



UTAH 4-H ANIMAL SCIENCE

REGION CONTESTS

**RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR HORSE &
LIVESTOCK SKILL-A-THON**



**PREPARED BY THE UTAH 4-H HORSE AND LIVESTOCK
WORKING GROUPS**

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2026



Extension
UtahStateUniversity



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2026 CONTEST SPECIFICS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 20th and 21st 2026

Registration \$15 per contest

Register on Zsuite

Open February 9th - Closes March 13th

Northern Region

Spanish Fork Fairgrounds
475 S Main St, Spanish Fork



March 20th
Horse Skill-a-thon

March 21st
Livestock Skill-a-thon



Southern Region

Millard County Fairgrounds
187 Manzanita Ave, Delta, UT



March 20th
Livestock Skill-a-thon

March 21st
Horse Skill-a-thon



Youth participants will receive a hat with registration.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Utah 4-H Region Contests are a skill-a-thon style event designed to make learning fun for 4-H members.

Participants exhibit their knowledge and understanding of animal science and husbandry in a friendly yet competitive setting. The Horse and Livestock Region Contests are modeled after Hippology, Academic Quadrathlon, and Livestock Skill-a-thon contests. The contests incorporate judging, public speaking, quiz bowl, and practical education and knowledge components.



PURPOSE

Utah 4-H has a long-standing tradition of providing youth with high-quality competitive learning opportunities that build knowledge, leadership, communication skills, and teamwork. Historically, state-level 4-H contests required youth to compete as complete teams representing a single county. As Utah continues to experience population growth, urbanization, and increased participation in diverse 4-H programs, this structure has made it difficult for some counties to consistently field full teams. To address this challenge and ensure equitable access to competitive opportunities, Utah 4-H is implementing a Regional Contest Model for Horse and Livestock contests. This model allows youth from multiple counties within a region to qualify individually through a standardized Regional Skill-a-thon and form cross-county regional teams based on performance.

The Regional Skill-a-thon is designed to:

- Standardize the process for forming cross-county teams
- Align closely with existing Utah 4-H Horse and Livestock Skill-a-thon contests
- Maintain fairness, consistency, and educational rigor
- Allow youth to qualify for specific contest areas based on demonstrated strengths

The infographic features two columns of county names, each under a dark green banner with white text. The background is a light beige color with a faint illustration of green mountains at the bottom. The left column is titled 'Northern Region Counties' and lists 14 counties. The right column is titled 'Southern Region Counties' and lists 10 counties.

Northern Region Counties	Southern Region Counties
• Box Elder County	• Beaver County
• Cache County	• Garfield County
• Carbon County	• Iron County
• Davis County	• Juab County
• Duchesne County	• Kane County
• Morgan County	• Millard County
• Rich County	• Piute County
• Salt Lake County	• Sanpete County
• Summit County	• Sevier County
• Tooele County	• Washington County
• Uintah County	• Wayne County
• Utah County	
• Wasatch County	

RULES



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ELIGIBILITY

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Participants must:

- Be currently enrolled in Utah 4-H and in good standing
- Meet all behavioral and participation expectations outlined in Utah 4-H policies

AGE DIVISIONS

Age divisions will follow Utah 4-H guidelines, based on the member's grade level as of September 1 of the previous year:

- Junior (Grades 3 - 5)
- Intermediate (Grades 6 - 8)
- Senior (Grades 9 - 12)

Youth will compete within their designated age division for all phases.

PARTICIPATION

Participation in a county-level contest is not required to compete at the regional level. Youth must participate in the region contest of the region they reside in regardless of other project participation.

ATTIRE & SUPPLIES

DRESS CODE

Participants should wear attire appropriate for both indoor and outdoor venues, wear closed toe shoes, long pants, and have an official 4-H patch visible on the upper left sleeve.

SUPPLIES

Participants are responsible for bringing their own notebooks, writing utensils, and resource materials as applicable. Unless otherwise noted, **NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES** will be allowed.



OFFICIAL RESOURCES

Only content from these approved resources will be used when putting together each phase of the contest.

