



MINI EQUINE



2026 Mini Equine Committee Members

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LaPorte County 4-H Mini Equine Reference Guide

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution.

2026 Mini Equine Meetings

January

January 18, 2026

Welcome to Mini Equine Night
Small Projects Building @ 5 PM

February

February 15, 2026

Election of officers
Small Projects Building @ 5 PM

March

March 15, 2026

Project Meeting
Small Projects Building @ 5 PM

May

May 17, 2026

Super Clinic 4 - 6 PM
Small Projects Building

July

July 5, 2026

Final Clinic 5-6 TBD

July 10, 2026

Check-In 6-8 PM

July 11, 2026

In hand trail/jumping practice @ 7 PM

July 12, 2026

Family Fun Night 7 PM - BRING A DISH

July 13, 2026

Show Day #1 4 PM Livestock Show
Arena

April

April 19, 2026

Paperwork & FairEntry
Small Projects Building @ 5 PM

June

June 14, 2026

Super Clinic 4 - 6 PM

June 28, 2026

Set up day - NO MINIS
Mini Barn (Time to be announced)

July 14, 2026

Showmanship practice @ 7 PM

July 15, 2026

Show Day #2 9 AM Mini Equine Arena

Early release @ 6 PM - APP. ONLY

July 16, 2026

Game night 7 - 9 PM

July 17, 2026

End of week celebration 7 - 9 PM

July 18, 2026

Check out 12 PM

ENTRY INFORMATION

IMPORTANT DATES:

May 15: Miniature horses and donkeys need to be identified in 4-H Online and vaccination paper needs to be turned in. *Animals cannot come to any clinic until shot records have been RECEIVED.*

May 16: Fair Entry Opens, this is where you enter into the classes you would like to show at the fair.

June 1: \$10 cash stall fee is due.

June 12: Fair Entry Closes, all classes need to be entered by this date.

4HOnline (Step 1): Miniature horse(s) or donkey(s) must be owned and cared for by 4-H members, and only shown by the exhibitor by May 15th through to fair. You must ID your animals in 4HOnline by May 15th. If your animal was in 4-H Online from the previous year, you simply reactivate the animal. The first step to enter or reactive is by clicking "Add an Animal". If you need help adding your animal feel free to call the Extension Office.



Add an Animal

FairEntry (Step 2): After May 15th the animals that you entered in 4-H Online will sync to FairEntry. All animals that are to be shown at fair will need to be entered into the appropriate classes in FairEntry by June 12th. If you need help adding your classes feel free to call the Extension Office.



Find Your Fair

Staff Sign-in

Contact Sales

Find Your Fair

SCHEDULE

Monday, July 13th at 4 PM

Livestock Arena

1. Reinsmanship - All Grades
2. Pleasure Driving - All Grades
3. Obstacle Driving - All Grades
4. Line Driving Obstacles - All Grades
5. In Hand Trail - Horse - Jr. (Grades 3-5)
6. In Hand Trail - Horse - Int. (Grades 6-8)
7. In Hand Trail - Horse - Sr. (Grades 9-12)
8. In Hand Trail - Donkey - All Grades
9. In Hand Jumping - Horse - Jr. (Grades 3-5)
10. In Hand Jumping - Horse - Int. (Grades 6-8)
11. In Hand Jumping - Horse - Sr. (Grades 9-12)
12. In Hand Jumping - Donkey - All Grades

Wednesday, July 15th at 9 AM

Mini Equine Arena

13. Halter Horse - Foal - Under 1 year old
14. Halter Donkey - Foal - Under 1 year old
15. Halter Horse Mare - 1 to 5 years old
16. Halter Horse Mare - 6 to 10 years old
17. Halter Horse Mare - 11 to 15 years old
18. Halter Horse Mare - 16 years old & older
19. Donkey Jennet - All ages
20. Halter Horse Gelding - 1 to 5 years old
21. Halter Horse Gelding - 6 to 10 years old
22. Halter Horse Gelding - 11 to 15 years old
23. Halter Horse Gelding - 16 years old & older
24. Donkey Gelding - All ages

Champion Horse - 1st & 2nd place winners from each halter horse class - Mare & Gelding

