

Agriculture and Natural Resources
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March 13, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Agents Responsible for 4-H and ANR

FROM: Sarah Owen
Program Coordinator
4-H Youth Agriculture & Natural Resources

SUBJECT: State 4-H & FFA Horse Judging and Hippology Contests

This letter is in regard to the 2025 State 4-H & FFA Horse Judging and Hippology Contests scheduled for **Saturday, April 26, 2025**, at the West Virginia University JW Ruby Research Farm in Reedsville, WV. Please read this information carefully and follow up with the information needed for pre-registration.

Please complete the registration form at:

<https://www.judgingcard.com>

Each county extension office has a username and password to register for events through [judgingcard.com](https://www.judgingcard.com). If you have questions, please contact Sarah Owen at sarah.owen@mail.wvu.edu.

For your information, the address for the JW Ruby Research Farm is:

155 WVU Reedsville Farm Drive Reedsville, WV 26547

Directions are available at: <https://horses.wvu.edu/farm/directions>

Directions to the WVU JW Ruby Research Farm from I-68 are as follows:

- From I-68 take Exit 4/Route 7 (Sabraton)
- Follow Route 7 East towards Masontown/Reedsville
 - Follow Route 7 East for 13.2 miles
 - Pass thru the town of Masontown
 - Pass the Save-A-Lot, Subway, and Dairy Queen in Reedsville
- Turn R at the 4-way stop sign in Reedsville onto the Kingwood Pike
 - Follow the Kingwood Pike for 0.9 miles and the farm is on the Left
- Travel time from the interstate is approximately 25 minutes
- Park in the gravel lot to the right of the main driveway

The registration deadline will be April 4, 2025.

Your county is responsible for participant transportation, meals, and lodging, if needed. Each county should have health cards for all participants and adults on hand at the event in case of an accident or illness. If counties anticipate traveling time difficulties, lodging can be arranged at local hotel facilities. Morgantown has the closest national chain hotels, however The Appalachian Hotel in Kingwood and Modern Homestead Guest Houses in Reedsville are within 10 minutes.

Preston County 4-H-ers are hoping to provide breakfast, lunch and concessions during the day as a fundraiser, since restaurants are not located close to the facility, and the schedule will not allow for a long lunch break. Details of lunch pre-payment and/or concession offerings will be sent to teams once we have final registration numbers.

NOTE TO COACHES: Please do not contact WVU to arrange a judging practice or to view animals prior to the contest.

Please list your contestants as designated teams. If you have more than one team in a division, list team A, B, C, etc. See General Rules enclosed for specific information.

Competition Format

WVU Extension will be continuing with the format we have used the last few years for the Hippology and Horse Judging competitions. Both competitions will be conducted simultaneously, offering qualifications for Eastern National 4-H Round Up for the winning 4-H teams. For those that wish to compete in both competitions, you will be able to do so. All horse judging classes will be judged by competitors of both hippology and horse judging contestants in the morning. After the classes have been judged, the horse judging and hippology competition will continue. After everyone has completed their contests, awards will be distributed. You do not have to compete in both contests, but you are encouraged to do so.

Tentative Schedule:

8:00 AM	Judges Orientation & Records Room Prep - Educational Center
8:15-8:45 AM	Registration – Educational Center
8:45-9:00 AM	Orientation – Arena
9:00 AM	Begin Placing Classes for Horse Judging
11:00-1:00 PM	Lunch and Oral Reasons Prep
1:00-3:00 PM	Hippology Slides and Exam (SRs) – Classroom Stations (JRs) – Multipurpose Building
3:00-3:30 PM	All Team Problems (JRs and SRs) – Classroom**
3:30 PM	Horse Judging and Hippology Placings/Answer Review
4:00 PM ***	Awards Ceremony

**** Team Problem is exhibition only to learn the format, but will not contribute to the hippology score.**

***** All times are subject to change since schedule will depend on number of contestants.**

Horse Judging Contest

Program: The contest will possibly include 2-4 halter classes and 2-4 performance classes. Seniors will give *up to* 2 sets of reasons, while juniors will give one set of reasons. There is a possibility that the contest will begin with the performance classes. All details will be announced at the opening orientation. Notes will not be allowed when presenting oral reasons for seniors and juniors.

