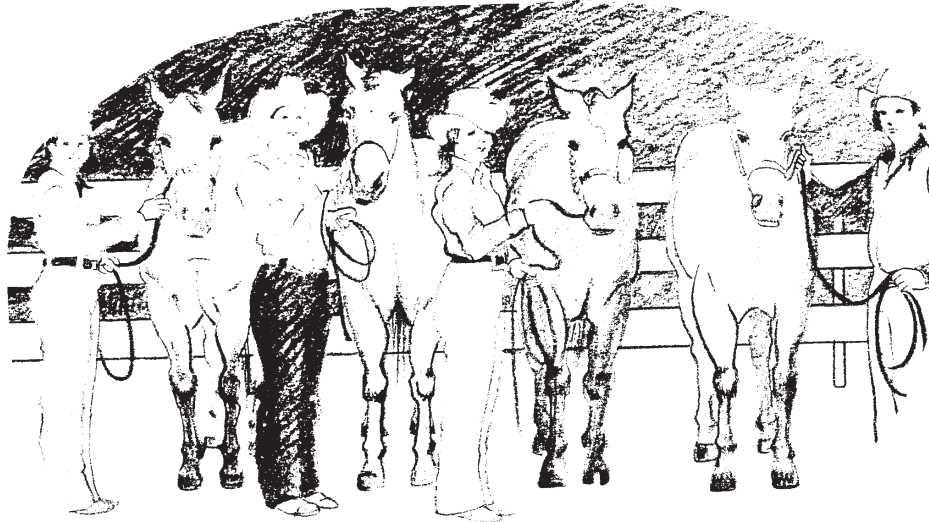
your horse is exceptionally dirty, or when preparing for a show.

Whenever you are around a horse, safety practices and guidelines should be considered – and grooming is no exception. Speak to the horse before touching it, this helps to keep from startling the horse. Never stand directly behind the horse to work on the tail or to clean the hoof, always stand to the side. Also, never crawl or walk under the neck or belly of the horse. Keep grooming equipment in a bucket (or something else) and place it where the horse can't step in it or otherwise get to it. When finished, always double check to make sure that all of the equipment is picked-up and that nothing is left in the stall – otherwise you might end up with a lame horse because it stepped on a forgotten item of grooming equipment.

*Safety note: When walking around the rear of the horse, it is important to let the horse know where you are, so that it does not become startled and kick you. You should either keep your hand on the horse or walk a wide path around it.*

Your pride and interest in the horse are reflected in the way you care for, feed, manage, and groom it. The appearance of the horse says much about you and your dedication, so make sure that what it says is something productive, positive, and complimentary. Shortcuts and halfway measures can not be hidden (on the horse or in life).

*Grooming note: No amount of grooming can correct or make up for a poor job of feeding, care, and management of the horse.*



### Showing the horse

Showing the horse, like fitting and grooming, does not start at the show; it also starts at home. It begins with the feeding, exercising, washing, brushing, clipping, halter breaking, and other tasks that you should be doing from the very first day that the horse arrives at its new home. Proper care and feeding gets the horse in show condition (not too fat nor too thin). Exercising and training the horse gets it in show ring shape (able to stand, walk, trot, and otherwise be in the ring for a long period of time without tiring). Washing, brushing, clipping, and other grooming techniques make the horse neat, clean, and otherwise presentable to the judge.

Training the horse to work with you begins by earning its trust and confidence, and by making friends with it. This is accomplished by playing with it, brushing it, and otherwise spending time with the horse. When the horse stops running from you when you enter the pen, it is time to start the exercise and training routine.

The first step is to simply catch the horse. Since horses are shown with a halter, the

second step is to get them used to wearing a halter and lead strap. This is usually accomplished by simply putting them on for short periods of time and then gradually increasing the time that the horse has them on.

