



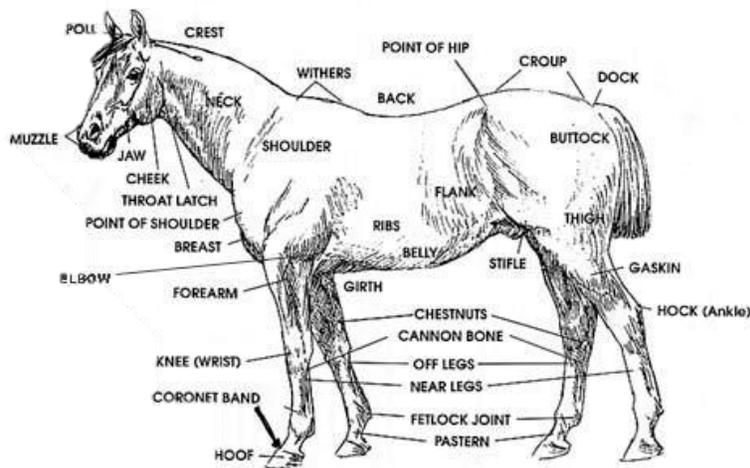
North Dakota 4-H Horse Program

Hippology

Where do I begin?

- 1) Often overwhelming, let the standard study material guide you. Purchase or have access to the *standard study material* found in the Hippology contest rules. This is the material you will teach from, help guide you with hands on activities, and where questions will be pulled from for the contest.
https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/4h/Contests/NORTH_DAKOTA_Hippology_Rules_2020_01.pdf
- 2) Start with the basics. a) Body parts, b) Breeds, b) Colors and Markings. First, one needs to understand the basic body identification parts of the horse. This will allow 4-H'ers to communicate effectively with a coach by knowing where on the horse a coach might be referencing.

a. **Body part identification** is a great way to kick off your Hippology team discussion and learning.



b. Cover different **breeds of horses**. Being there are over 235 breeds of horses, start with the basics: draft, warmblood, coldblood, harness, stock type, pony. Teach how to quickly identify a breed and the common gaits for each breed. For example, an Arabian's dished face is a key characteristic of the breed. A Clydesdale is most often brown in color with which stockings and feathered feet. An Appaloosa is spotted where a Paint horse has patches of color. The standard study material will address the key breeds and characteristic.

c. **Colors and markings**. These can be key to a particular breed, and thus might be learned when covering breeds.

- 3) After having a good grasp on the outside of the horse, you can begin to pick a particular breed and study its **conformation** and the importance of correct conformation. Conformation should include unsoundness and blemishes.
 - a. The breed association rule books are an excellent tool to utilize as you become familiar with how a horse is judged. Most Hippology contest has some type of judging component, including halter and performance classes.
 - b. For example, read the American Quarter Horse Rule book for Halter and Western Pleasure. You will see how descriptive each section is and be able to use this information as you expand the knowledge of your 4-H'ers.
- 4) **Health** is the basic understanding of grooming (common tools and why we utilize them). Safety and common equipment can also be discussed when covering grooming. Normal vital signs can then be introduced. Once vital signs are learned and understood, diseases, vaccinations, and parasites can further be discussed in detail.

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- 5) **Feeds and nutrition.** Often these can be discussed together. Keep it simple at first by introducing terms such as “forage” and roughage.” Cover the basics of how to feed horses and what a body condition score is and its importance. Once these basic concepts are learned, you can move on to different types of forages and concentrates. The six required nutrients are very important to cover: carbohydrates (energy), fats, protein, vitamins, minerals, and water.
- 6) **Anatomy and physiology** are important for learning the function of the horse. Major systems of the horse and the skeletal system are key for both health and feeding concepts.
- 7) **The hoof and farrier** are a way to introduce hoof anatomy and the importance of cleaning the hoof. Front and hind limb anatomy can be discussed here too. Farrier equipment and tools are fair game for any contest and should be discussed.
- 8) **Facility management** discussed housing, fencing, and transportation of the horse. Environmental needs and behavior of the horse, including the safety of the horse around other horses, can be discussed during this topic.
- 9) **Training** is another way to introduce ground safety and its importance. During training is a chance to discuss **tack identification and use.** Parts of the saddle and bridle are important. Additionally, different types of common bits are key (snaffle vs curb) for identification and usage.
- 10) **Reproduction** is a complex subject and can be covered last. Cover the reproductive tract parts for both stallion and mare. Additionally, important reproductive hormones will need to be covered.
- 11) **Scantron.** Allow 4-H’ers to become familiar with the scantron before the contest. Practice bubbling in answers and erasing them.
- 12) **Small contest.** Host a small contest to give your 4-H’ers example questions.

How do I host a contest?

Start small. One could host a contest with only 20 questions, 20 stations, and a team problem simply to gain practice. Leave out the judging aspect the first year unless you feel confident in establishing good classes. Simply utilize a DVD or pictures if you desire to include the judging component. Use the Hippology rules to guide you for set up. Contests can be stressful on 4-H’ers. Hosting a small contest, if only for your club, allows your 4-H’ers to navigate through a contest situation.

- a. Have a rotation schedule so each team gets to each component of the Hippology contest.
 - i. Randomly schedule teams and have an individual checking off teams as they finish rotations.
- b. Develop your exam with an answer key
 - i. You can hand this back to coaches for educational purposes.
- c. Develop your stations with an answer key
- d. Develop your team problem with an answer key
 - i. Rotation schedule for each team with 10 minute review & 5 minute delivery checkoff times.
- e. Develop a structure to selecting your youth on each team
 - i. Examples:
 1. Strengths and weaknesses that complement the team
 2. Commitment to practice for individuals