Horse resources include Utah 4-H Horse Program Study Material, Rule Books, and other sources listed below.

Livestock resources include Ohio State University Publications for Market and Breeding Projects for Swine, Beef, Sheep, and Goats.

Specific chapters and topics of these selections are listed by age division in the table below.

AGE DIVISION	HORSE	LIVESTOCK
JUNIOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utah 4-H Horse Program Study Material Volume 1 Utah 4-H Biosecurity Policy Utah 4-H Western Rule Book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ohio State University Resources for Market & Breeding Projects for Swine, Beef, Sheep, and Goats focusing on the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breeds, Equipment, General Care
INTERMEDIATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Junior Materials Utah 4-H Horse Program Study Material Volume 2 Utah 4-H Working Ranch Horse rules and guidelines Utah 4-H English Rule Book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ohio State University Resources for Market & Breeding Projects for Swine, Beef, Sheep, and Goats focusing on the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breeds, Equipment, General Care, Diseases and Treatment
SENIOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Junior and Intermediate Materials Horse Science by Jean T Griffiths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ohio State University Resources for Market & Breeding Projects for Swine, Beef, Sheep, and Goats



CONTEST STRUCTURE

Each Regional Skill-a-thon consists of four individually scored phases, adapted from the Utah 4-H Horse and Livestock Classic contest rules. Participants will compete as individuals in all phases. Scores in each phase are used to form region teams and qualify for state contests.

Refer to corresponding contest rules as listed on the Utah 4-H State Classics webpage for additional rules and guidelines for each contest. Unless otherwise noted, contest phases will follow the format of the classic contests.

SKILL-A-THON PHASE	HORSE CLASSIC EQUIVALENT	LIVESTOCK CLASSIC EQUIVALENT
PHASE 1 JUDGING	HORSE JUDGING	LIVESTOCK JUDGING
PHASE 2 GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	HIPPOLOGY	LIVESTOCK SKILLATHON
PHASE 3 PUBLIC SPEAKING	HORSE PUBLIC SPEAKING, HORSE DEMONSTRATIONS	PUBLIC SPEAKING
PHASE 4 QUIZ BOWL	HORSE BOWL	LIVESTOCK BOWL

PHASE 1

JUDGING - 200 POINTS

The Judging Phase evaluates a contestant's ability to accurately place animal classes using accepted industry standards.

Contestants will be required to place four (4) classes appropriate to their contest area (Horse or Livestock). Class composition varies by contest and is outlined in the table below.

HORSE	LIVESTOCK
Two (2) Halter or Conformation Breeds may include American Paint Horse, American Quarter Horse, American Saddlebred, Appaloosa, Arabian, Common Draft Horse Breeds, Miniature Horse, and Morgan. Two (2) Performance Classes may include English Pleasue, Equitation, Hunter Hack, Hunter Under Saddle, Horsemanship, Ranch Riding, Reining, Trail, Western Riding, and Western Pleasure.	One (1) class of each market species including sheep, goats, hogs, and cattle. Classes will consist of breeds or crosses commonly accepted as market animals by industry standards. Classes will be designated and clearly marked as breeding (with or without performance data), market, or prospect

Each class will be worth 50 points and scored using official placings and cuts as outlined in the Utah 4-H Classics Horse and Livestock Judging Contest Rules.



Contestants are responsible for providing their own writing instruments and notepads.

There is no prohibition on the use of pre-printed reference materials during the Judging Phase. Allowable materials include, but are not limited to:

- Rule books
- Judging manuals
- Score sheets

If live classes are not available, pictorial and/or video classes may be used. Any such classes will be specifically prepared for the Regional Skillathon.

Participants with tied scores may be asked to prepare a set of oral reasons or answer questions specific to the classes they evaluated (WITHOUT NOTES). The judging phase official and contest committee will determine the tie breaking procedure and notify contestants as applicable.

Contestants will not be required to give oral reasons or answer questions unless tied scores need to be broken.



PHASE 2

KNOWLEDGE - 200 POINTS

The Knowledge Phase evaluates a contestant's knowledge, understanding, and application of subject matter relevant to their contest area (Horse or Livestock). This phase is designed to assess both academic knowledge and practical understanding through a combination of written and hands-on components.

