

DEPARTMENT 1009

4-H & OPEN YOUTH HORSE SHOW

GENERAL INFORMATION

Chairperson: Nancy McCarthy

Co-Chairpersons: Lorraine Morando, Sara Ponikvar, Emily Enos

Show Secretary: Nancy McCarthy

Contact Information: nmccarthy@umext.umass.edu, 978.498.4825

IMPORTANT DATES

Entry Form Due: Friday, September 25th, 2026

Show Date: Saturday, October 3rd, 2026 at 2:00PM

Entry Fee: \$25 per day pre-enter & \$50 per day or \$12 per class after Friday, September 25th, 2026, (*online only*) **\$3.00 per exhibitor**

STALLS AVAILABLE starting in the morning – must sign up! Please read all RULES & REGULATIONS.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. All exhibitors must be between the ages of 5-18 yrs. as of January 1st, 2026. Ages: Cloverbud 5-7 yrs., Junior 8-13 yrs., Senior 14-18 yrs.
2. Entry fees, Coggins and Health Certificates must accompany entry forms. You may enter online at www.topsfieldfair.org (see Exhibitors' Handbook) and pay or you can mail in your entry form and make checks payable to: Topsfield Fair, and mailed to: **Topsfield Fair, P.O. Box 134, Topsfield MA 01983** to be received by Friday, September 25th, 2026 entry fees will be \$25 a day. Entries submitted after September 25th, 2026 will be \$50 for the day or \$12 per class.
3. SEI/ASTM approved hard hats required when mounted.
4. Shoes with heels required (NO SNEAKERS).
5. Judge and Show Management decisions are final.
6. Classes/Divisions may be combined/divided or cancelled at judge or show committee discretion.
7. Current Negative Coggins and **Health Certificate Required.**
8. No Schooling allowed in the parking lot.
9. Bitless bridles and bosals are allowed. Any bit or bridle that is extreme and can cause pain to a horse's mouth is not allowed.

10. Lead Line and Walk Trot riders may not enter other divisions except for in hand. Person leading must be at least 14 years of age.
11. **SMALL EQUINE** – is 12 hands and under are “IN HAND” – not mounted.
12. Responsibility – All reasonable precautions will be taken to prevent accidents, but it will be the responsibility of each exhibitor to insure the safe conduct of his/her horse at all times. Riding without proper gear or equipment will not be permitted on the grounds. No BAREBACK (except costume and you must have proper footwear). The Topsfield Fair (Essex Agricultural Society), The State Horse Advisory, the University of Mass, the 4-H leaders, the Essex County Advisory Council, and the show officials assume NO responsibility for accidents to animal(s), persons, or property: entries are accepted on this basis ONLY.
13. No dogs allowed.
14. We will follow the *New England 4-H Horse Show Rules and Guidelines*.
15. **Stalls must be cleaned before you leave the grounds.**
16. **You may come early but someone needs to be watching your horse. We all need to leave the Arena one hour after the last class.**

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS:

- Barrel Race – CLOVERLEAF BARREL RACE – Starting Line – The contestant is allowed a running start and a choice of two methods of running the course. In the first method, at the signal from the starter, the entry will circle barrel number 1 clockwise, circle barrel number 2 counter-clockwise, circle barrel number 3 counterclockwise and then cross the finish line and the second method would be circle barrel number 1 counter clockwise, barrel number 2 clockwise and barrel number 3 clockwise and then cross the finish line.
- Command Class – This is an elimination contest where any rider not executing the judge's exact commands *promptly and correctly will be eliminated*. Delivery of the commands will be at the show committee's discretion and explained to all contestants prior to the start of the class. *This is an elimination class. Horses/riders are excused as they fail to follow commands as directed above.*
- Costume Class – Any type of costume is allowed. Appropriately 4-H themed (meaning no profanity).

Class Routine is walk only both ways of the ring. Either riding or in-hand proper footwear required, proper headgear required if mounted. Safety is of major importance.

