

**2026 Ionia Free Fair**  
**4-H Horse & Pony Rules**  
**Anetra Whalon, Superintendent (616) 523-2168**  
**anetrwhalon@yahoo.com.**

1. Exhibitors are allowed to bring 2 horses or ponies. Only one horse/pony can be entered in a class section. All must remain on the fairgrounds until Saturday 10AM thru Thursday midnight.
2. A 4-H horse project member bringing a horse to fair must be enrolled in a Ionia County 4-H horse club.
3. All horses and back up horses **MUST** be designated by the 4-H participant by May 1 in order to be eligible to show in the current year's fair. **No Exceptions.**
4. Members planning to show must enter fair classes by June 25. **Late entries will not be accepted.**
5. The 4-H member should contribute at least 60% of the care of their 4-H horse project.
6. Ponies will be measured prior to show time. Ponies with shoes will deduct 1/2 inch from their measured height.
7. It is recommended that all horses be immunized against influenza, tetanus and EEE at least 12 weeks prior to the fair. For Potomac Horse Fever, Rhino pneumonitis, and Strep Equi (strangles) follow your veterinarian's recommendations.
8. All 4-H horses must have a current negative Coggins test to be exhibited at the Ionia Free Fair. A copy of the negative test must be attached to the 4-H entry form.
9. The Superintendent reserves the right to split any classes into heats, then choosing eight (8) placings from the group as a whole.
10. All horses being ridden must wear a bridle and riders must wear boots and must also be supervised by a leader or parent.
11. Walk Trot riders are not allowed to ride bareback for the duration of fair.
12. No riding after dark
13. 4-H members will show in the age category they will be on January 1 of current fair year.
14. A member exhibiting in a first year classes can only enter in the first-year classes.
15. First year classes are reserved for members showing a horse or pony for the first time at any fair.
16. Walk/Trot winners are not eligible for championship classes.
17. Rules regarding clothing, equipment, and judging of classes will be governed by the most recent edition of 4-H Bulletin #1145: "4-H Horse & Pony Project Show Rules and Regulations."
18. No club or member will be dismissed before Midnight on Thursday from the fairgrounds unless permission is granted by the Horse Superintendent. **All requests to the Superintendent for special considerations are to be made through your 4-H leader.** Any member leaving early without permission will forfeit **any premiums, plaques and awards won** and may not bring the horse (or any other) back to the fair. All horses must haul out by Noon on Sunday.
19. A **PARENT** or **4-H LEADER** of a junior member may ride the member's horse only in order to resolve safety issues. Junior 4-H members, family, or leaders may do groundwork. **Senior members** are responsible for performing all groundwork and riding themselves, unless permission from the Superintendent is granted. **Members are not allowed to ride other members horses.**
20. Addition of classes at the fair will not be permitted.

Participants may reserve the right to scratch from any class that they had entered granted that it is done by 8 p.m. the day before.

21. Lunch breaks will be at the show committee's discretion and will be announced the day of the show.
22. First and second places qualify for the Grand and Reserve Championship Classes except for Walk/Trot and Gymkhana. Exhibitors need not pre-enter Grand and Reserve classes on their entry forms.
23. The 4-H Horse Superintendent is a volunteer representative of the MSU Extension 4-H Program and has authority in matters of housing, safety and parking. All matters regarding enforcement of rules will be at the discretion of the 4-H Horse Superintendent's and the 4-H Program Coordinator. Anyone disregarding the 4-H Horse Superintendent's requests, or refusing to follow established rules, will forfeit all awards won, including plaques, and will not be allowed to continue participation in the Ionia Free Fair or represent Ionia County at the State 4-H Horse Show of the current year.
24. Every participant will be required to get two sponsorships to participate at fair.
25. **Online entry form is available on the Ionia Free Fair website.**
26. **Ionia Free Fair is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged articles prior to, during or after the Fair.**

**Definitions:**

**First year:** The first time a child brings a horse to this (or any other) fair, not including Mentor program. If a child has exhibited in western classes in previous years, they are not eligible for first year English classes.

**8-year-old:** A member may show as first year OR in their age class.

**Walk/Trot:** A member is not capable of riding their horse at a canter. If the member rides in any walk/trot classes, they will not be allowed to exhibit in any other class that requires a canter.

**Mentor Program:** The member does not currently own a horse and the horse being used by the horseless member is currently at the fair being shown by another 4-H member. A horseless member may enter showmanship and 2 other classes approved by 4-H leader.

**Gymkhana horsemanship and Gymkhana Trail:**

A member entering these classes cannot enter an age class in the same section.