Champion Donkey - 1st & 2nd place winners from each halter donkey class - Jennet & Gelding

25. Color Pinto - Horse
26. Color Solid - Horse
27. Color Spotted - Donkey
28. Color Solid - Donkey
29. Showmanship - Jr. (Grades 3-5)
30. Showmanship - Int. (Grades 6-8)
31. Showmanship - Sr. (Grades 9-12)

Champion Showmanship - 1st & 2nd place winners from each showmanship class

32. Costume Class - MUSIC IS REQUIRED



CLASS GUIDELINES

SHOWMANSHIP

Purpose:

The showmanship exhibitor is judged on his or her ability to fit, groom, and show an animal at halter. The animal is merely a prop to show the ability of the showman.

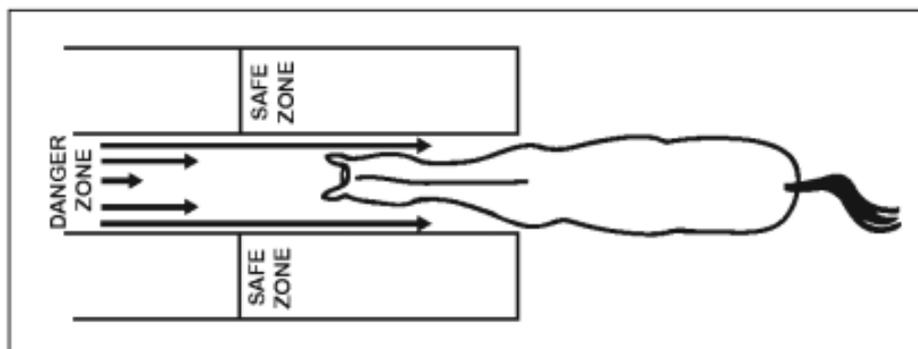
Tack and Attire

1. Assigned polo, long pants (jeans are recommended) and closed toed shoes.
2. Chain or rope may be run under the chin (preferred), or over the nose (accepted). The chain or rope may not be run through the mouth or under the lip of the horse.

Class Procedures and Guidelines

1. A working order will be posted and each exhibitor will be worked from the gate individually. The following maneuvers are considered acceptable: lead the horse at a walk, jog, trot or extended trot, or back in a straight or curved line, or a combination of straight and curved lines; stop; and turn 90 (1/4), 180 (1/2), 270 (3/4), 360 (full turn) degrees or any combination or multiple of these turns. The pull turn is an unacceptable maneuver. The judge must have exhibitors set the horse up squarely for inspection sometime during the class.
2. Exhibitors are to be scored from 0 to infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. Patterns will be divided into 6 to 10 maneuvers, as specified by the judge, and each maneuver will be scored from plus 3 to minus 3 with 1/2- point increments acceptable that will be added or subtracted from 70. Maneuver scores should be determined independent of penalties, and should reflect equal consideration of both performance of the exhibitor's pattern and the horsemanship form and effectiveness of the exhibitor to result in the following scores: -3 extremely poor, -2 very poor, -1 poor, 0 average or correct, +1 good, +2 very good, +3 excellent. Exhibitors' overall horsemanship form and effectiveness should also be scored from 0 to 5 with 0 to 2 average, 3 good, 4 very good, 5 excellent.
3. The judge may not ask the exhibitor to change animals with another exhibitor during the class.
4. Individual patterns are required. Patterns will be posted in advance.
5. The animal is to be led from the left side, with the right hand controlling the animal. The right hand must not hold the chain portion of the lead, The excess lead is held in the left hand in a loose coil or completely uncoiled. At no time is the lead to be wrapped around the hand or held in a tight coil.
6. When reversing direction more than 90 degrees, the animal must be turned to the right, with the exhibitor walking around the animal.
7. The exhibitor must show with the lead or curb rein, without kicking or handling the animal to position feet.
8. The judge must have a clear, unobstructed view of the animal at all times. The exhibitor must be in a position that enables him or her to watch both the judge and the animal at all times, but must not stand directly in front of the animal. See illustration of Showmanship Safety Zone, next page.