*Safety note. During these sessions, the horse should never be left unattended.*

This is followed by gently talking to it, petting it, and rubbing it: rub down the back, sides, neck, and legs – this is to simply get the horse used to you and to being touched. The fourth step is walking with the horse. After the horse is accustomed to being caught, haltered, touched, and walked – the next step is to teach it to set-up. This is simply getting each leg to come straight down from the body. Many new exhibitors get this only half right. Remember, straight not only means straight when the horse is viewed from the side, but also when it is viewed from the front and the rear. When this is preformed correctly it is referred to as having the feet and legs squarely under the body. It is also referred to as standing square. It does not matter if you set the front legs first and then the back legs or the other way around, either method is acceptable.

When placing or setting the front feet and legs, raise or lift the horse's head (very slightly) by lifting on the lead strap (this is to cue the horse so that it knows the front feet and legs are being set). When the front feet and legs are set, return the head to its normal position. To set the rear feet and legs, lower the horse's head (very slightly) by pulling down on the lead strap (this is again to cue the horse, only this time it is for the back feet and legs). When the back feet and legs are set, return the head to its normal position.

Now that the horse has all four feet and legs in the desired position (this is fairly easy, if it was practiced at home), they must be kept in the proper position. This is done by standing on the left side of the horse and keeping it relaxed (but alert) by talking to it (very softly), slightly wiggling the lead strap, or by some other subtle method.

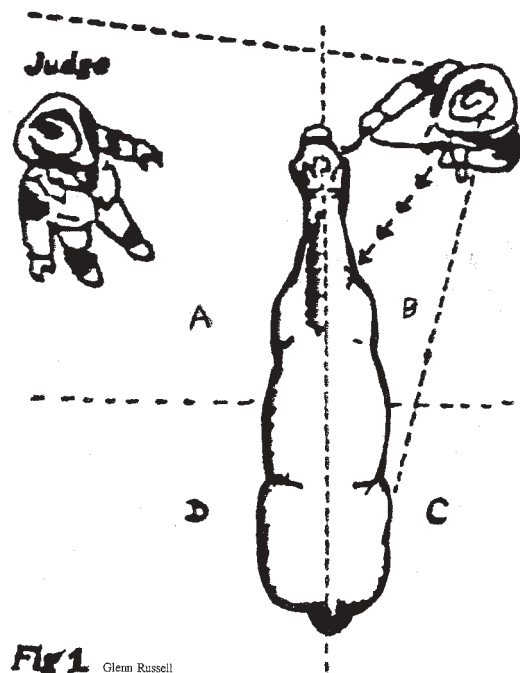
When the feet and legs are set; the back, neck, and head must be placed and maintained in a straight line. This is accomplished by getting the head straight with the neck which almost automatically aligns these with the back. To get the head and neck straight is fairly easy, simply push or pull on the lead strap. When everything is in the desired position, "lock it" in place by lifting up on the lead strap to make the horse hold its head up.

Now that the horse has all four feet and legs in the desired position (and this is fairly easy, if it was practiced at home), they must be kept in this position. This can be accomplished by softly speaking to it and keeping the head held up. This will keep the horse relaxed (but alert) and thus looking its best for the judge. Also, always stand so that the judge can see the horse

(not you)—keep the horse between you and the judge. This is best accomplished by using a process called the quarter system.

The quarter system is a basic method for showing a horse. According to Karen Hansen, University of Wyoming Associate Professor of Animal Science, an easy way to learn this method of showmanship is to think in terms of positioning. When the judge is at the back half of the horse, the exhibitor should be on the same side of the horse as the judge. When the judge is at the front half of the horse, the exhibitor should be on the opposite side of the horse as the judge. Examples of this are shown in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Figure 1 is illustrating that when the judge is at the front half of the horse (in Section A or B), the exhibitor should be on the opposite side to give the judge and exhibitor a clear view.



**Fig 1** Glenn Russell

Figure 2 is showing that the judge crosses the imaginary line across the back of the horse and is positioned at the rear half of the horse, the exhibitor then moves to the same side as the judge.