Scoring: We will implement the same scoring computer program for the State 4-H and FFA Contest. Enclosed is a copy of the scantron sheet for review with your team members. Please practice marking the sheet prior to the contest. **Important: Contestants must possess two #2 pencils and clipboard** for marking scantron scoring sheets. Make certain that contestants darken the correct placing for the class they are evaluating. Don't mark Class 1 if you are starting with Class 2. On placing classes (Halter & Performance) - darken in your choice for the placing of the class. This section is located in the upper right-hand corner of the scantron sheet.

We are planning to use e-scansheets with this contest. Participants will mark their placings on paper scantrons during the contest. At the conclusion of the contest, contestants will then transfer their choices to an electronic scorecard by logging into the contest website and clicking an electronic scorecard. An example e-scoresheet (this one is for meat evaluation) can be tried out here: <https://www.judgingcard.com/go/default.html?E=81022&A=88895> . Please allow your students to try inputting placings on this demo card. The e-scantron we will use during the contest will look exactly like the paper scantron sheet they use during the contest (not like the meat evaluation card). Monitored banks of computers/tablets will be provided for contestants to enter their placings into the e-scansheet.

If you have personal, club or classroom tablets (with internet access) you can bring for contest use, these are very much appreciated. The tablets will only be used in a closely-monitored contest area. The more tablets we have, the faster the scoring can be completed. Please let staff know if you will be bringing tablets, and provide them (fully charged) at check-in so they can be set up for scoring.

Rules:

- A. Classes: All classes will consist of four horses. Halter classes handlers will have an exhibitor number (1, 2, 3, and 4). Riders in performance classes will have an exhibitor number (1, 2, 3, and 4). At least fifteen minutes will be allowed to place halter classes and ten minutes to place performance classes.
- B. Performance horses will be shown both directions of the arena at a walk, trot/jog, canter/lope or perform a pattern based on what is appropriate for the discipline. The horses may also be asked to back and stand quietly.
- C. The four animals in each class will be of the same type and appropriate for the discipline.

The registration deadline will be April 4, 2025.

- D. The contest officials will attempt to select only horses that are serviceably sound. All halter classes will be judged as sound of limb, eye, wind, and mouth. Performance horses will be judged as seen (unsoundness to be penalized accordingly). All tack and attire is considered legal.
- E. Potential classes in the contest include the following:
Halter – Stock Type Horses (Quarter Horse, Paint, Appaloosa), Fine Breeds (Arabian, Saddlebreds), Hunter-Type, Dressage-Type, Saddleseat-Type, Draft Breeds and Miniature Horses.
Performance – Rail classes might include Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, and English Pleasure (Saddleseat). Pattern classes might include Western Horsemanship, Ranch Riding, Western Riding, Reining, Trail, Hunt Seat Equitation, or Saddle Seat Equitation. If a pattern classes are included in the contest the pattern will be handed out at registration.
- F. Awards: **Contest results as announced are final.** Appropriate awards are being arranged. An out-of-state trip to the national contest in Louisville, KY for the winning senior 4-H team in both Hippology and Horse Judging will be planned. Financial support is dependent upon donor support for the team going to the National Contest. Annual allocations to offset costs of the trip are often provided to the winning teams from WV Dept of Ag, but due to budgeting procedures, monies will probably not be available prior to national contest, but could be reimbursed afterward. The counties will be responsible for raising funds for the out-of-state trip.
- G. Individuals requesting an accommodation because of disability should contact ANR Program Unit, 1064 Agricultural Sciences Building, PO Box 6108, Morgantown, WV 26506-6108. Telephone: (304) 293-2708; or Fax: (304) 293-6954 by the **registration deadline date of April 4, 2025.**

Hippology Contest

Program: Participants will complete the judging, exam, slides, and stations phases of the Hippology contest. We will also host an exhibition team problem for both junior and senior teams but scores in this phase will not count toward overall scores.

Examination Phase includes a written exam and slides and may include: breed, color, color patterns, activity, proper appointments, anatomy which may include external, skeletal internal organs, parts of gastrointestinal tract, male and female reproductive organs, detailed anatomy of the foot and detailed anatomy of the lower limbs, and anything also listed in the station phase below.

