NYSHC.org
established 1968

NEW YORK STATE HORSE COUNCIL

FALL 2026

NEWSLETTER



New York State Horse Council

President's Message – Autumn Newsletter

It has been a pleasure to serve as president of the New York State Horse Council, Inc. for the past four years. Because of increased responsibilities with my landscape architecture business, trail design work, and role as Administrative Coordinator for IMPACT: Friends Improving Allegany County Trails, Inc., I have decided not to run for a third term. I will, however, remain involved with NYSHC as past president to help ensure that initiatives begun during my tenure continue to move forward.

The New York State Horse Council Annual General Membership Meeting at Rhinebeck Equine was highly informative. Attendees toured the facility and heard excellent presentations from the veterinary staff. Karen Lassell received the Horse Person of the Year Award, and Susan Knauer received the Lifetime Achievement Award. Both are long-time New York State Horse Council members who have served the organization in many capacities.



President Pauline Burnes, Susan Knauer and Karen Lassell

Although it was not on the meeting agenda, Colleen Segarra, Executive Vice President of NYSHC, and I provided an update on the recent New York City Council vote to ban NYC carriage horses by June 2028. I presented testimony at the City Council public hearing in July 2026. A copy of that testimony, which was also sent to the City Council, is included in this newsletter. The recommendations were developed by NYSHC board members who are both horsemen and experienced carriage horse drivers.

New York State Horse Council

Another challenge this year involved changes to the New York State Fair policy that set strict delivery times for livestock entering the fairgrounds during Fair Week. As a result, the National Barrel Horse Association, the Pulling Horse Competition, and a 4-H Equine Club did not attend the 2026 Fair. I have included a copy of my letter to several officials, including the Commissioner of New York State Agriculture and Markets and the Executive Manager of the Fairgrounds, urging changes for next year. If you were discouraged from participating in the New York State Fair as an equine exhibitor, please contact me at pauline.burnes@nyshc.org.

NYSHC members need to stay active and engaged in issues affecting the equine community. I encourage all members to stay informed about legislative activity in Albany, New York City, and the federal government through NYSHC, the American Horse Council, and the Coalition of State Horse Councils.

Budget planning for 2027 is underway. If you would like the New York State Horse Council to sponsor your clinic or show, please send your request to info@nyshc.org by December 1, 2026. If you have events to add to the NYSHC calendar, please send those as well.

Remember to vote in this year's New York State Horse Council elections by November 15. New board members will be announced after the NYSHC Board of Directors meeting on December 8, 2026.

New York State Horse Council

NYSHC,Inc. P.O.Box424 Arkport,NewYork14807

Testimony to the New York City Council regarding a Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to prohibiting the operation of horse drawn cabs. Int. Bill 943.

Submitted: July14,2026

Dear Esteemed Members of the New York City Council,

The New York Horse Council (NYSHC) was founded in 1966 as an umbrella organization for the equine community residing in New York State. Our mission is “To create a strong unified voice for all horse interests toward the preservation of a future for horses in New York State.” The NYSHC board of directors and its membership is composed of a diverse group of industry professionals making our organization uniquely qualified to assist in all matters pertaining to horses in New York State.

At this time, we are abstaining from a direct position on Int.No.943 a bill to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to prohibiting the operation of horse drawn cabs.

The New York State Horse Council, Inc. would like clarification on the intent of language contained in New York City Int.943 pertaining to disposition of licensed horses. We agree, horses should not be sold for slaughter, and it is, in fact, illegal in NY (Agriculture & Markets Law Section 385 Prohibition of slaughtering horses for human or animal consumption). However, we also recognize that the carriage horses in New York City (NYC) are privately owned, and as such, their owners are responsible for their humane disposition.

We recognize New York City has evolved since the inception of the carriage industry and that Central Park is now host to millions of tourists and residents, who all have a vision for the use of the park. Your support of enforcement of current regulations pertaining to suspensions and revocations within the NYC carriage industry will improve the safety of the horses, drivers, passengers and general public.

We welcome the opportunity for thoughtful discussion so we can work together to find fair and humane paths forward; for the city, the residents, the visitors, the carriage industry and the horses.

