



Maryland 4-H State Horse Communication Contest Procedures & Regulations

Objectives

The primary objective of the Maryland 4-H Horse Communications Contest is to provide an opportunity for youth enrolled in 4-H to demonstrate their knowledge of equine- related subject matter in a competitive setting where attitudes of friendliness and fairness prevail. This contest should provide an educational experience for both participants and spectators.

General

1. Contest location: **This contest will be held at the University of Maryland Animal Science Building, College Park, MD 20740 on Saturday, April 18, 2026.**
2. This is a contest in which **teams or individuals** compete. A Team is composed of two (2) members.
3. Registration is required to compete. **Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026.**
4. There is no limit to the number of entries from a local 4-H unit. 4-H members wishing to participate must register through 4-H Online.
5. Statewide competition will be governed by the prescribed procedures and regulations found in this document. Additional rules may be distributed for specific purposes. Contestants not complying with the rules will be disqualified. Coaches and/or spectators not complying with the applicable Procedures and Regulations will be dismissed from the contest area.
6. 4-Hers participating in the Maryland 4-H Horse Communications Contest may enter in multiple categories, either as an individual or as part of a team. Categories are:
 - a. Individual Presentation
 - b. Team Presentation
 - c. Public Speech (Individuals only)

Contestants and Eligibility

1. **Individuals participating in the statewide contest must be enrolled as a Maryland 4-H member for 2026 in 4-H Online by April 8, 2026. Contest registration must be submitted via the 4-H Online registration system by April 8, 2026.** Counties must verify entries in 4-H Online and will be invoiced for entry fees based on the total number of participants registered from their programs. There will be a \$7.00 entry fee for each contestant.
2. Maryland 4-H members must be between the ages of 8-18 as of January 1 of the current year. Juniors are ages 8-10; Intermediates are ages 11-13; and Seniors are ages 14-18.
3. Contestants must not have previously competed in the same category of the (Team or Individual) Horse Communications Demonstration Contest or Horse Communications Public Speaking Contest at Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup (Louisville, Kentucky) or Western National 4-H Horse Roundup.



4. Senior contestants receiving college or vocational training beyond high school in areas relative to horses are restricted from competing in the Maryland 4-H Horse Communications Contest.
5. Attire: Contestants are strongly encouraged to wear appropriate attire.
6. Contestants requesting a reasonable accommodation to participate in this event must indicate the need on the contest registration form in 4-H Online by the registration deadline. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a program that will enable a person who has a disability to participate in and/or benefit from the program.
7. All sources used must be listed, including but not limited to: websites, books, articles, interviews, use of AI, and any other relevant materials. Any form of plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Plagiarism can include but is not limited to: copying parts of a speech or presentation previously presented by another youth or individual; using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to write entire sentences, paragraphs, or significant portions of the work.; using text, phrases, photos or diagrams from an article, video, book, movie or other published work without giving credit to the author. A competitor's resource citation should be specific, accurate and honest.

Categories: Individual and Team Presentations

1. The **Topic** of the presentation may relate to any aspect of the horse project or the horse industry.
2. Demonstrations or illustrated presentations are equally acceptable. Both should utilize **visual aids** to help convey the major points of the presentation and more than one type of visual aid is preferable. Visual aids may include but are not limited to: handouts, posters, props, videos, slides, and computer generated media (PowerPoint, websites, etc.). No live animals may be used.
3. The contestant(s) must supply their own props. Two tables and chairs will be provided for the presenter's use. The contestant(s) must provide all of their own equipment, including easels, except for a laptop and LCD projector. Contestants must make arrangements for special equipment such as power point equipment at least one week before the contest if it is to be used.
4. The contestant(s) may use **notes**. However, excessive use of notes may be counted against them. This will be at the discretion of the judge(s).
5. The **Time** for each presentation should be as follows:
 - a. Junior Teams and Individuals (5-7 minutes)
 - b. Intermediate Teams and Individuals (7-10 minutes)
 - c. Senior Individuals (9-12 minutes)
 - d. Senior Teams (10-15 minutes)
6. **Time Penalties** are as follows:
 - a. Juniors and Intermediates: One (1) point will be deducted for each minute over or under the allotted range.
 - b. Seniors: Three (3) points will be deducted for every minute under or over the allotted time.
7. **References** should be cited at the conclusion of the presentation. This will not be counted in the allotted time.
8. **Questions** may be asked by the judges only and will not be counted in the allotted time.
9. **Ties** will be broken by the scores in the following order: delivery, organization, content and accuracy.



Individual and Team Presentations Scoring

Scoring for individual and team presentations will be as follows:

Introduction.....	10 points
Organization	25 points
Content and Accuracy.....	25 points
Stage presence.....	10 points
Delivery	15 points
Effect on Audience.....	5 points
Summary	<u>10 points</u>
	100 points maximum

Individual and Team Presentations Awards

1. Team and Individual awards will be presented in all age divisions.
2. The top Senior Team and the top Senior Individual will be eligible to compete in the respective National 4-H Horse Demonstration Contest at the Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup in Louisville, Kentucky as a part of the Maryland 4-H State Horse Communications Team. Note: Participation is contingent upon the national event being held and upon current state and University of Maryland Extension/4-H out-of-state travel guidelines.

Category: Public Speech

1. The Topic of the speech may relate to any aspect of the horse project or the horse industry.
2. The contestant(s) may use notes. However, excessive use of notes may be counted against them. This will be at the discretion of the judge(s).
3. No visual aids may be used.
4. The Time for each speech should be as follows:
 - a. Juniors and Intermediates (4-6 minutes)
 - b. Seniors (7-10 minutes)
5. Time Penalties are as follows:
 - a. Juniors and Intermediates: One (1) point will be subtracted for each minute over or under the allotted range.
 - b. Seniors: Three (3) points will be deducted for every minute under or over the allotted time.
6. References should be cited at the conclusion of the presentation. This will not be counted in the allotted time.
7. Questions may be asked by the judges only and will not be counted in the allotted time.
8. Ties will be broken by the scores in the following order: delivery, organization, content and accuracy.

Public Speech Scoring

Scoring of individual and team demonstrations will be as follows:

Introduction.....	10 points
Organization	25 points
Content and Accuracy.....	25 points
Stage presence.....	10 points
Delivery	15 points
Effect on Audience.....	5 points
Summary	<u>10 points</u>
	100 points maximum



Public Speech Awards

1. Individual awards will be presented in all age divisions.
2. The top Senior Individual will be eligible to compete in the National 4-H Horse Public Speaking Contest at the Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup in Louisville, Kentucky as a part of the Maryland 4-H State Horse Communications Team. Note: Participation is contingent upon the national event being held and upon current state and University of Maryland Extension/4-H out-of-state travel guidelines.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Maryland 4-H Horse Program Website: <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/4-h-youth-development/program-areas/animal-sciences/4-h-horse-program>