Showmanship Safety Zone Diagram



HALTER

Purpose

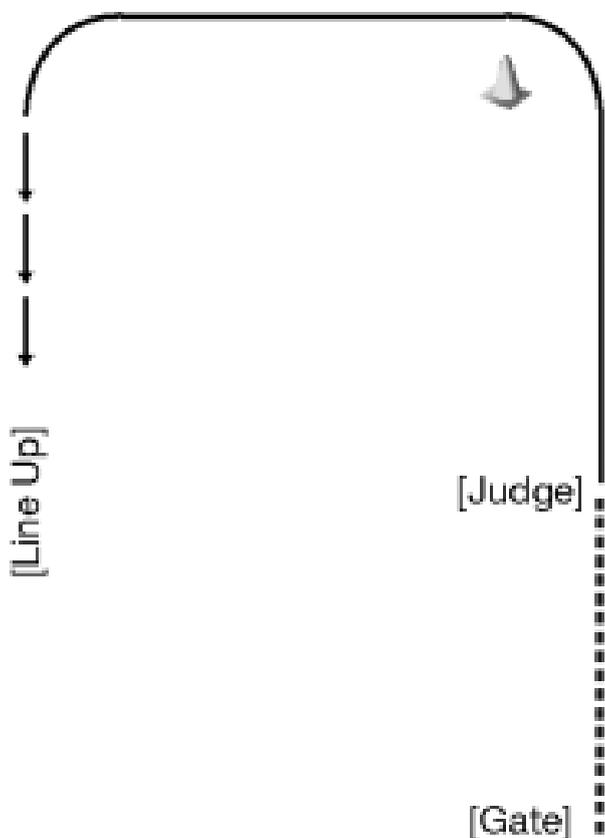
Halter competition can be divided into miniature horse and donkey. Animals are to be judged on conformation, type, soundness, way of moving, and general balance and appearance. Members learn to appreciate horse quality and evaluation criteria.

Tack and Attire

1. Assigned polo, long pants (jeans are recommended) and closed toed shoes.

Class Procedures and Guidelines

1. The animal is to be judged individually both standing and at a walk and trot (or equivalent breed gait), with exhibitors following the instructions of the judge or ring steward.
2. Champion is selected from first-place winners of classes in a division. Reserve Champion is selected from the second place winner in the Champion's class and the first-place winners in the other classes in that division.
3. The 4-H member must show with and maintain control of the lead or reins throughout the entire class or be penalized.
4. Exhibitors walk straight from gate to judge.
5. Trot straight away from judge past cone and turn left and trot a profile.
6. Line up head to tail as instructed for close inspection



COLOR CLASSES

Purpose

Color class can be broken into miniature horse, donkey and then divided by Pinto (tobiano and overo), spotted and solid. Color classes are judged on the most ideal markings of the individual miniature horse and/or donkey.

Tack and Attire

1. Assigned polo, long pants (jeans are recommended) and closed toed shoes.

Class Procedures and Guidelines

1. Conformation is not considered, and the class should not be conducted like a conformation halter class (i.e. entries moved individually).
2. This class will be judged 100% on color.
3. The handler leads their miniature horse or donkey into the ring counter-clockwise (to the right) and walk in a circle, then you will reverse and go the other direction.
4. The miniature horses or donkey remain in a circle to be judged.



PLEASURE DRIVING

Purpose

The Pleasure Driving class demonstrates the animal's ability to provide the driver with a pleasant drive at a walk, working trot, and a strong trot. The animal must be well-mannered, easy to control, and safe for a novice to drive.

Tack and Attire

1. Assigned polo, long pants (jeans are recommended) and closed toed shoes.
2. All 4-H members are required to wear a properly fitted ASTM or SEI standard F1163 (or above) certified equestrian helmet whenever driving at all 4-H horse and pony events, shows, or activities. Original tags must be present in all approved helmets.
3. The type of harness is optional but must fit the animal and be a complete harness. A snaffle bit with straight or jointed mouthpiece is preferred. A single animal must be shown hitched to a two- or four-wheeled vehicle with a basket guard and suitable to the animal. It is essential that all equipment be in sound condition.