The Knowledge Phase consists of a series of stations or tables, and a written exam that may be either a hard copy or electronic.

Content for the stations and exam will be pulled from approved Utah 4-H Study Materials listed in the Official References section of this guide.

STATIONS

Contestants will rotate through each station as either individuals or in small groups. Time limits and the number of stations will be announced prior to the beginning of the phase.

Stations may utilize actual equipment, photographs, diagrams, or projected images, including images from popular press sources, provided all content aligns with approved study materials.

Contest officials reserve the right to adjust station formats as needed to ensure a fair and efficient contest



EXAM

The exam may be either a physical test, electronic, or utilize a scantron.

Exam questions will be any combination of multiple choice, short answer, true or false, or matching.



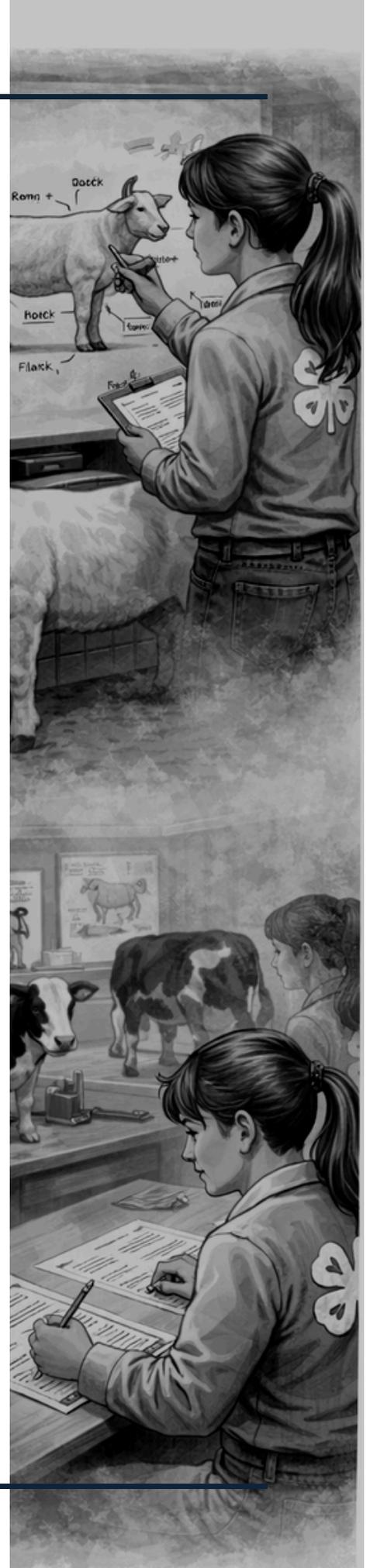
Contestants are responsible for providing their own writing instruments and may bring a blank notebook or scratch paper. There will be absolutely NO pre-printed materials such as notes or photographs, and no electronic devices are allowed during this phase.

Scores from the stations and exam will be combined for one Knowledge Phase score. Contest officials will determine point values of each station or question as long as the combined total equals 200 points. This phase may be standardized in the overall scoring phase.

Tied scores will be broken in the following sequence:

- Highest Exam Score
- Highest Stations Score
- Most correct answers in sequence
- Tie breaker test administered separately

No oral presentations, reasons, or verbal responses are required during the Knowledge Phase.



PHASE 3

PUBLIC SPEAKING - 200 POINTS

The Public Speaking Phase evaluates a contestant's ability to quickly organize and deliver effective oral communication based on a prompt drawn at the time of competition. This phase emphasizes clarity, critical thinking, confidence, and subject-relevant knowledge, and is comparable to an impromptu public speaking competition.

At the start of the phase, contestants will randomly draw three topic prompts and will select one to speak on. A maximum of one (1) minute is allotted for this selection process.

Contestants will be given a set amount of preparation time beginning immediately after selecting their topic, to organize their thoughts and prepare notes. Preparation and presentation times are dependent on age division.