**Cloverbuds:** May participate in walk-trot events with adult volunteers in the ring at all times. 4-H Cloverbud members must wear ASTM- or SEI-approved helmets for all 4-H Cloverbud horse experiences. Cloverbuds age 7 may elect to show another 4-H member's horse currently being shown at fair. Horses being shown solely by Cloverbuds may be hauled in for their show days or may be released from exhibition (go home) after the Cloverbud has completed all of their classes.

## **Friday, July 11**

Horses may haul in anytime on Friday but all horses must haul in by 10 a.m. Saturday.

## **Day 1—Saturday, July 18 - 10AM**

Horse must haul in by 10:00 a.m.

Horse Committee Meeting 11:00 a.m. at announcers stand.

**Mandatory Exhibitor Meeting 11:30 a.m. in bleachers**  
**We will draw for Teams after this meeting.**

### **STICK HORSE SHOW**

To start at 3 p.m. in Make-Up Arena

Open to participants aged 7 and under who are not showing a horse at fair.

Fun Classes: to be announced at the exhibitor meeting.

## Day 2—ENGLISH Sunday, July 19 - 9:00AM

### OVER FENCES

#### HUNTER HACK

- 1-8 Place Flat Ribbons
- 004 Hunter Hack, ages 15-19
- 005 Hunter Hack, ages 8-14

#### Working Hunter Over Fences

- 1-8 Place Flat Ribbons
- 006 Working Hunter Over Fences, ages 15-19
- 007 Working Hunter Over Fences, ages 8-14

#### Equitation Over Fences

- 1-8 Place Rosettes
- 008 Equitation Over Fences, ages 15-19
- 009 Equitation Over Fences, ages 8-14

#### All Ages Grand & Reserve Champion Over Fences

*Combination of classes 004, 005, 006, 007, 008 and 009 Judge Selects.*

#### HUNT SEAT/SADDLE SEAT PLEASURE

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons (Cloverbud not Placed, use Cloverbud flat ribbon)

- 010 Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat Pleasure, ages 15-19
- 011 Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat Pleasure, ages 12-14
- 012 Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat Pleasure, ages 8-11
- 013 Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat Pleasure First Year all ages

014 Hunt/Saddle Seat Pleasure Walk/Trot ages all ages

015 Hunt/Saddle Seat Pleasure Walk/Trot, Cloverbud age 7

#### ENGLISH DISCIPLINED RAIL

- 1-8 Place Flat Ribbons
- 016 Disciplined Rail, ages 15-19
- 017 Disciplined Rail, ages 12-14
- 018 Disciplined Rail, ages 8-11
- 019 Disciplined Rail, First-Year all ages

020 Discipline Rail Walk/Trot all ages

#### HUNT SEAT EQUITATION

1-8 Place Rosettes (Cloverbuds not placed, use Cloverbud rosette)

021 Hunt/Saddle Seat Equitation Walk Trot, Cloverbud, age 7

- 022 Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat Equitation, ages 15-19
- 023 Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat Equitation, ages 12-14
- 024 Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat Equitation, ages 8-11
- 025 Hunt/Saddle Seat Equitation First Year all ages

026 Hunt/Saddle Seat Equitation Walk/Trot all ages

**All Ages Grand and Reserve Champion English/Saddle Seat Rail 1st and 2nd place participants from classes 010 through 026. Judge Selects.**

**\*Excluding classes 014, 015, 020 & 026**

#### DRESSAGE

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons  
Snaffle bits required. The latest edition of the USEF Dressage tests will be used. Other tests will not be scored.

027 Dressage Training Level I, age 15-19

028 Dressage Training Level I, age 8-14

029 Dressage Training Level II, age 15-19

030 Dressage Training Level II, age 8-14

031 Dressage Training Level III, age 15-19

032 Dressage Training Level III, age 8-14

#### All Ages Grand & Reserve Dressage\*

*\*Grand & Reserve will be determined by the highest percentage rides (your score divided by total number of points possible in that test) in all qualifying age divisions. Reserve Champion will go to different rider than Grand.*

033 Green as Grass Dressage, age 15-19

034 Green as Grass Dressage, age 8-14

Participants must be a first-time rider in a Dressage class. The pattern will be a basic pattern provided to exhibitors. Not eligible for levels I through III or Championship classes. Participants may not show in any other Dressage class.

#### VERSATILITY

1-8 Rosettes  
Walk/Trot riders are not eligible for this class.

There is a maximum of three (3) helpers per rider.

Five (5) minute tack change from Showmanship to English in the ring.

Five (5) minute tack change from English to Western in the ring.

Riders will be excused from the ring after Western to prepare for Gymkhana.