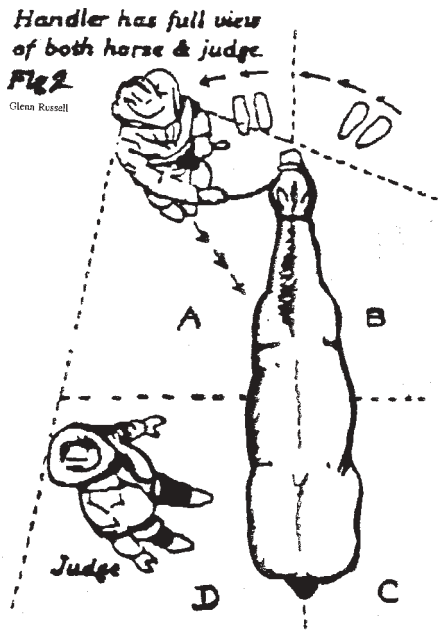


Figure 4 is showing that as the judge crosses the imaginary line directly behind the horse and moves into Section C, the exhibitor moves to the same side of the horse as the judge.

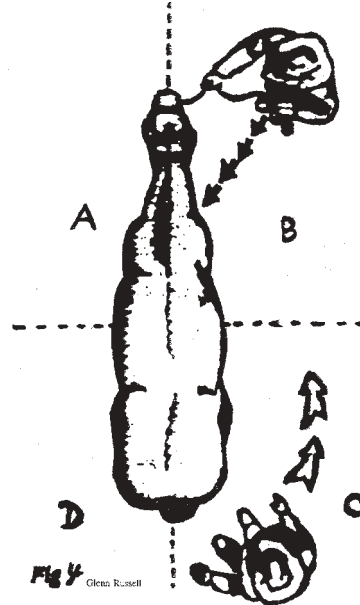


Figure 3 is depicting the exhibitor does not switch sides while the is continuing to view the horse from the rear.

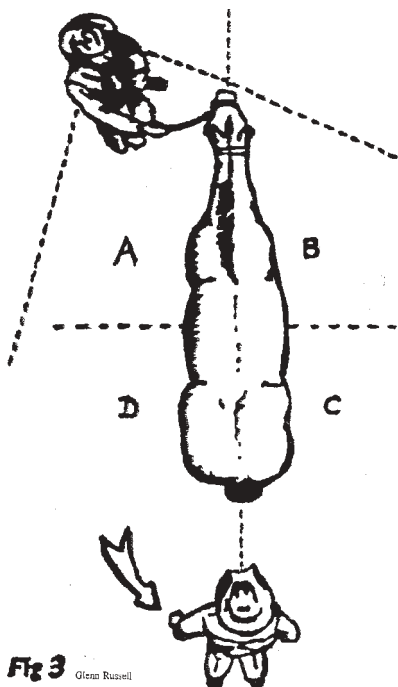


Figure 5 is illustrating that the exhibitor remains on the same side of the horse as the judge until the judge crosses the imaginary line across the horse's back from Section C into Section B.

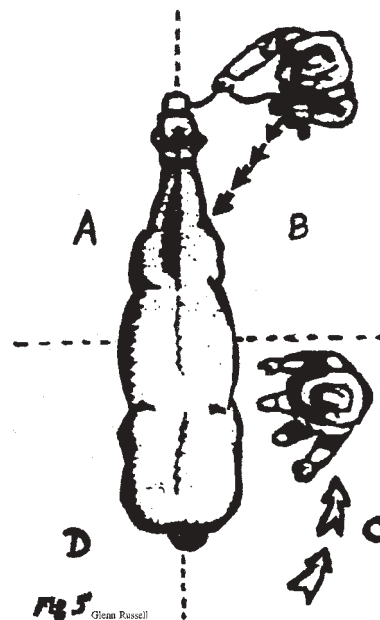
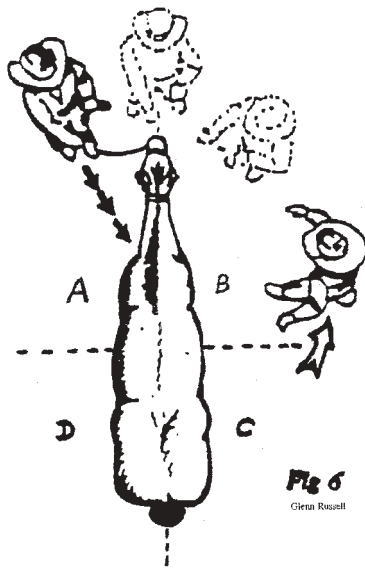


Figure 6 is showing that as the judge crosses the imaginary line dividing Section C and Section D, which means the judge is moving from the back half of the horse to the front half, the exhibitor moves to the opposite side of the horse to avoid obstructing the view of the judge.