Respectfully,

Pauline Burnes, President, NYSHC, Inc.

Pauline E. Burnes, President, NYSHC
pauline.burnes@nyshc.org
607-765-8543

The New York State Horse Council, Inc. is a member of the American Horse Council, National Coalition of State Horse Councils, Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations (CAO), and New York Council of Non-Profits (NYCON).
For more information visit: www.nyshc.org

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The New York State Horse Council, Inc. offers guidance to New York City, the Carriage Horse Industry, and any city agency that may be affected by the horses and the carriage operations for the duration of the Carriage Horse Industry in New York City. Further evaluation of the New York City (NYC) Carriage Horse Industry could result in further recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- There shall be an experienced licensed carriage horse driver to be attentively seated in the box of the carriage holding the lines of the horse when a driver needs to leave the carriage horse for any reason.
- Add a relief handler at each of the carriage horse stops, who is a knowledgeable horseman who can hold the horse when the certified driver needs to take a break or adjust the carriage or harness.
- All potential drivers shall be trained and tested on the proper fit, adjustment and care of the bridle and the harness in its entirety. This shall include the proper care and maintenance of the horse carriage.
- Drivers shall not allow their horses to eat ANY plants not on their regular diet.
- All carriage horse drivers shall be required to take a driver's test, (like the auto driver's test) with a knowledgeable, experienced, licensed carriage horse operator and shall pass the practical carriage driver's test with horse and carriage, prior to being awarded a NY City Carriage Horse Operator's license.
- All drivers shall be retested and their license renewed annually.
- All drivers shall be reminded daily that they are responsible for their horse's and passengers' safety.
- Carriage horse drivers should NEVER "leave the box" when there are customers or other people in the carriage. This includes taking pictures. Violations will be subject to suspensions and revocation of their license.
- Horse stalls at the Carriage stables shall be a minimum size of 12-ft x 12-ft. (Cornell CCE)
- Horses shall have access to shade during the day especially during the summer months.
- Each carriage horse stable shall have a knowledgeable, experienced, certified inspector hired by the NYC Health Dept. to inspect all carriage horses, their harness, and the carriage prior to leaving the stable for work each day.
- Horse drawn cabs parked on a 4 % incline shall be moved to a flatter parking area where they can also be provided shade. Provide all carriage horses shade during the summer months while parked.
- Measure temperatures at the ground surface to determine suspension of carriage horse operations due to inclement weather.
- Access to fresh, clean water shall be accessible for all horses during the day. Also hay for forage.
- The re-design of Central Park Carriage drives has created safety issues with shared use paths and trails. Another re-design is recommended to provide dedicated Carriage Drives and Bridle paths within Central Park and increase safety for pedestrians.
- An education program should be implemented with the Central Park Conservancy regarding Shared Use Trails "Trails are Common Ground". Horses have the right-of-way.
- Violations of speed limits in Central Park need to be strictly enforced.
- The use of e-bikes, e-scooters and pedicabs in Central Park and New York City are increasing. Enforcement of speed limits in Central Park will benefit all users of the park. Many parks have banned the use of e-bikes on public trails.

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The Honorable Kathy Hochul
New York State Governor
NY State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

August 26th, 2026

RE: New York State Fairgrounds Vehicle Access Policy

Dear Governor Hochul,

The New York State Horse Council, Inc. is a non-profit organization established in 1968 serving as the umbrella organization for New York's vibrant equine industry. We represent all breeds of horses and all disciplines of horse owners. This includes exhibitors, trainers, youth organizations, breed associations, agricultural partners, and the families who proudly participate in the New York State Fair each year.

I am writing to express concerns that have been shared by various parties regarding the 2026 New York State Fair vehicle access policy.

First and foremost, we want to acknowledge the importance of keeping the New York State Fair safe and secure. We recognize the tremendous responsibility of protecting the hundreds of thousands of visitors, exhibitors, volunteers, and staff who attend the Fair each year. We understand that enhanced security measures are necessary, and we appreciate the work being done to ensure public safety and support those efforts.