Station Phase may include identification of: various types of saddles (actual or pictured) and parts of saddles, tack, bits, bridles, horseshoes and parts of shoes; tools and equipment, and assembly of specific parts of various pieces of equipment; grains and forages used in equine rations including various forms and methods of preparation; internal and external parasites based on actual samples, pictures, life cycle chart

and/or damage caused; blemishes and unsoundnesses, ages of equines based on teeth, use of pulse rate, respiration rate, temperature, dehydration, anemia, etc. to assess horse health; measurements such as, but not limited to, wither height, shoe size, girth, collar size, gullet width, seat length of saddle, etc.

Judging Phase will include placing two conformation and two performance classes. Every effort will be made to use the same horses as being used in the judging contest, with placings to be simultaneous to the judging contest. In extreme emergency, pictorial, video and/or movie classes may be used, in which case they would be especially prepared for the event.

Exhibition only:

Team Problem Phase will ask Seniors to discuss and prepare an oral defense or explanation of a problem and present it as a team. Each team member is expected to contribute to the oral presentation. Evaluation will be based on understanding of the problem and completeness of the logic used in making the oral response. The officials may ask questions of any or all the team members to clarify the presentation. Juniors will be asked to work out a team problem on paper, not an oral presentation. A set time period will be established at the beginning of the contest for this phase. This phase is exhibition only in 2025 and will not count toward Hippology score.

Examples of problems to be given might include but not be limited to: 1. Plan a specific youth participation activity. 2. Set up an annual herd health program. 3. Design a stable of a given size for a specific number of horses. 4. Balance a ration for DE or TDN, CP, Ca and P for a specific type of horse. 5. Design a training program for a specific type of performance horse. 6. Design a breeding and/or leasing contract - specific clauses for insurance, liability, payments, care, termination, transport, etc.

Rules: For a contest involving both junior and senior contestants, separate written tests, slides and stations for the two age groups should be developed. Judging classes in the contest may be the same.

4-H teams consist of three or four members. In teams in which there are four members, all will compete, but the member receiving the lowest score in each division and overall will automatically be dropped for scoring purposes for team awards. All scores will be utilized for individual awards. Teams consisting of three members will have no scores dropped and all members scores will count in determining individual and team awards.

All Hippology ties overall, individual and team, will be broken using the following sequence:

1. Examination scores
2. Station scores
3. Judging scores

Ties within any phase are to be broken using the overall score first and then the same sequence as above. If further tie breaking is needed, the scores at each station, in order, may be used.

The registration deadline will be April 4, 2025.

Resources:

Senior Reference Material:

All the information covered in this contest for Senior competition may be found in one or more of the following publications:

1. NEWHOR ILLUSTRATED DICTIONARY OF EQUINE TERMS, by New Horizons Education Center, Inc. Alpine Publications, Inc., 38262 Linman Road, Crawford, CO 81415 www.alpinepub.com Phone: 970-921-5005 Fax: 970-921-5081
2. AYHC HIH HORSE INDUSTRY HANDBOOK, by the American Youth Horse Council AYHC, 1 Gainer Rd, McDonald, NM 88262 www.ayhc.com Phone: 817-320-2005 *Visit website for continued updates – www.ayhc.com
3. LEWIS 2nd FEEDING AND CARE OF THE HORSE (2nd edition), by Lon D. Lewis Wiley-Blackwell, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030 www.wiley.com Phone: 201-748-6000
4. EQUINE SCIENCE, by Jean T. Griffiths AYHC, 1 Gainer Rd, McDonald, NM 88262 www.ayhc.com Phone: 817-320-2005 *2020 update sentence correction, page 60: original sentence "The size of the horse's eyeball (known as the globe) is larger than that of any other mammal, including the elephant and the whale." changed to "The size of the horse's eyeball (known as globe) is larger than that of any other land mammal."
5. KAINER THE COLORING ATLAS OF HORSE ANATOMY, by Robert A. Kainer & Thomas O. McCracken Alpine Publications, Inc., 38262 Linman Road, Crawford, CO 81415 www.alpinepub.com Phone: 970-921-5005 Fax: 970-921-5081
6. AYHC HS HORSE SMARTS: AN EQUINE REFERENCE & YOUTH ACTIVITY GUIDE, by the American Youth Horse Council, 1 Gainer Rd, McDonald, NM 88262 www.ayhc.com Phone: 817-320-2005 *Visit website for continued updates – www.ayhc.com
7. DOVER AND STATE LINE TACK CATALOGS 8. Other: Grains, forages, and feed preparations used in this contest will be representatives of feeds utilized in horse rations.