Senior then Junior Gymkhana Class will be run after Junior Riders complete their Western class.

Four (4) parts in this class:

- Showmanship
- English: 50% Pleasure and 50% Equitation
- Western: 50% Pleasure and 50% Equitation
- Gymkhana: Pattern will be Cloverleaf

035 Versatility Class, ages 15-19

036 Versatility Class, ages 8-14

All Ages Grand & Reserve Versatility\*

**\*All Ages Grand and Reserve Champion Versatility Judge Selects**

## Day 3—WESTERN Monday, July 20 - 9:00AM

### HALTER

1-8 Place Rosettes

037 5 & Under

038 Pony

039 Fine Breeds

040 Stock Type Mares/Geldings

041 Performance Type

042 Color Breed

043 Super Seniors (Horses 15 & Older)

**All Ages Grand and Reserve Halter** *1st and 2nd place participants from classes 037 through 043 Judge Selects.*

### SHOWMANSHIP

1-8 Place Rosette (Cloverbuds Not Placed, Use Cloverbud Rosette)

044 Showmanship Senior, ages 15-19

045 Showmanship Intermediate, ages 12-14

046 Showmanship Junior, ages 8-11

047 Showmanship First year all ages

048 Showmanship, Cloverbud, age 7

*Grand Champion plaques awarded to the winner of Senior, Intermediate, Junior and First Year Classes. The Senior Division Sweepstakes Representative will be chosen by the judge from class 044. The Intermediate Representative will be chosen by the judge from class 045. The Junior Representative will be chosen by the judge from class 046. The First Year Representative will be chosen by the judge from class 047.*

### WESTERN PLEASURE

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons (Cloverbuds Not Placed, Use Cloverbud Flat Ribbon)

049 Western Pleasure, ages 15-19

050 Western Pleasure, ages 12-14

051 Western Pleasure, ages 8-11

052 Western Pleasure First year all ages

053 Western Pleasure Walk/Trot all ages

054 Western Pleasure Walk/Trot, Cloverbud, age 7

### WESTERN DISCIPLINED RAIL

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons

055 Disciplined Rail, ages 15-19

056 Disciplined Rail, ages 12-14

057 Disciplined Rail, ages 8-11

058 Disciplined Rail First-Year all ages

059 Disciplined Rail Walk/Trot all ages

### WESTERN HORSEMANSHIP

1-8 Place Rosettes (Cloverbuds Not Placed, Use Cloverbud Rosette)

060 Western Horsemanship Walk/Trot, Cloverbud, age 7

061 Western Horsemanship, ages 15-19

062 Western Horsemanship, ages 12-14

063 Western Horsemanship, ages 8-11

064 Western Horsemanship First Year all ages

065 Western Horsemanship Walk/Trot all ages

066 Western Horsemanship for Gymkhana Riders, ages 15-19

067 Western Horsemanship for Gymkhana Riders, ages 8-14

**All Ages Grand and Reserve Champion Western Rail**  
*1st and 2nd place participants from classes 49 through 68 Judge Selects*  
**\*Excluding classes 053, 054, 059, 060 & 065.**

### BAREBACK EQUITATION

1-8 Place Rosettes

SEI Approved Helmets Required

068 Bareback Equitation, ages 15-19

069 Bareback Equitation, ages 12-14

070 Bareback Equitation, ages 8-11

071 Bareback Equitation, First Year all ages

**All Ages Grand and Reserve Champion Bareback Equitation**  
*1st and 2nd place participants from classes 068 through 071 Judge Selects.*

### TEAM COMPETITION

1-8 Special Team Ribbons

Draw for teams during exhibitor meeting.

Each team will consist of four (4) members.

Each team member will compete in one (1) event.

The events are:

-Showmanship

-English Equitation

-Western Horsemanship

-Gymkhana-Down and Back

072 Team Competition, All Ages

**Day 4—FUN CLASS Tuesday July 21- 1:00PM**

**AFTERNOON FUN CLASSES**

Fun classes will be announced at the exhibitor meeting

**7:00 pm**

**073 FREESTYLE REINING** - All Ages

1-8 Rosettes

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> place awarded gift card.

## Day 5-RANCH Wednesday, July 22 - 9:00AM

### TRAIL

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons (Cloverbuds Not Placed, Cloverbud Flat Ribbon)  
Exhibitors may enter only one Trail class.