Showmanship guidelines vary slightly from one breed to another. However, 4-H does not give preference to one breed or another, so general showmanship and scoring guidelines are used. This scoring system is shown in the Showmanship Score Card.

<b>SHOWMANSHIP SCORE CARD</b>		
Scoring Guideline		Points
A. Appearance of the Horse		40
a. condition	15	
b. grooming	20	
c. tack	5	
B. Showing the Horse		50
a. ring deportment	10	
b. actions	10	
c. leading	15	
d. posing	15	
C. The Exhibitor		10
a. appearance	5	
b. attitude	5	
Total Possible Points		100

*Showing note: While you are setting up the horse, keep an eye on the judge. You must keep the horse between you and the judge. Also, it is important to listen to the judge's instructions.*

As you practice each of these steps, you and your horse will become a team. When you feel confident and comfortable, ask someone to act as the judge. He or she should walk around the horse, handle it, and do anything else that you think might benefit you and/or the horse.

*Showing tip: Attending showmanship clinics and workshops is a good way to learn more about recommendations and techniques. However, do not just attend – go home and practice what you have learned.*

Training and practicing for showmanship involves preparing yourself as well as teaching the horse. You must know what to do and how to do it. You must also mentally prepare yourself. If you lack poise and self-confidence in the show ring, the horse will sense that something isn't right and will become confused and uncomfortable. Consequently, the horse will not respond to your cues. This will lead to further frustration on your part and the result is a cycle of confusion and frustration between you and the horse.

*Showing hint: Remember, showing involves the appearance and attitude of the exhibitor, the appearance of the horse, and the showing or showmanship of the horse. Also, be on time for your class and be courteous – not only to the judge and ringmaster, but also to your fellow exhibitors.*

**Preparing for the show ring includes:**

- Wear clean, neat, and appropriate clothing.
- Wear boots, not shoes.
- Carry a small rag in your pocket.
- Arrive on time for your class.
- Know the pattern if the class requires one.
- Know the horse's breed, sex, height, and date of birth (foaling date).
- Know other relevant information such as the ideal body temperature, protein percentage of feed, etc.
- Know what the judge looks like and/or is wearing.
- Know what the ringmaster looks like and/or is wearing.