Junior Contest References will be limited to:

1. EQUINE SCIENCE by Jean T. Griffiths AYHC, 1 Gainer Rd, McDonald, NM 88262 www.ayhc.com Phone: 817-320-2005 *see update noted above
2. Horse Science – by Ray Antoniewicz <https://shop4-h.org/products/horse-program-curriculum-horse-science>
3. AYHC HS HORSE SMARTS: AN EQUINE REFERENCE & YOUTH ACTIVITY GUIDE, by the American Youth Horse Council, 1 Gainer Rd, McDonald, NM 88262 www.ayhc.com Phone: 817-320-2005 *Visit website for continued updates – www.ayhc.com
4. Horses & Horsemanship – by Ray Antoniewicz <https://shop4-h.org/products/horse-program-curriculum-horses-horsemanship>
5. DOVER AND STATE LINE TACK CATALOGS
6. Other: Grains, forages, and feed preparations used for both divisions of this contest will be representatives of feed stuffs utilized in horse rations.

I hope this information will help you prepare for the 2025 State 4-H and FFA Horse Judging Contest. If you have any questions or problems, please feel free to contact me at 304-293-2708. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

General Rules
HORSE JUDGING and HIPPOLOGY CONTESTS

PURPOSE: The State 4-H Horse Judging and Hippology event is designed to provide youth participants with the opportunity to develop skills in critical thinking, leadership, teamwork, evaluation, communications, and decision-making. This event is designed to give the participants an opportunity to: a) recognize good conformation (structural correctness, balance, and muscling, breed character, and performance ideals) in different breeds of horses; b) select and evaluate horses based on knowledge and fact, make a decision, and then defend their decision through oral reasons; c) learn equine terms which can be used in a logical, systematic way to defend their placing and d) build self-confidence and self-reliance by learning to speak clearly, decisively and convincingly through the presentation of oral reasons.

WHO: WV 4-H Members. **See Judging Contests General Rules for specific team composition, entry, state eligibility, etc.**

WHEN: April 26, 2025

WHERE: WVU JW Ruby Research Farm
Reedsville, WV

COST: Transportation, meals, lodging, if needed.

PRE-REGISTRATION: by April 4, 2025

COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Conduct the educational activities prior to the event.
2. Complete pre-registration by deadline.
3. Agree to assist with the contest if needed.

PROGRAM: The Horse Judging contest will possibly include 2-4 halter classes and 2-4 performance classes. Seniors will give up to 2 sets of reasons, while juniors will give one set of reasons. There is a possibility that the contest will begin with the performance classes. All details will be announced at the opening orientation. Notes will not be allowed when presenting oral reasons for seniors and juniors. Upon completion of the judging activities, contestants will be directed how to proceed to lunch and reasons prep. For the Hippology Contest, participants will complete the judging, exam, slides, and stations phases of the Hippology contest. We will also host an exhibition team problem for both junior and senior teams but scores in this phase will not count toward overall scores.

AWARDS AND INCENTIVES:

The registration deadline will be April 4, 2025.

1. Appropriate awards are presented.
2. The winning 4-H teams are eligible to represent West Virginia in the national contests.
3. Financial support for the 4-H teams to attend the national contest in Louisville, Kentucky in November is dependent upon the 2025 budget allocation.

