

# Fergus/Petroleum 4-H Horse Program

## Tack and Gear

The primary considerations with this section are the safety issues for the exhibitors which are our 4-H members!

In addition to the specific project manuals and project guide sheets, "Montana Horsemanship Projects Manual, Bulletin 1160" is a good resource about tack and gear for Montana 4-H horse projects. (This book is commonly referred to as the "brown book").

The following are local rules and guidelines adopted by the Fergus-Petroleum 4-H Horse Committee which govern 4-H horse classes at the Central Montana Fair.

To prepare properly, members should also follow these same rules and guidelines as they train and prepare for the fair.

1. Snaffle Bits. An acceptable snaffle bit would be considered a conventional O-ring, Egg Butt, or D-ring with a broken mouthpiece (2 or 3 pieces) with no leverage or gag action. Rings are no smaller than 2" or larger than 4" in diameter. Mouthpiece is of smooth material, round or oval in shape, no wire bits or wire wrapped bits. Conchos or other decorative shapes in the center of the rings that can be utilized to change the leverage are not allowed.
2. Running Martingales. Running martingales are allowed in the green horse and colt to maturity classes because the martingales are training aids. For safety reasons, they are allowed only with acceptable snaffle bits. They are not allowed in the horsemanship classes. Standing martingales are not allowed in any 4-H classes except for the speed event classes - barrels and poles.
3. Unless it is a green horse in an established Green Horse Class, horses older than five years old must be ridden with a curb bit and one-handed. Curb bits are those with a shank; maximum shank length is that which is consistent with major breed show rule books.
4. Curb straps must lie flat and be at least 1 1/2 inch wide. Wire or wire-wrapped curb straps are not allowed.
5. Tie downs, draw reins, and non-split reins and mechanical hackamores are not allowed. The exception to this is in the speed event classes (barrels and poles) where tie downs, roping reins, and mechanical hackamores are common and generally acceptable.
6. For the English classes, acceptable headgear is defined as: an English snaffle, Kimberwick, Pelham, and/or full double bridle. Cavesson nosebands are generally standard equipment.
7. Australian stock saddles are acceptable for the classes specified as "Western".
8. Chains, if part of a halter lead strap, cannot be in contact with any part of the horse. Example: Cannot go over the nose, under the jaw, etc. The chain must be only a connecting link between the halter and the lead strap.