074 Trail, ages 15-19  
075 Trail, ages 12-14  
076 Trail, ages 8-11  
077 Trail First Year all ages

078 Trail Walk/Trot, all ages

079 Trail Gymkhana, ages 15-19  
080 Trail Gymkhana, ages 8-14

081 Trail in Hand, ages 15-19  
082 Trail in Hand, ages 8-14

083 Trail, Cloverbud age 7

#### **All Ages Grand and Reserve Champion Trail**

*Highest scores from classes 074 075, 076, 077, judge selects*

**RANCH RIDING - ALL AGES** (Ranchmanship patterns can be found in the latest edition of the ARHA rule book will be used. Final patterns will be determined prior to Fair.)

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons

084 Ranch Riding, ages 15-19  
085 Ranch Riding, ages 8-14

086 Ranch Riding Introductory Level\* - All Ages

\*Participants must be a first-time rider in a Ranch Riding class. This test is an introduction to the discipline of Ranch Riding. Participants may not show in any other Ranch Riding classes.

#### **Ranch Rail- ALL AGES**

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons

087 Ranch Rail, ages 15-19  
088 Ranch Rail, ages 8-14

#### **All Ages Grand & Reserve Ranch**

*Highest scores from classes 084 through 088 Judge Selects*

### WESTERN/ENGLISH RIDING PATTERN

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons

#### **Jr. Pattern – determined before show.**

Riders may only ride in one Western/English Riding class.

1st and 2nd year members may only ride in Intro Western/English Riding Pattern. Intro Western/English Riding Pattern is for members beginning pattern work. Intro Western/English Riding Pattern exhibitors are not eligible for Championship.

089 Intro Western/English Riding Pattern, ages 15-19  
090 Intro Western/English Riding Pattern, ages 8-14  
091 Intro Western/English Riding Pattern, Walk/Trot, All Ages

092 Western/English Riding, ages 15-19  
093 Western/English Riding, ages 12-14  
094 Western/English Riding, ages 8-11

### REINING

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons

#### **Jr. Pattern – determined before show.**

Riders may only ride in one Reining class.

1st and 2nd year members may only ride in Intro Reining Pattern. Intro Reining Pattern is for members beginning pattern work. Intro Reining Pattern exhibitors are not eligible for Reining Championship.

095 Intro Reining Pattern, ages 15-19  
096 Intro Reining Pattern, ages 8-14

097 Reining, ages 15-19  
098 Reining, ages 12-14  
099 Reining, ages 8-11

#### **All Ages Grand and Reserve Champion Performance.**

*Highest scores from classes 089 through 099 Judge selects.*

## Day 6—SPEED Thursday, July 23 at 11:00 am

### COSTUME

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons (Cloverbuds Not Placed,  
Use Cloverbud Flat Ribbon)  
All costume narratives must be at the announcer stand before 3 p.m.  
100 Costume, ages 15 - 19  
101 Costume, ages 8 - 14  
102 Costume, Cloverbud, age 7

### GYMKHANA

1-8 Place Flat Ribbons  
  
103 Kegs, ages 15-19  
104 Kegs, ages 12-14  
105 Kegs, ages 8-11  
106 Kegs First Year all ages  
  
107 Keyhole, ages 15-19  
108 Keyhole, ages 12-14  
109 Keyhole, ages 8-11  
110 Keyhole First Year all ages

111 Pole Bending, ages 15-19  
112 Pole Bending, ages 12-14  
113 Pole Bending, ages 8-11  
114 Pole Bending First Year all ages

115 Speed & Action, ages 15-19  
116 Speed & Action, ages 12-14  
117 Speed & Action, ages 8-11  
118 Speed & Action First Year all ages

119 Cloverleaf, ages 15-19  
120 Cloverleaf, ages 12-14  
121 Cloverleaf ages 8-11  
122 Cloverleaf First Year all ages

123 Flag Race, ages 15-19  
124 Flag Race, ages 12-14  
125 Flag Race, ages 8-11  
126 Flag Race First Year all ages

127 Down & Back, ages 15-19  
128 Down & Back, ages 12-14  
129 Down & Back, ages 8-11  
130 Down & Back First Year all ages

**All Ages Gymkhana Top 5 Awarded**  
classes 100 through 130

### GENERATION SENSATION

Special Team Ribbons  
Ionia County parents or guardians of their participating 4-H member(s) or leaders with 4-H members. These adults may ride for 2 qualifying youth riders only if one is in Junior and one is in Senior division.  
This class may be split into heats if there are over 24 riders.  
One rider will be judged on Horsemanship, the other will perform the Cloverleaf pattern. Tiebreaker will be Cloverleaf. ***We will start this class with Horsemanship.***

131 Generation Sensation, 4-H member ages 15-19  
132 Generation Sensation, 4-H member ages 8-14

### RECORD BOOK

133 All Ages

**Haul out after Midnight on  
Thursday and before Noon Friday.**