GENERAL RULES: STATE 4-H JUDGING CONTESTS 2025

- A. **Age Division:** There will be a junior and senior division in each contest. 4-H members in the junior division must not have passed their 14th birthday on or before January 1 of the current 4-H year. 4-H members in the senior division must have passed their 14th birthday on or before January 1 of the current 4-H year and not have passed their 19th birthday as of this date.
- B. **Team Composition:** A county or multi-county group may enter as many teams as it wishes in either the junior or senior division. Counties with more-than-one team in an age division will designate these as A, B, C, etc. The members for each team must be designated on or before the day of the contest. Teams may consist of four members with the three high scores making up the team score. The contestant with the lowest score on the team will be designated as the alternate. The alternate and any individual contestants will be eligible for individual awards. Counties not having a fourth team member may enter a team with three members.
- C. **Multi-county teams:** Counties who have organized multi-county (2 counties or more) programming groups with the purpose to provide specific educational subject-matter judging (i.e. land, home site, forestry, horse, dairy cattle, poultry, livestock, and horticulture) knowledge for 4-H members may have teams and/or individuals representing the multi-county group. This may only occur if the counties are contiguous, and if a **Letter of Intent** is submitted from the program director and received in the State Office **thirty (30) days prior to the event**, stating the approval of the specific programming area and the coach or Extension agent of record. Any changes in this programming approach must be stated in a letter from the program director 10 days prior to the event. 4-H members must be members in only one county and must be approved by the specific agents involved in the multi-county group endeavor. A county or multi-county group can enter as many teams as it wishes in either the junior or senior division; however, if a county participates in a multi-county group for a particular contest, it must notify the state office in the above Letter of Intent if it wishes to also have single-county teams in that contest.
- D. **Entries:** Students are allowed to compete in more than one national/out-of-state contest in a given year. Members who competed in a previous national contest are not eligible for the same state or national contest again. Junior team winners are eligible to compete in subsequent contests in the Junior division as long as age eligibility is current.
- E. **State Eligibility:** Unless extreme extenuating circumstances exist, a state winner who, for whatever reason, declines the national/out-of-state event *may not* enter the same state event the following year. Extenuating circumstances will be determined by the Extension agent, subject-matter specialist, and the state 4-H office representative. If a state-winning team or individual chooses to not participate in the national/out-of-state contest for any reason, the State Office and second place team must be notified at least 60 days prior to the deadline for registration for the national/out-of-state contest to give the second-place team the opportunity to compete.
- F. **National contest team composition:** If a county has entered only one team consisting of three members and this team wins the state contest, the next highest individual in the state contest (at the discretion of the Extension Agent in consultation with 4-H Youth Agriculture Program Coordinator) may be added to the team to participate in the national contest. If a winning county team has an original team member elect not to participate in the national event, leaving the team with three members, the following procedures will be

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instituted in consultation with and approval of the Extension Agent, subject matter specialist, and state 4-H office representative to replace that team member:

- i. A letter from the 4-H team member declining the trip must be submitted to the Extension Agent with copies to the Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Agriculture and coach of record;
- ii. The letter must be signed by the 4-H member and his/her parent or guardian;
- iii. This letter must be submitted and postmarked at least 60 days prior to the national registration deadline; and
- iv. Upon receipt of the letter, the Extension Agent, subject matter specialist, and state 4-H representative will consult on the final team composition prior to national team registration. To replace a winning team member who is unable to compete nationally, the county must have had additional 4-H members who competed in the same state contest as the original team members. The vacant position would be offered to the winning county's 4-H member with the highest score, descending consecutively to the next highest scorer until a four-member team is selected.

G. ***National 4-H Competitive Events Effective January 1, 2002:***

1. To be eligible for participation in a national event, a 4-Her must compete in the state contest.
2. Contestant must not have reached his or her 19th birthday as of January 1 of the year in which the National 4-H competitive event is held, with the exception of the Land & Homesite Judging Contest (See Section A).
3. All contestants must be members of 4-H in the state they are representing during the year in which the National 4-H competitive event is held.
4. The contestant(s) or team(s) of contestants must be certified as the official state entry by the State 4-H Leader or by a person designated by the State 4-H Leader. The individual(s) or team(s) may be selected by any procedure the State 4-H leader believes is appropriate.
5. The contestant, his or her county 4-H staff member, and the State 4-H Leader must certify as follows on the application form: "This contestant has not participated in post-secondary coursework in the subject area of the national 4-H competition, nor has he or she participated in training for post-secondary competition in the subject area of the national 4-H competition." Violation of the above will result in forfeiture of any awards or recognition that have been won in the National 4-H Competitive Event.