Our concern is not with the goal of improving security. Rather, it is with the unintended consequences this policy creates for those transporting live animals.

Unlike equipment or merchandise, horses are living animals that require careful handling, adequate space, and safe conditions during transportation, loading, and unloading. Requiring horse exhibitors to arrive during a very limited early morning window, often before daylight, presents significant safety concerns for both people and animals.

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Among our concerns are:

- Loading and unloading horses in darkness increases the risk of injury to horses, exhibitors, volunteers, veterinarians, and Fair staff.
- Horses are prey animals and naturally become more reactive in unfamiliar surroundings with limited visibility. This poses safety risks for all involved.
- Many exhibitors are children and teenagers accompanied by parents and volunteers who must begin traveling in the middle of the night to meet the required arrival times.
- Many livestock exhibitors are youth participants accompanied by parents and volunteers. It is safer for everyone involved with these youth activities to arrive and reach their destination during daylight hours. This allows time during daylight hours to set up their overnight campers or reach their destination at the 4H dorms.
- Traveling during daylight hours allows proper rest for youth exhibitors. Fatigued youth are a safety concern when handling livestock and will not compete to the best of their ability.
- Many exhibitors travel for several hours to reach Syracuse, requiring departures well before dawn if arrival hours are not in natural daylight hours, creating fatigue while towing large horse and livestock trailers. There is also lower visibility for drivers, especially if they need to drive during rainfall events.
- Compressing all livestock arrivals into a narrow morning window creates congestion and increases the likelihood of accidents both for handlers and livestock during unloading and parking. Not all livestock and horse trailers are equipped with lights in the trailer. If the trailers do have lights, the livestock are not always accustomed to the different light conditions, increasing the likelihood of "spooking" or reacting to the artificial light.
- For many 4-H exhibitors and open horse show participants, these challenges become even more significant. Many horse divisions at the New York State Fair are only one- or two-day competitions. Families traveling several hours to compete may need to leave home between 4:00 and 4:30 a.m. simply to arrive by the required unloading time and remove their vehicle before the morning deadline.
- After competing throughout the day, exhibitors may then be required to wait until late at night before being permitted to retrieve their trailers and leave the Fairgrounds. For many families, this results in a day approaching or exceeding twenty hours awake before beginning a three- or four-hour drive home while towing horses. Driver fatigue is a recognized highway safety concern, and transporting

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large trailers under these conditions places unnecessary risk on exhibitors and the traveling public alike.

The policy also presents practical challenges that cannot be overlooked. **Many livestock barns do not have enough stall space to allow exhibitors to arrive a day early or remain overnight simply to comply with vehicle restrictions** As a result, the National Barrel Horse Association, the New York Draft Horse Club (pulling horses), a 4-H club and others have already indicated they will choose not to bring their horses and children to exhibit at the Fair rather than place their families and horses in an unsafe situation. If participation declines, the impact extends far beyond exhibitors. The National Barrel Horse Association and the New York Draft Horse Club – Pulling Horses, have major competitions that attract thousands of fairgoers to the Coliseum.

Every family attending the Fair purchases admission, food, beverages, camping accommodations, fuel, souvenirs, ride tickets, and countless other goods and services. Fewer exhibitors mean fewer visitors, reduced vendor revenue, and diminished economic activity for one of New York's premier agricultural events.

Most importantly, horse shows and livestock are one of the defining features of the New York State Fair. For generations, fairgoers have come to experience agriculture firsthand by visiting the barns and watching livestock competitions. Horses, cattle, sheep, goats, and other animals are central to the Fair's identity and educational mission. If policies discourage exhibitors from attending, visitors will notice the absence, and the Fair itself will lose an important part of what makes it unique.

The new transport regulations at the New York State Fair appear to be considerably more restrictive than those of comparable state fairs throughout the country.

For example:

- **Missouri State Fair** – Draft horse arrivals begin after 8:00 a.m.
- **Maryland State Fair** – No published livestock arrival or departure restrictions.
- **Iowa State Fair** – Arrival before noon on the designated day with departures following the show.
- **Illinois State Fair** – Horse pull arrivals from 9:00 a.m. to noon; draft horse check-in beginning at noon with departures after the show.

