The Montana Ranch Horse project book is to be used to guide the Ranch Horse project in North Dakota.

Passing the levels identified in the adopted Montana project book completes this project. Showcasing at a county or state fair is not necessary. Levels may be passed at the pace set by the individual 4-Her. The objectives for each level can be assessed (passed/checked off) by any designated leader, coach, or judge appropriately skilled in the 4-H Ranch Horse Project. Assessor is to provide a signature and date in the project book of the 4-Her when level is “passed”.

Only one horse may be used per project. If the project is discontinued with one horse, for any reason, the 4-Her must start over at Level 1 with a new ranch horse project.

The Ranch Horse demonstration displays the ability of the rider to cause the animal to navigate obstacles that would be encountered in a ranch operation. The rider’s basic position in the saddle, hand position, leg position, and general appearance are considered. The position of rider’s free hand is optional but needs to be relaxed and balanced with the horse. While the horse is in motion, the rider’s hands must be clear of the saddle and the horse. A good ranch horse can also be a good pleasure horse with the ability to navigate on the correct lead indicated by the pattern.

Demonstration Procedure and Guidelines

The pattern, determined by the demonstration coordinator(s), will include a minimum of six obstacles, four of which are mandatory, with a maximum of ten obstacles. All obstacles used in the Ranch Horse demonstration need to be practical and realistic. All three gaits (walk, jog/trot, and lope/canter) should be used between obstacles in the pattern. The exhibitor is asked to move to the next obstacle after three refusals on any one obstacle. Horses are not required to work the rail after all exhibitors worked.

Mandatory Obstacles
- Gate
- Bridge
- Walk over poles
- Roping from ground (Level 1)
- Swinging rope from horse (Level 2)

Obstacles NOT to be used
- Rocking bridge
- Flames or dry ice

Optional Obstacles
- Water hazard
- Carry one object from one area to another in the arena
- Slicker
- Lope over poles
- Trot over poles
- Trot around markers
- 360 degree turn in a box
- Side pass
- Loading in trailer
- Livestock herd work (Level 2 & up)
- Roping livestock from horse (Level 3 & up)
- Drag a log
- Walk-to-lope-to-walk

The following characteristics are considered faults and will be scored accordingly:
- Unnecessary roughness as determined by the judge.
- Falling off the horse while on course.
- Equipment failure that delays completion of the course, or unsafe condition.
- Unsoundness of the horse.
- Exhibitors’ failure to control the horse, endangering self, the horse, or others.
- Failure to attempt obstacles in posed order.
- Refusals on the course.