July 11, 2020

Hello Horse members:

The HLC leaders, Superintendents, 4-H Staff and Boulder County Fair Board and staff have worked hard on several scenarios on what would work for our Fair horse show. We all discussed our Fair plan on several occasions, trying to come up with the plan that best fits our program. Of course, the kids and safety are first and foremost in our minds, and every one of the leaders in this program are so dedicated to seeing our kids succeed. At this time we have decided to host the Boulder County Fair Horse show in a virtual format. This was not a decision that we came to lightly, and we tried to look at it from every angle that we could. Here are the reasons that we have decided to go all virtual:

* Safety. Many of the kids in the program do not have their own arenas to ride in and many have not been able to ride as much this spring and summer as they usually would. We weren't able to hold our HLC ride outs to provide instruction and guidance to the riders, especially the younger ones. Most of the horses have not been in the Indoor since the new chutes have been put in and the riders have not had a chance to work with them to get the horses comfortable with the chutes. We feel that putting young riders on sometimes inexperienced horses in this situation would not be successful.
* Logistics. In order to keep our numbers at the 10 person per area limit that would be imposed, we would only be able to have three kids per class. We would have the judge, ring steward/announcer/gate person, superintendent, three kids and three parents. If we have three riders at a time, a class of 15 could potentially take over three hours and would be a logistic nightmare trying to get kids and trailers in and out of the parking lots.
	+ The kids would have to arrive at the show with clean horses and have a very minimal tack up and warm up time. It would not promote safety and responsibility for us to tell the kids that they only have 10 minutes to get tacked up and warmed up - this is just not possible for some hoses and/or riders.
	+ The initial idea of having kids move in groups and rotate between the arenas is not feasible with kids riding different levels in different disciplines and kids sharing horses between levels.
	+ In the worst-case scenario, parents (or horse owners) would have to make several tips back and forth to the Fairgrounds each day for kids to participate in different classes.
	+ It will be difficult for us to find volunteers who are willing to wear masks all day in 90+ degree weather.
	+ With the new outbreaks in Boulder County (and in many of the U.S. states), we are not confident that the arenas will be open for use in a month.

We know that having an all-virtual Fair is not what everyone wants. We know that having our classes in this format will be a hardship for some families, while for others it will be an inconvenience. Some folks will really like it, given all that is going on right now.

To try to make it easier for the families that don't have their own arena to use, we have the following ideas to help:

* Work with private arena owners to find arenas for the kids to use to film their patterns- talk with your 4-H Leaders about options
* The Nelson Road arena is open for public use- you can use it to film your patterns.
* We have scheduled times for the Indoor arena on Friday, July 29th and Saturday, July 30th for those who do not have access to their own arena. Sign up for your family time here : SIGN UP GENIUS: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0F44ADAD2CA64-indoor>
	+ Please note that you must do this as an individual family and no more than 10 people can be in the indoor at a time. If you arrive early you need to wait at your vehicle until the person in front of you has left. Please be respectful and leave on time so others can use the arena.
* The Patterns for the all classes are now posted to the website so that the kids have almost a month to video all their patterns and submit them. Click this for [Pattern Link](https://boulder.extension.colostate.edu/additional-information-horse/).
* Instructional videos are available to help kids and parents know how to video a successful pattern (many thanks to the Thomas family for taking the time to make these and doing a wonderful job!)
	+ How to film a rail class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opKoBdFecF8&list=WL&index=2&t=0s>
	+ How to film a showmanship class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W02kBApIWrU&list=WL&index=3>
	+ How to film a riding pattern: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eidCsaDiLhU&list=WL&index=2>
* Offer virtual rail classes for the walk/trot and Unrated kids

Again, thank you for your understanding and positive attitudes as we move forward. It is such a challenging time for everyone and hard to know what the right decisions are.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

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