H. ***Competing in both 4-H and FFA National Events:*** The National offices of 4-H and FFA have agreed on the following national policy, in the interest of consistency between events and between organizations in eligibility for national competition. "Participation by the same individual in both a National 4-H and a National FFA competitive event in the same year may occur only when the following is accomplished:"

One for 4-H:

Participation in a National 4-H competitive event will require that all youth participating be "bona fide" current 4-H participants and must qualify for the national event through an approved state competition or selection process conducted or sanctioned by the representative organization.

One for FFA:

Participation in a National FFA Career Development event will require that all youth participating be "bona fide" members of an FFA chapter and must qualify

for the national event through an approved state competition conducted or sanctioned by the representative organization.

4-H and FFA determined to establish a consistent policy for all their National 4-H Competitive Events, and National FFA Career Development Events. Criteria for the policy included:

1. Assure that participants in national event are genuine representatives of their state and organization.
 2. Assure that each individual is given all the opportunities he or she has legitimately earned.
 3. Assure that the policy is easy for participants and states to understand.
 4. Assure that the policy does not require extra efforts from the Management Committee to enforce.
 5. Assure that the national offices of 4-H and FFA are supportive of each other and consistent in their interpretation of eligibility.
- I. ***Pre-registration*** forms will be required and will be submitted to the State 4-H Office by the date requested.
- J. ***Contest results*** as announced are final. The county teams winning any state contest are eligible to represent West Virginia in the out-of-state event. Example: Hardy County might enter three teams in the senior division for the Livestock Judging. The teams would be designated team A, B, and C. If team B were the state winning team, then it would be eligible to represent West Virginia in the out-of-state/national event. This includes the alternate if there were four members entered. The coach of the winning county team would be designated as the coach for the out-of-state/national trip.
- K. After the winning team is selected, it will be the responsibility of the county coach to work with the appropriate state specialist to provide training for the team to participate in the out-of-state/national event.
- L. Any individual who has competed in the National Land and/or Homesite Judging Contest in either the FFA or 4-H Division will not be eligible to compete in succeeding State 4-H Land & Homesite Judging Contests.
- M. ***Determination of Ratings for Livestock, Poultry, Horse and Dairy.***
1. Fifty points shall constitute a perfect mark on placings, and fifty points a perfect mark on reasons.
 2. Species/Breed Ties
 - a. If tied for a species/breed award, the contestant or team having the highest **reasons** score in the division will be listed first.
 - b. If still tied for a species/breed award, the contestant or team having the highest **score for all species/breed** will be listed first.
 3. Overall Ties
 - a. If tied for individual or team overall award, the contestant or team having the highest overall **reasons** score will be listed first.
 - b. If still tied from after the above, the contestant or team having the highest score in **placing used for reasons** classes will be listed first.

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- c. If teams are still tied from a and b, the team with the highest scoring alternate will be listed first.
4. Alternates will be eligible for individual awards.

N. ***Judges for Livestock, Horse, and Dairy Contests.***

1. The official judges will work each class and shall place the classes while the contestants are working the ring of animals. The judges will enter their placings on a placing card, indicate the cuts to be made and file that card with the superintendent.
2. Contestants may be handed their card as they appear before a judge to give oral reasons. When the contestant has finished, the judge will place the official reason grade upon the contestant's placing card or designated official sheet.

O. ***Contestant Conduct***

1. All contestants will remain with assigned group throughout the contest.
2. Contestants are discouraged from wearing any clothing, pins, or badges that will in any way reveal his/her identity or the county represented.
3. While the contest is in progress, there shall be no communicating between a contestant and anyone else unless directed by the superintendent or his/her representative.

P. All judging contests will be conducted under conditions as near as possible to those of a national contest.

Q. ***Use of Technology in State 4-H Judging Contests and Events:*** The use of all electronic devices; including but not limited to cell phones, PDAs, MP3 players, programmable calculators; are prohibited during all State 4-H Judging Contests and Events. If an event requires the use of calculators or other devices, the event coordinator will provide exact specifications on the type(s) of devices (including functions) that will be permitted. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in the elimination of the entire team from competition. A letter will be sent to the Extension Agent and State 4-H Leader by the state staff detailing the reasons for the dismissal.

R. ***Joint 4-H and FFA state contests:*** If a state 4-H contest is being held in conjunction with FFA, teams/individuals can only compete as either 4-H or FFA teams/individuals, and must pre-register as such.