May 21, 2008

Greetings Horse Leaders!

The 2008 Ottawa County 4-H horse show season is kicking off in the next few weeks. I hope all your members are ready for a fun season of horse shows, fairs and learning. As I mentioned at the Spring Leaders Meeting, this letter is giving everyone the official dates, patterns, and updates for the 2008 season. This allows all clubs to be aware of any changes that were made over the winter and keep everyone updated as to the new opportunities we are offering. Please be sure to pass this information along to your members so we may have a successful 2008 season.

Spring Clinic

The '08 Spring Clinic was held on May 5, 2008 at Lynn Croel’s indoor arena. Our keynote speaker was Tim Christensen and the subject was the Trail class. Thanks to all those clubs that attended. For those that missed out, we had just over 150 people in attendance and some great questions were asked and we had some great examples of how to tackle a trail course… Hope everyone learned that patience is required! Tim did a spectacular job teaching us what it takes to have a successful trail class. Thanks also to Lynn for letting us use her facility, Scott and Geena for bringing their horses and being great demonstrators and Gary Ohr for his assistance with the arena. I hope everyone has been practicing those trail patterns…. Because you may be seeing them again this summer.

Reining Pattern

Attached, you will find the 2008 Reining Pattern. You will notice that this is different from any pattern the members have performed in the past. The committee who chose this pattern felt that it was very possible for our members to perform and it has been changed to allow for the footing that we have at our three 4-H fair shows. Thanks so much to Kris, Mary and Jan for your hard working putting this together!

Pony Measuring

Pony measuring was a success last year and we are continuing this again for 2008. *Members showing ponies that have not been previously measured by the committee or are newly enrolled in 4-H are required to have their ponies measured to compete in the pony division. A negative Coggins test is required. Measuring dates and locations are as follows:

- June 7, 2008 Hudsonville Fair Grounds 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Check with the entry booth where to go.
- June 24, 2008 Hudsonville Fair Grounds 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Ask Jean at the food booth for where to go.

If members are unable to attend either of these dates please contact a committee member so that an alternate location/date may be arranged.
*The only exception to our measuring rule are ponies that have permanent height cards from breed registries (i.e. POA, Quarter Pony, etc.). For those members, we need to have a copy of the card on file before they may show at the fair, or compete for State Points.

**Leaders Show**

The 4-H Leaders Show will be held at the Hudsonville Community Fairgrounds on June 7, 2008. Show starts at 8:00 am. Members are encouraged to use their 4-H issued back numbers. There will be a photographer available and a few vendors selling clothing and tack. A reminder is also made that ASTM/SEI approved helmets are required for all Hunt Seat and bareback riding classes.

**State Show Points**

Due to the increasing interest in the state show, the horse committee is offering an additional opportunity to qualify for the State Show to our members in 2008. The Southwest Riding Club has allowed us to include the State Show Points Qualifying Showmanship and Equitation classes at one of their Tuesday night Fun Shows. This Show is in addition to the qualifying classes that we offer at the Leaders Show and the Berlin Fair. Members are required to use their 4-H back numbers during these classes. The qualifiers are as follows:

- June 7, 2008- Hudsonville Community Fairgrounds- Ottawa County 4-H Leaders Show, Saturday at 8:00 am.
- June 24, 2008 Hudsonville Community Fairgrounds- Southwest Riding Club Fun Show, Tuesday at 7:00 pm
- July 11, 2008- Berlin Fairgrounds- Berlin Fair 4-H Horse Show, Friday at 8:00 am

The 2008 State 4-H Horse Show will be held on August 22-24 at the Pavilion at MSU. Leaders should note that this is the final weekend of the Hudsonville Fair. Members who plan on keeping their horse at the fair should take note of which day they show. If they show on Friday or Saturday, they may want to rethink staying at fair. Horses and Ponies will not be granted an early release from the fair to complete at State.

**2008 Fairs**

Leaders are reminded to make copies of all members’ premium sheets. This is important because of the number of members not knowing what classes they are entered into, data entry errors on the part of the fair, and general peace of mind. We have had numerous members show in the wrong classes in the past few years and unless you have proof of your member being enrolled in a class, they will not receive a premium for that class. There will also be no class changes allowed at any fair show. We ask that you provide the member with a copy of their premium sheet and also keep a master list of your club’s sheets that someone has at the show should we need to verify information. As a reminder, premium sheets are due in the fair office no later than two weeks prior to fair.

Fair dates and times are as follows:

- Berlin Fair: July 11, 2008, at 8:00 am (Remind members to have a copy of their negative Coggins test on them to enter the fairgrounds)
- Ottawa County Fair: July 23, 2008, at 8:00 am
• Hudsonville Community Fair: August 20, 2008, Donkey to start at 8:00 am, Horses and Ponies to immediately follow.

Be sure to check your class numbers closely. Sometimes the online premium/class listing doesn’t follow the written fair book…. The premiums are paid based on the written fair book. This is especially important at Hudsonville where the class numbers are slightly different than the previous two fairs. Also, we’ve changed some classes and have added walk trot classes in the horse and pony divisions. Check out the attached minutes from our Spring Leaders Meeting for the official class changes.

**State 4-H Trail Ride**

The ’08 trail ride will be held June 27 – 29 at Goose Creek Reservation near Grayling again this year. Registration packets are available from the 4-H Office and include all requirements and information. This is a great opportunity for members and families to meet others from across the state and enjoy the camaraderie, great trail riding, food and crafts. Deadline is fast approaching! For additional information, you may also contact Jean McCarthy at 616-669-7656 or Theresa Miedema at 616-240-7030. These ladies are both on the State 4-H Trail Ride Planning Committee.

**Volunteers**

The volunteer sign up sheets were passed around at the Spring Leaders Meeting in April. There are still many spots available for your club to help out and we can’t do it without you. The committee understands that many clubs have a limited amount of members. However, we are all benefiting from the programs that our county has offered. I know most of you have heard this before, but this program cannot run without the help of volunteers and our shows will not start until all volunteer slots have been filled at each show. If your club hasn’t signed up for volunteer positions for the fairs or leader show or if you have members, parents, or family members that are willing to donate their time and help out, please contact Ruth Price at 616-688-5662 to sign up. We welcome your assistance.

**Horse Changes**

We’ve heard some rumblings about numerous members wanting to change their project horse for 2008. It is a reminder to leaders that all decisions on horse changes are made by the Ottawa County 4-H Horse Committee alone. Our current county rule states; “In cases of sickness, loss, injury, or a veterinarian’s certificate verifying the animal’s inability to participate for the rest of the fair season will be left to the discretion of the Horse Committee. Once a project animal has received a premium at the fair, no further change may be made. Consult the 4-H Horse Committee concerning permission to procure a new project animal after May 1 deadline.” Requests should be made in writing as soon as possible. We do understand that there may be extenuating circumstances regarding some changes and we ask that you submit your request promptly.
Dates to Remember

June 7, 2008- Leaders Show- (also includes State Show Qualifier Classes and Pony Measuring)
June 24, 2008- Southwest Riding Club Fun Show- (State Show Qualifier Classes and Pony Measuring)
June 27-29, 2008- State 4-H Trail Ride
July 11, 2008- Berlin Fair (also includes State Show Qualifier Classes)
July 23, 2008- Ottawa County Fair
August 20, 2008- Hudsonville Community Fair
August 22-24, 2008- State 4-H Horse Show

If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact a committee member or myself and we will be happy to help out. I look forward to working with all of you again in 2008!

Best regards,

Erin McCarthy
Ottawa County 4-H Horse Committee President.

Enclosure