4H Horse Advancement Program
Leader's Guide

Within a county's 4-H Horse program, completion of the project year is often measured by a member's participation in a county show, presentation of the project demonstration, completion of the project record book and serving as a contributing club member. Such criteria however fails to acknowledge the specific knowledge and skills achieved by a member during a particular year. To compensate for this 4-H Horse project leaders are encouraged to assist members in setting realistic goals for learning (knowledge to be gained, skills to be learned) as well as measuring and recognizing a member's progress toward achieving their goals.

4-H Horse Advancement Program

Florida's 4-H Horse advancement program is a tool to be used by club leaders to encourage planned, systematic and self-motivated learning by members. Its purpose is to:

< provide guidelines to help members set realistic project goals
< serve as a tool to motivate self learning
< divide members into interest and ability levels
< broaden member experiences and help them develop both life skills and project skills
< provide a planned learning approach for members
< serve as a way of recognizing members for completion of project goals

Advancement Program Levels

There are four levels to Florida's Horse Advancement Program. They are:

Level I	Basic Horseman
Level II	Novice Horseman
Level III	Intermediate Horseman
Level IV	Advanced Horseman

The advancement levels are written so there is a planned learning sequence for all members. Each member should start with Level I, the Basic Horseman. It is recommended that a member be at least 8 years old to complete Level I, 10 years old to complete Level II, 13 years old to complete Level III, and 16 or older to complete Level IV.

The Advancement program is designed so a 4-H member may progress as quickly as he or she desires based on interest, effort and ability. A third or fourth grade 4-H member may take two or three years to complete Level I; an eighth or ninth grade member may complete one or two levels in a year. Members may work on one level at a time. However, members may be permitted to work on sections in two or more levels at the same time; completing each level as the appropriate age requirements are met. Much of the information needed for satisfactory completion of the advancement program can be found in project materials and Extension bulletins. When working on the Intermediate and Advanced levels members will need to refer to other references.

Advancement Program Not a Project

The 4-H Horse Advancement Program is a planning system which allows leaders and members to evaluate the 4-H experience, review progress, and establish goals for the future. Although involvement in the advancement program is strictly on an elective basis, a member must still be enrolled in a 4-H horse project and maintain a horse project record book to participate.

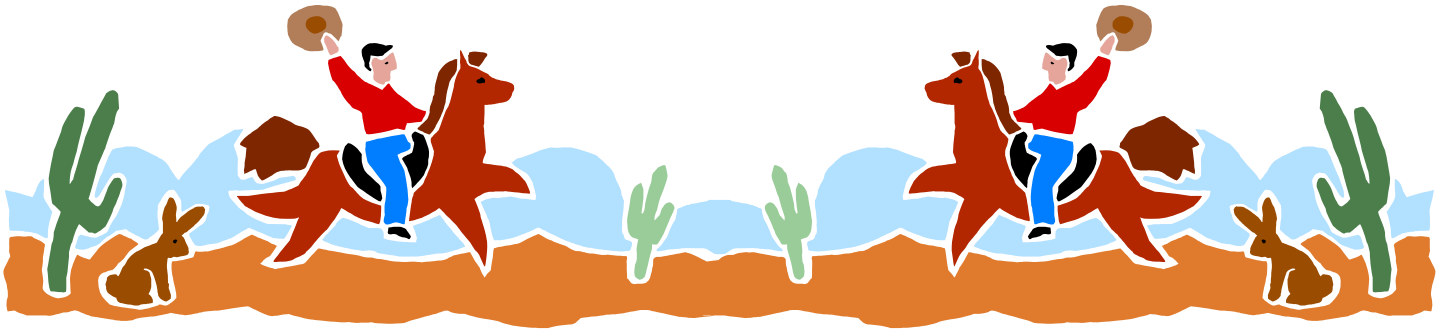
Inspection of Member Competencies

Each level will require inspectors for certain tests. The selection and training of these inspections (can be project leaders) should be arranged for at the local and/or county level. Project leaders can establish the appropriate procedures for approving inspectors at this level. Tests within levels are not competitive and many tests can be replaced by alternate tests designed by project leaders according to local needs and interests.

Recognition of Advancement Level Completion

When a member has completed a level, you should submit the completed unit to your 4-H Agent and request an advancement certificate. On completion of Level IV-Advanced Horseman a special recognition plaque will be forwarded to the member by the State Extension Horse Specialist. Members who earn advancement certificates deserve recognition. When members have completed a level a certificate should be presented to them at a club meeting. Recognize these members at an achievement meeting or other community event if there is not a long time period between completion of the advancement level and the meeting.

Cooperate with your 4-H Extension Agent for newspaper and radio releases on the member's achievements. When teens, parents, or co-leaders have assisted recognize them by allowing them to present the achievement certificate to the member.



Prepared by Bob Horton, Extension 4-H Specialist, University of Florida from the Minnesota Advancement Program Leaders Guide
Revised June 2004 by Vera Collins 4-H Secretary