Class Procedures and Guidelines

1. The animal is to be judged on manners, quality, and performance.
2. The animal is to be shown at a flat-footed walk, a normal trot, and an extended trot, both ways of the ring. Change of direction is to be executed at the walk diagonally across the arena and only as directed by the ring steward.
3. The animal is to stand quietly and back readily.
4. Only the 4-H exhibitor may ride in the vehicle unless, for safety purposes, show management approves the accompaniment (not assisting) by one groom capable of providing assistance if necessary.
5. Header/Groom may be a 4-H member or an adult appropriately attired.

REINSMANSHIP

Purpose

The Reinsmanship class emphasizes the driver's effective handling of lines, whip, control, posture, and overall appearance while performing at walk, trot, and extended trot and requested pattern.

Tack and Attire

1. See Pleasure Driving tack and attire.

Class Procedures and Guidelines

1. A working order will be posted and each exhibitor will execute a pattern individually. Patterns will be posted in advance.
2. The animal may also be shown at a walk, a normal trot, and an extended trot, both ways of the ring. Change of direction is to be executed at the walk diagonally across the arena and only as directed by the ring steward.
3. The animal is to stand quietly and back readily.
4. Only the 4-H exhibitor may ride in the vehicle unless, for safety purposes, show management approves the accompaniment (not assisting) by one groom capable of providing assistance if necessary.
5. Headers are permitted when class is lined up.

LINE DRIVING/DRIVING OBSTACLE

Purpose

To provide the 4-H member an opportunity to display his or her ability to navigate their driven entry through a course of obstacles and task similar to a trail pattern.

Tack and Attire

1. Assigned polo, long pants (jeans are recommended) and closed toed shoes.
2. The type of harness is optional but must fit the animal and be a complete harness. A snaffle bit with straight or jointed mouthpiece is preferred.

Class Procedures and Guidelines

1. The judge assigns a point value to each task, and points are added to or subtracted from this score based on the horse's performance through the task. Points may be added or subtracted from a horse's total score on the tasks based on his attitude, manners, style, and way of going.
2. Manner of horse's way of going should demonstrate the general utility of the driving horse in everyday working situations.
3. Credit is given to horses that negotiate, in a continuous motion, the tasks cleanly, smoothly, and alertly with style, in prompt response to the driver's cues. Excessive hesitation at a task shall be penalized. The scoring, faults, and obstacles are evaluated as in a trail class.
4. The course shall be designed to require each horse to demonstrate walk, normal trot, and extended trot.
5. Commonly used obstacles are back through, barrels, poles or pylons, box, bridge, figure eight(s), L-obstacle(s), and mailbox.



IN-HAND TRAIL

Purpose

This class allows the exhibitors to demonstrate handling, leading, and training skills with animals being led through obstacles. The animal should be well mannered, quiet, and a pleasure to handle, with the ability to negotiate the obstacles with a calm, willing attitude.

Tack and Attire

1. Assigned polo, long pants (jeans are recommended) and closed toed shoes.

Procedures and Guidelines

1. Scoring is on the basis of 0-infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. Each obstacle receives an obstacle score that should be added or subtracted from 70 and is subject to a penalty that should be subtracted. Each obstacle is scored on the following basis, ranging from plus 1 1/2 to minus 1 1/2: -1 1/2 extremely poor, -1 very poor, -1/2 poor, 0 correct, +1/2 good, +1 very good, +1 1/2 excellent.
2. Judged on correctness of the horse while being led: Drifting to the side, leading or stopping crooked, failure to maintain a pivot foot in a turn, leading or turning sluggishly should be considered and evaluated in the horse's maneuver scores and reflected in his overall score.
3. Handlers should be penalized for excessive verbal cues and excessive stiff or unnatural movements around horse or when leading. For safety reasons, those handlers continuously holding the chain on the lead, tightly coiling lead shank around hand, or dragging the lead shank should be penalized.
4. Exhibitor must use only the right hand on the lead where the chain begins, and lead on the horse's left side. A chain may be used under the chin or hanging from the halter, or if needed for safety control over the nose. Exhibitor must use only the left hand to carry the excess lead, looped loosely except when
 - a. Carrying an object from one part of the arena to another.
 - b. Dragging an object from one part of the arena to another.
 - c. Opening/closing a gate, left hand gate only. In these cases, the right hand can also carry the excess lead.
 - d. Side passing. In this case, the lead at the chain and the excess lead can be held in the hand at the horse's head.
5. Any stops should be straight, smooth, and responsive with the horse's body remaining straight. Backing and turning should be performed from the left side of the horse. The exhibitor should face the horse when backing. Exception: When negotiating a gate, the exhibitor is not required to face the horse. The horse should back up readily with the head, neck, and body aligned in a straight or curved line as instructed.
6. When executing a turn to the right, the exhibitor should face the horse and move the horse away from them. On turns of less than 90 degrees, it is acceptable to lead the horse toward them. On turns of 90 degrees or greater, the horse should pivot on the right or left hind leg while stepping across with the front legs.
7. Exhibitor is not allowed to touch the horse, except when side passing.