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- **Indiana State Fair** – Scheduled daytime arrival windows for draft horse divisions with daytime departures.
- **Wisconsin State Fair** – Arrival after 9:00 a.m. through the following evening with departures after 5:00 p.m.
- **Ohio State Fair** – Arrival before 5:00 p.m. or after 10:00 p.m.

These fairs host hundreds of thousands of visitors each year and have successfully developed security plans that accommodate the safe transportation of livestock while maintaining public safety.

We respectfully ask that New York review its current policy and consider whether a similar balance can be achieved for the 2027 New York State Fair.

Possible solutions include:

- Scheduling of arrival times for livestock trailers to arrange for inspection and reduced congestion at designated staging areas. Ensure careful scheduling to avoid having livestock trailers having to wait in inclement weather conditions, including heat.

Inspection of livestock trailers by NYS Agriculture and Markets, NYS Police or NYSDOT truck inspectors prior to entry to the Fairgrounds.

- Collaboration between Fair leadership, law enforcement, the Department of Agriculture and Markets, livestock superintendents, 4-H representatives, breed organizations, equine industry leaders, NY Farm Bureau and the Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations to develop procedures that prioritize both security and animal welfare.

The New York horse industry contributes billions of dollars annually to our state's economy while supporting farms, veterinarians, farriers, feed suppliers, small businesses, tourism, youth organizations, and thousands of jobs. More importantly, it provides educational opportunities, teaches responsibility and sportsmanship to young people, and preserves New York's agricultural heritage.

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We respectfully request that this policy be reviewed with input from the equine and livestock communities prior to holding the New York State Fair in the future. Invite stakeholders to participate in identifying practical solutions. We believe it is entirely possible to maintain the highest level of security while also ensuring the safe transportation of live animals.

Our goal is not to oppose security measures. Our goal is to work together to create policies that protect the public without unintentionally discouraging the very agricultural exhibitors the New York State Fair was created to celebrate.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your consideration of this important issue. We welcome the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Governor's Office, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the New York State Fair leadership to discuss solutions that uphold public safety while preserving the traditions, educational value, and agricultural excellence that have defined the New York State Fair for generations.

Respectfully,

Pauline Burnes, President, NYSHC, Inc.

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peb:ll

cc: Julie La Fave, Director, New York State Fair
Richard Ball, Commissioner, NYS Agriculture and Markets
Ellen King, New York State Fair
Renee St.Jacques, Chair
Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations, Inc.
David Fisher, President, New York State Farm Bureau
Colleen Segarra, Executive Vice President, NYSHC, Inc.
Debbie Soule, NY State District Director, National Barrel Horse Association

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Section E – 4-H Horse Show
Superintendent Robin Bartholomew

Rider Safety and Animal Care

It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian of the exhibitor to see to it that the head gear worn complies with the appropriate safety standards as set forth in the official 4-H policy. Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York State 4-H, and the New York State Fair make no representation or warranty expressed or implied about any protective head gear, and caution riders that death or serious injury may result despite wearing such protective head gear, as all equestrian sports involve inherent dangerous risk and as no helmet can protect against all foreseeable injuries.

Proper equestrian footwear with a distinguishable heel and an approved helmet shall be always worn that a rider is mounted on an equine, sitting in a cart or handling a horse in a riding arena (whether on the ground, mounted or seated in a cart) at a 4-H sponsored clinic or show.

Exhibitors are responsible for the humane treatment and well-being for any horse in their care. They are to be treated humanely and with dignity and respect. Showing competitively is of secondary importance.

Event Specific Rules

- Each specific event is governed by rules developed for that event (see "NYS 4-H Horse Program Rules" for each event for details). Visit the website at: www.ansci.cornell.edu/4h/horses/index.html.Please refer to the "NYS 4-H Horse Show Rules" for the most complete details of each specific event.