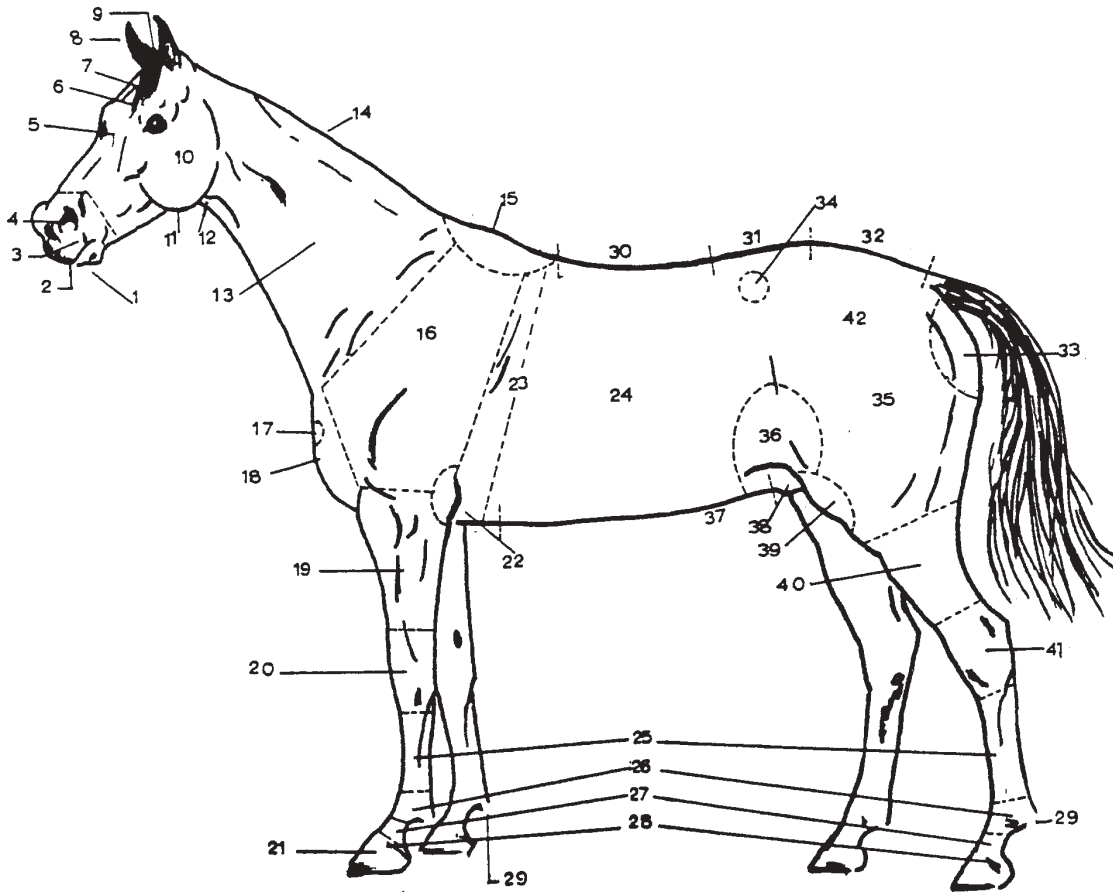
**Preparing the horse for the show ring includes:**

- Wash the horse, either the night before the show or the morning of the show.
- On show day, feed the horse at least two hours before show time, but only feed approximately half of the usual amount. This keeps the horse attentive and alert.
- On show day, give about half the amount of water usually provided. This prevents the horse from having a large girth and helps keep it active and alert.
- Groom and brush the horse at least twice before show time. This brings out the natural oils as well as removing dust and dirt, resulting in a cleaner hair coat.
- Before leaving for the show ring, give the horse a drink of water and a final brushing.

- Be calm and gentle with the horse while on the way to the show ring and while in the show ring.

**Working as a team in the show ring includes:**

- Be aware of the location of both the judge and the ringmaster, as well as instructions they may give.
- Be courteous to the judge, ringmaster, and other exhibitors. Be sure to say "yes sir" or "no sir," "excuse me," and "thank you."
- Know the horse's location at all times, especially in relation to yourself and to the judge.
- Follow the guidelines of the quarter system.
- Keep the proper distance (about a horse length) between your horse and the other horses.
- When leading the horse, walk slowly.
- Walk by the left side of the horse's head, keep your shoulder between the horse's head and shoulder.
- When setting up the horse, do it quickly, confidently, and smoothly.
- If the judge touches your horse or if your horse rubs against another horse, use the rag to re-smooth the hair and/or to wipe off any dirt.
- Maintain eye contact with the judge.
- Smile, relax, and enjoy what you are doing.
- Keep yourself cool, calm, and collected; this helps to keep the horse under control.
- Be humble when you win and gracious when you lose.
- Remember to thank the judge and congratulate the winners after the final placing.



**Identify the horse parts**

- |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____  | 15. _____ | 29. _____ |
| 2. _____  | 16. _____ | 30. _____ |
| 3. _____  | 17. _____ | 31. _____ |
| 4. _____  | 18. _____ | 32. _____ |
| 5. _____  | 19. _____ | 33. _____ |
| 6. _____  | 20. _____ | 34. _____ |
| 7. _____  | 21. _____ | 35. _____ |
| 8. _____  | 22. _____ | 36. _____ |
| 9. _____  | 23. _____ | 37. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 24. _____ | 38. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 25. _____ | 39. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 26. _____ | 40. _____ |
| 13. _____ | 27. _____ | 41. _____ |
| 14. _____ | 28. _____ | 42. _____ |

