

4-H WORKING RANCH COMPETITION RULES

JUNIOR AND NOVICE

GENERAL RULES

Regular and Non-Regular Divisions may be offered at the State Working Ranch Horse show. Regular divisions include Juniors, Intermediates, and Seniors. Non-regular divisions are Novice, and Open.

Novice divisions will follow the same rules, judging criteria, and scoring as the Junior division, while the Open division will follow the same rules, judging criteria, and scoring as the Intermediate/Senior divisions.

The regular classes are for 4-H youth that are ready to compete in their age division. The non-regular Novice class is for 4-H youth of any age not ready to rope, drive, or pen live cattle. The non-regular Open class is for when the state offers 4-H volunteers and adults a chance to compete at a 4-H show too.

Junior and Novice contestants will compete in 5 events for the 4-H Working Ranch Competition. These events will be 1. Test, 2. Working Ranch Dummy Roping, 3. Ranch Sorting, 4. Reining, 5. Cow Work.

AWARDS AND SCORING

For all events, each horse/rider team automatically begins with a score of 70. A score of 70 denotes an average performance. Events are judged with points added or subtracted from 70 to achieve a final event score and placing. The test will break all ties in every event. All event's final points will be totaled for the all-around show placing.

Overall awards will be given in each event for the top 5 placings from the regular age divisions. All-around show awards will be given for the top 10 placings from the regular age divisions. Additional awards may be given at show management's discretion.

ATTIRE AND TACK

Western attire consisting of a long-sleeve shirt with a 4-H patch on the upper left sleeve, long pants, boots, a belt, and a properly fitted equestrian helmet are required. Gloves and leg protection such as chinks or chaps are optional.

Tack will follow the rules listed in the *Utah 4-H Western Horse Rulebook* in the sections regarding judged events. Leg protection is permitted in all events. It is acceptable to use the saddle horn in events that have cows. Contestants are permitted to show younger horses in age appropriate headgear without being penalized.

TEST

Each contestant will be required to take a general knowledge test worth 70 points with 6 bonus points possible. Junior exams will have questions from the Utah 4-H Horse Programs Study Guide Volume 1 as well as questions from the Working Ranch Horse Practical Training Guide found on the website here:

<https://extension.usu.edu/utah4h/files/working-ranch-horse-training-guide.pdf>. They will also be tested from the Working Ranch Rules and Working Ranch Scorecards.

WORKING RANCH DUMMY ROPING

The purpose of the Working Ranch Dummy Roping is for youth participants to show their skill in throwing head and heel loops, demonstrating their ability to safely dally their ropes.

Participants will throw loops from horseback at a roping dummy that is equipped with a hornless or muley head. Control and positioning of the horse will be important in the scoring process. Each participant will use only one rope, and must recoil and build a new loop after each throw. If rope is dropped, the contestant can dismount and retrieve rope.

Heading

- Competitors will be allowed a maximum of three head loops within a three (3) minute time limit.

Heeling

- Competitors will be allowed a maximum of three heel loops within a three (3) minute time limit.

Refer to the Working Ranch Dummy Roping Scorecard for penalties and credits.

RANCH SORTING

Ranch sorting is a demonstration of the common chores involved in sorting cattle for doctoring, weaning, branding, sifting, and sorting for market. The contestant should demonstrate their knowledge of cattle and how to influence cattle movements with the help of a quiet and responsive horse.

Ranch sorting is an individually judged event with a 2.5 minute time limit. This event is a judged event, excessive speed is discouraged. Contestants will sort up to three head of cattle in a run.