AGE DIVISION	PREP TIME	PRESENTATION
JUNIORS	15 MINUTES	1 - 5 MINUTES
INTERMEDIATES	15 MINUTES	2 - 5 MINUTES
SENIORS	10 MINUTES	3 - 5 MINUTES

Speeches that are shorter than the minimum or longer than the maximum will incur a 2 point penalty for each 30 seconds over or under the specified range.

During the preparation phase, contestants will be placed in a holding room. There will be no limitations on printed materials or notes in the holding room. During this phase, contestants may prepare notes on a supplied 5×7 blank note card and may reference these notes during their speech. Contestants will deliver their speech individually at the assigned time and will not be permitted to watch other speeches until after they have presented.

Contest organizers may provide visual aids or materials for youth to use. In this case, all youth will have access to the same materials. No electronic devices, costumes, posters, visual aids, or props are permitted from home.

JUDGING CRITERIA

A. Organization

1. Introduction: Captures audience and clearly states the purpose and subject.
2. Body: Main points are clear, follow a logical order, and support the central theme.
3. Conclusion: Summarizes main points and ties back to the purpose in a memorable way.
4. Content Quality: Information is accurate, relevant, creative, and original. Avoid unnecessary repetition.
5. Relevance to 4-H / Youth: Relates content to 4-H experiences or today's youth.

B. Delivery

1. Bodily Action: Speaker is poised and confident, maintains eye contact, and uses natural, purposeful gestures.
2. Voice: Voice is clear, audible, and expressive, with varied pitch and appropriate speaking rate.
3. Language Effectiveness: Words are appropriate and precise; uses examples, facts, or quotes to support ideas.

C. General

Appearance: Speaker is in official attire, clean, neat, and professional. Hairstyle, jewelry, or makeup should not distract.

PROMPTS

Contestants will draw a prompt related to horse or livestock industry knowledge, 4-H leadership, agriculture, or other topics pertinent to youth and the contest area, and then deliver an impromptu speech. Potential topics can be found in the table below although the prompts will vary.

Age Division	Horse	Livestock
Junior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favorite Part of the Horse Project • Popular breeds and their uses • Picking a horse project for someone new to 4-H • Any Horse Project Portfolio Objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favorite Part of Raising Livestock • Tips for showing any species of livestock • Popular breeds and their uses • Any Livestock Project Portfolio Objectives
Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Junior topics • Common biosecurity practices • Grooming and preparation for a show • General health and care of your horse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Junior topics • Importance of farm biosecurity • Grooming and preparation for a show • Technology uses in livestock production
Senior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Junior and Intermediate topics • Impact of equine industry trends on small farms and youth programs • Innovations in horse health and veterinary care • Leadership opportunities through horse-related community service • Any other horse related topics consistent with information found in official resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Junior and Intermediate topics • Impact of livestock industry trends on small farms and youth programs • Environmental stewardship in livestock production • Leadership opportunities within agriculture • Any other livestock or agriculture related topics consistent with information found in official resources

No two senior contestants will present on the same topic.

Scoresheets add up to a total of 100 points. When two judges are available, their scores are combined for overall placings. When one judge is available, their scores are multiplied by 2.

Ties will be broken by the following sequence:

- Highest score in Part A: Organization
- Highest score in Part B: Delivery
- Highest score in Part C: General
- Tie Breaker judge will make a selection



PHASE 4

QUIZ BOWL - 200 POINTS

The Quiz Bowl Phase evaluates a contestant's knowledge, accuracy, and speed of recall related to horse or livestock project areas, industry knowledge, and 4-H subject matter. This phase is conducted in a competitive question-and-answer format and scored individually.

Up to sixteen (16) contestants may participate in a single heat. Contestants will be randomly assigned a contestant seat and order of participation at the beginning of each heat. When more than sixteen contestants are entered, competition will be conducted in multiple heats or rounds. Scores do not carry over between heats; each heat begins with new scores.

Quiz Bowl questions will be divided evenly between two formats: head-to-head questions and toss-up questions.

