

4-H HORSE PROGRAM STALL DECORATING CONTEST PROPOSAL

ABSTRACT:

To create a visual exhibit that will demonstrate to the attendees of the SC State Fair the positive involvement of youth and the diversity of activities within the clubs, the SC 4-H Horse Program clubs are invited to participate in a stall decorating contest at the 2009 S.C. State Fair in conjunction with an All Youth Horse Show and the Equine Industry Scholarship Program on October 16-18, 2009.

Enrolled participants are assigned designated stalls on a first come basis in Barn A directly across from the Abernathy Arena. There are 80 stalls in this barn. Guidelines for decorating the assigned stalls are given. A theme may be developed to unify the resulting displays. Each display should highlight the activities in which the club members have participated over the past year. A rubric is used to aid in the displays being fairly evaluated by a committee of judges. The top three clubs are awarded prizes provided by donors.

BACKGROUND:

With the 2004 equine census showing that 84,300 equines residing in South Carolina and contributing \$478 million in expenses and income, the equine industry is extremely important to the state's economy. The *Horsemanship and Life Skills of Youth in Horse Programs* study (C.E. Smith, et al, 2005) has shown a direct and significant relationship between involvement in youth horse programs and the development of life skills, such as decision making, communication, goal setting, thinking, and problem solving. While S.C. 4-H program is well represented to the public in the areas of other livestock species, the horse program has never had a means to promote it to the general public. The S.C State Fair typically has an attendance of approximately 450,000. This display would make a positive impact on the public of the effectiveness of this 4-H program, as well as generate interest in joining among the competitors that aren't members. A sense of teamwork and community would be created among the members of the horse clubs.

IMPLEMENTATION:

A committee will be formed to develop the guidelines and judging rubric for the contest before January 15, 2009. The information would be disseminated to volunteer leaders at the annual leadership symposium. Information would also be posted on the S.C 4-H and the S.C. State Fair websites. The registration period for the S.C State Fair All Youth Horse Show is August 1- 31, 2009. The stall decorating contest applications would coincide with this entry period until all the available space is filled.

A team of volunteers, extension agents and/or volunteers would mark the assigned stalls on the morning of Friday, Oct. 9, prior to contestant check-in at noon. The stall cards that were printed for 4-H contestants would be used to designate the stalls. The judging committee would score the displays on Saturday morning, Oct. 17 with the winners being announced that afternoon during the scholarship competition.

Funding and/or product donations need to be secured for awards. Committee members for development, judging and on-site facilitation of the contest will need to be identified and contacted.