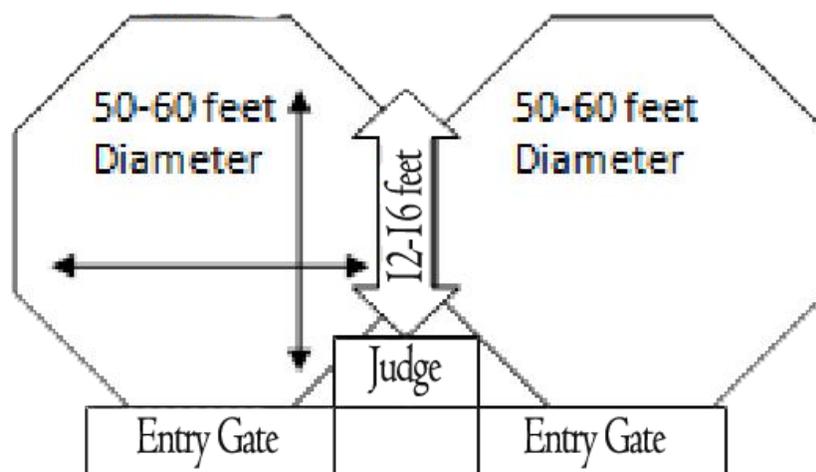
No extra credit will be given for finishing early and each cow will be scored separately on degree of difficulty and the contestant's ability to handle the cow.

Contestants will choose their gate help. The gate help may be other contestants, leaders, or qualified adults. If needed, contestants will have gate help provided. The gate helper prevents unwanted cattle from passing through the gate. The contestant and the gate help are allowed to communicate and teamwork is encouraged; however, the contestant should do the majority of the sorting.

- Ten (10) head of cattle will be assembled in a pen. The cattle will be clearly marked with the numbers 0-9.
- Ranch Sorting will take place between two pens of approximately equal size with the show management's option of working cattle back and forth or only one way.
- Each herd will be settled prior to beginning.
- Recommended sorting area to be round pens 50'-60' in diameter.
- The start/foul line will be recommended as a 12' - 16' opening between the two pens.
- The judge will be positioned evenly with the foul line.
- All cattle will be bunched on the cattle side of the gate within the designated area before the time begins. At the conclusion of each run, the judge will designate the need to bunch cattle.
- The flag will drop when the nose of the horse crosses the start/foul line and the announcer will provide the number to be sorted first. Rider will begin riding from the pen that is to be sorted into.
- The rider will sort that number first, and then the next two numbers in ascending order. (For example: If five (5) is the number given, the contestant will sort number 5 first, followed by 6, and then 7.)
- All cattle must have approved back or neck numbers.
- The cattle are sorted in the proper order. If any part of a numbered cow crosses the start/foul line prior to its correct order, it is considered a dirty cow. The rider will receive a 5-point penalty per dirty cow and does not need to be corrected.
- A cow is considered sorted when the entire animal is completely across the start/foul line.
- If a numbered cow jumps the fence and either leaves the arena or ends up in the opposite pen, but did not pass through the gate, it will result in a re-ride for that contestant at the end of the herd, (assuming it was not caused by roughing).
- The run is considered complete when the appropriate numbers are sorted through the center gate or the time limit expires.

Refer to the Ranch Sorting Scorecard for penalties and credits.

SINGLE SORTING ARENA CONFIGURATION



REINING

A reined work will consist of the following maneuvers: circles, lead changes, rollbacks, well-balanced stops, spins, and a backup. In all judged events simple lead changes will receive full credit if done correctly and flying lead changes will receive extra credit. Simple lead changes must be done in 3 or fewer trotting steps. Trotting more than three strides when making a simple lead change will be penalized.

The horse shall be easily guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance. Bad manners exhibited by the horse will be penalized. The reining pattern will be determined by the show management.

Refer to the Rein Work Scorecard for penalties and credits.

COW WORK (BOXING)

Each contestant upon receiving a cow in the arena shall hold that cow on the prescribed end of the arena for 50 seconds, demonstrating the ability of the horse and rider to control the cow. Time shall begin when the gate closes behind the cow after being let into the arena. The announcer or judge will signal the completion of the 50 seconds with a whistle or horn, and the run will be complete.

If the judge determines the cow drawn is unreasonably difficult or unworkable the contestant should receive a new cow. The judge will indicate new cow by blowing his/her whistle twice - indicating the awarding of a new cow. Allowing the horse to quit working before the judge signals for a new cow will result in a zero score. If the judge awards a new cow, the exhibitor

has the option to refuse the new cow by continuing to work. If the exhibitor intends to accept the new cow, he or she must pull up immediately.

Refer to the Boxing Scorecard for penalties and credits. (Updated July 2025)