Head-to-head questions place two contestants in direct competition against one another. Contestants will be randomly paired for these questions. When time allows, contestants may compete head-to-head against every other contestant; however, this format is rare. Most commonly, each contestant will compete head-to-head against four (4) randomly assigned opponents within a heat.



Toss-up questions are open to all contestants participating in the heat and follow standard Quiz Bowl procedures.

Questions for both formats will be drawn from approved reference materials and will be fill-in-the-blank or short answer questions and will exclude multiple choice or true or false questions.

At the conclusion of each heat, the top five (5) scoring individuals will advance to the next round of competition. Additional heats will be conducted as needed until a top ten (10) overall ranking is determined. Scores are reset at the beginning of each heat to ensure fairness among advancing contestants.

Scoring for the Quiz Bowl Phase differs from other contest phases and is based on relative placement rather than raw question totals. Following final rankings, the highest-scoring individual will receive two hundred (200) points, the second-highest will receive one hundred ninety (190) points, the third-highest will receive one hundred eighty (180) points, and so on in descending order. No contestant will receive less than one hundred (100) points after final placements are determined.

There will be no ties following the final qualifying heat. If ties occur, sudden-death rounds will be used to break ties. Sudden-death questions will continue until all ties are resolved and each of the top ten contestants has a unique placement.



SCORING

Overall awards are based on the combined score from all four contest phases, for a maximum total of eight hundred (800) points. To be eligible for overall awards, contestants must participate in all four phases. Youth who do not compete in every phase may still earn individual phase awards and qualify for regional teams based on phase-specific performance. Overall rankings are determined by total points earned across all phases.

TIE BREAKING

All ties of overall scores will be broken by the following sequence:

- Phase 2: Knowledge
- Phase 3: Public Speaking
- Phase 1: Judging
- Phase 4: Quiz Bowl



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Awards and recognition are intended to encourage participation while celebrating individual achievement.

- The highest-scoring individual in each contest phase will receive an award.
- Overall awards will be presented to the top five individuals based on cumulative scores from all phases.

Additional awards may be presented based on participation and availability as determined by contest organizers. Award types may include ribbons, plaques, certificates, or comparable recognition items.

CREATION OF REGION TEAMS

YOUTH MAY QUALIFY FOR RECOGNITION AND TEAM PLACEMENT BASED ON INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE IN EACH PHASE



Teams are typically formed from the highest qualifiers across counties within the region, ensuring representation and competitive balance. Eligible youth may choose to participate in a county based team instead and must declare their intention within 1 hour of team eligibility announcements.

A participant who places in the top 10 in any given phase (e.g., Judging, Quiz Bowl, Knowledge, or Public Speaking) is eligible to be selected as a regional team member for that phase/contest category.

For Example:

- Top 10 in Judging → eligible for Regional Judging Team
- Top 10 in Knowledge → eligible for Regional Hippology or Skillathon
- Top 10 in Public Speaking → eligible for Regional Team Demos or other individual speech contests
- Top 10 in Quiz Bowl → eligible for Regional Quiz Bowl Team

These top performers contribute to team formation as well as individual recognition opportunities. Youth may qualify in more than one phase and be eligible for multiple teams.

Qualifying individuals may request special accommodations to form teams that cater to existing clubs or geographic proximity. These requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the Utah 4-H Working Groups

The highest scoring individual on a regional team will be appointed the team captain. It is the responsibility of the team captain to select a volunteer coach and help arrange team practices.

In the event that one individual is the highest scoring team member and wishes to participate on multiple regional teams, they must select only one contest team to be captain. In this scenario, team captain responsibilities will revert to the next highest team member.

TEAM COACHES

Selected coaches must be Utah 4-H volunteers and must go through an application and approval process. This process is accomplished through a Zsuite event registration [Year] Regional Team Coach Application.

STATE CONTEST

Youth wishing to participate at the Utah 4-H Classics where State Contests are held must qualify in one of two ways.

1. Participate in region contests and qualify to participate on a region team or
2. Qualify and participate in a county team with a volunteer

Youth wishing to participate in a multi-county team must participate and qualify in a regional contest. No exceptions.

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