- Mint Julep – Water Race Class – Each exhibitor is given a paper cup filled with water. It is a good idea to use cups you can write on so the water line can be marked easily. It is recommended to put the exhibitor’s number on the cup.
Class Routine – The class is worked at a walk, trot, and canter for a set amount of time. Usually, 3 to 5 minutes will be sufficient. Any exhibitor not riding at the gait requested by the judge will be eliminated. The riders with the most amount of water left in their cups at the end of the ride will be the winners. A variation of this class has the riders hold the cup on their open palm as they ride.
- Sit-A-Buck – Each exhibitor must ride in a saddle. Upon entering the ring, the judge places a piece of paper (approximately 3”x5”) under the rider’s leg between the knee and buttocks. The horses are then worked at a walk, trot, and canter both directions of the ring. Any rider not performing the gaits asked by the judge in a reasonable amount of time is eliminated. As exhibitors lose their paper, they are eliminated. The last to lose the paper is first; next to last, second, etc.
- Pole Bending – Poles (stakes) shall be approximately 1 1/2” in diameter of the safe material that will not splinter. Each shall be from 6’ – 7’ high with a safe stable stand not more than 14 inches in diameter. Distances between poles and starting line to first pole should be 21’ but may be reduced to 18’ for pony competitors in a pony pole bending class.
- **NEW:** Horse Lovers Classes – we will have some relay races, barrels, it will be fun things for the Horse Lovers, grooms, helpers to do!
- To enter – go online to: www.topsfieldfair.org (see Exhibitor’s Handbook) put in your entries and you can upload your Coggins and **Health Certificate** and make a payment or you can print the entry form using a separate entry form for each exhibitor and make check payable to: Topsfield Fair. Mail to: **Topsfield Fair, P.O. Box 134, Topsfield MA 01983.**

DIVISIONS AND CLASSES

4-H CLASSES

Awards: RIBBONS

MINT JULEP CLASS A LOT

1. Lead Line Mint Julep
2. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot Mint Julep
3. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot-Canter Mint Julep
4. Small Equine Mint Julep
5. Alumni Mint Julep

BARREL RACE CLASS B LOT

6. Lead Line Barrel Race
7. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot Barrel Race
8. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot-Canter Barrel Race
9. Small Equine Barrel Race
10. Alumni Barrel Race

KEYHOLE CLASS C LOT

11. Lead Line Keyhole
12. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot Keyhole
13. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot-Canter Keyhole
14. Small Equine Keyhole
15. Alumni Keyhole

COMMAND CLASS CLASS D LOT

16. Lead Line Command Class
17. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot Command Class
18. Jr. Sr. Walk-Trot-Canter Command Class
19. Small Equine Command Class
20. Alumni Command Class

SIT-A-BUCK CLASS E LOT

21. Lead Line Sit-A-Buck
22. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot Sit-A-Buck
23. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot-Canter Sit-A-Buck
24. Small Equine Sit-A-Buck
25. Alumni Sit-A-Buck

POLE BENDING

CLASS F

LOT

26. Lead Line Pole Bending
27. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot Pole Bending
28. Jr./Sr. Walk-Trot-Canter Pole Bending
29. Small Equine Pole Bending
30. Alumni Pole Bending

RELAY – NON-ANIMAL

CLASS G

LOT

31. Cloverbud Horse Lovers Class - Relay
32. Jr. Horse Lovers Class – Relay
33. Sr. Horse Lovers Class – Relay
34. Alumni Horse Lovers Class - Relay

POLE BENDING – NON-ANIMAL

CLASS H

LOT

35. Cloverbud Horse Lovers Class – Pole Bending
36. Jr. Horse Lovers Class – Pole Bending
37. Sr. Horse Lovers Class – Pole Bending
38. Alumni Horse Lovers Class – Pole Bending

COSTUME CLASS – Class may be moved to an earlier time or combined depending on size of class. All will receive a participation ribbon.

CLASS I

LOT

39. Lead Line Costume Class
40. Jr. Costume Class
41. Sr. Costume Class
42. Small Equine Costume Class
43. Alumni Costume Class
44. All Levels Costume Class

OFFICIAL RULES

Topsfield Fair General Rules & Information

Topsfield Fair General Livestock Rules & Information

Commonwealth of Massachusetts 2026 Fairs Animal Health Rules – HEALTH CERTIFICATES required