IN HAND JUMPING

Purpose

The In Hand Jumping class is designed to test the ability of the exhibitor to maneuver their miniature horse over jumps in a clean, efficient, and safe manner.

Tack and Attire

1. Assigned polo, long pants (jeans are recommended) and closed toed shoes.
2. Horses to be shown in a halter with appropriate lead, chain on lead permitted under the chin of the horse.

Class Procedure and Guidelines

1. Exhibitors not permitted to go over jumps.
2. Jumpers are scored mathematically on accumulated faults only unless there is a tie, in which case there will be a jump off described below.
3. There is a minimum of four fences and a maximum of six fences.
4. Jump standards may not be taller than 40 inches.
5. No wings or additions are allowed outside the jump standards.
6. Jumps should be of attractive design but constructed of a material that does not cause danger to the horse.
7. The jumps can range in height from 6 to 24 inches. (In the jump off this changes to a minimum of 6 inches to a maximum of 30 inches.) All jumps must be at least 5 feet in width, no wider than 6 feet, with a minimum of 20 feet between jumps, with the exception of an in and out.
8. The distance between the two jumps of an in and out jump should be 10-12 feet. An in and out jump should never be the first jump in the course.
9. Faults:
 - a. Knockdowns: A jump is considered knocked down when in jumping an obstacle, a horse or handler, by contact, lowers the established height of the fence in any way.
 - b. Refusals: Stopping at a jump without knocking it down and without backing, followed by jumping from a standstill is not penalized. However, if the halt continues, or if the horse backs even a single step, side steps, or circles to retake the fence, a refusal is incurred.
 - c. Circling: Any form of circle or circles whereby the horse crosses its original track between two consecutive jumps, stops advancing toward the next jump, or turns away from the next jump, except to retake a jump after a disobedience. Crossing your own path (i.e., circling between jumps, not retaking a jump from a refusal).
10. Jump Offs/Breaking Ties: When a jump off is required, the winner is decided on time only when jumping faults are equal.
 - a. The jump off is held over the original course. Only two jumps in the jump off are raised. The height of the jumps shall be increased not less than 1 inch and not more than 6 inches in height.
 - b. The jump off is scored on jumping faults (including disobediences, falls, and knockdowns) and then time.
 - c. The jump off is timed, and the horse that has the fastest time and the fewest faults in the jump-off round is declared the winner.



COSTUME

This class is a crowd-pleaser and the exhibitors have fun too. We're not sure how the miniature horses and donkeys feel about it! It allows members to show their creativity and maybe a little insight into some of their favorite things.

Tack and Attire

1. Costume and closed toed shoes.
2. If driving members are required to wear a properly fitted ASTM or SEI standard F1163 (or above) certified equestrian helmet. Tags must be present in all approved helmets.

Class Procedure and Guidelines

1. Costume classes will be judged 75% on originality of costume and 25% on presentation.
2. Exhibitors enter the arena one at a time. The exhibitor is required to supply music to be played while the exhibitor is being judged.
3. Once all exhibitors have been judged all entries will come back in for final placings.
4. Costume entries may be led or driven. Harness must be secured and properly fitted.
5. Costumes must be considered safe.
6. An entry can consist of one or more handlers and miniature horses and/or donkeys. Any entry with more than one (1) handler or miniature horse and/or donkey will be judged as one entry and will only receive one placing.



Guidelines have been adapted from the following resources:
2024 Indiana 4-H Horse and Pony Handbook
PtHA 2025 Official Rule Book