EQUINES

- REFER TO: Health Requirements section of the State Fair "Youth Livestock" premium book: http://www.nysfair.ny.gov/competitions
- ORIGINAL: Rabies certificate and Coggins papers must accompany the animal – bring to the NYS 4-H Horse Show Office at check in. No animal will be admitted that does not meet all health requirements.
- All the equines must be at least 24 months of age. No intact stallion over 12 months of age may be present at a 4-H sponsored clinic or show.
- All equines shown in riding and driving classes must be 3 years of age or older. If exhibiting a "junior equine" in the Western Division and using a snaffle or bosal – refer to age requirements in the Western Section of the NYS 4-H Horse Program Rule Book.
- All equines must have been officially designated as the member's project animal by **June 15th** of the current year. A copy of the completed certificate must be filed with your Cornell Cooperative Extension office. Members may designate all personal or family-owned equines as project animals. Family will be defined as the legal guardian, as well as husband, wife, parent, stepparents, child, brother, stepchild, sister, half brother and sister, grandmother and grandfather and in-laws of the same relation. Any "shared" family-owned equine being shown in Jr. and Sr. classes, may NOT be entered in more than 6 classes per division.
- Members who do not own or use a family-owned equine may designate one non-owned equine as their project animal. The only exception to this will be youth may also designate donkeys, mules, minis or driving, mounted games and Drill/Parade/Quadrille as project animals, if they have already designated an owned or non-owned equine.

A non-owned equine may be shown by different youth in different Divisions. A non-owned equine may not be shown by multiple youth in each Division.

- Equines entered as ponies will be measured at check-in or present a USEF permanent pony card. This measurement will supersede all previous measurements and will be the sole basis for determination of status. There is no minimum size for equines entered as horses. Pony = 14.2 hands or less at the withers. (See 4- H Horse Show rulebook.)

Exhibitors and Entries

- Exhibitors must meet age and membership requirements as specified for all Youth Dept. participants. They must be 4-H members.
- Exhibitors *must* receive endorsement of a county 4-H Educator. Any entry that does not receive endorsement may be scratched.
- Additionally, all exhibitors must meet all the requirements set by that organization (i.e., membership, ownership, specific class requirements, etc.) as well as any animal health and registration requirements specified by their department.
- Exhibitors are responsible for emailing their entry receipt to their County Educator and Department Superintendent. A directory of these contacts is located here.
- Selection of exhibitors from each region shall be at the discretion of the county Staff or HEC and/or the region's Competitive 4-H Horse Education Committee,

subject to the following limitations: Each exhibitor shall exhibit no more than two (2) equines in the state show. Only one non-owned equine may be shown (see donkey, mule, mini and driving, exception noted prior). No more than one (1) equine may be entered in any one division, and no more than two (2) equines may be stabled in the pole barns at the same time.

Entries in the various divisions are based on the following quotas:

County Parade Team of counties represented as a team.(Refer to 4-H Rule Book)	2 teams per county or group
County Drill Team	2 teams per county or group of counties represented as a team. (Refer to 4-H Rule Book)
County Quadrille Team represented as a team. (Refer to 4-H Rule Book)	2 teams per county or group of counties

Senior Divisions. Note: More youth may be invited as time and scheduling allow.

Gymkhana Driving Miniature Dressage Hunt Seat Saddleseat Western	4 per county in each division if selected on, a county basis 4 times the number of counties in the region in each division if selected on a regional basis
Mounted Games	2 teams per county (Junior, Senior **or** Mixed)

- Each exhibitor may enter as many classes in any division that they would like to as long as the horse is not overrode. In the Dressage Division only three (3) classes may be entered (this does not include Dressage Equitation, which may also be entered). A **maximum of two (2) equines** per exhibitor may be entered with Mini's, Donkey/Mules and Driving not being included in the maximum number of equines
- Exhibitors must use the same equine(s) in the state show event as they used at the regional/county selection shows(s).
- No equine, regardless of the number of exhibitors using that equine, may be shown by one exhibitor as a horse in one

division and as a pony by the same or different exhibitor in the same or different division.

- No equine may be entered by more than one exhibitor in any class.
- No non-owned equine may be shown by more than one exhibitor in a division. Only one rider per leased horse per division.
- Entries may not be submitted for, nor will they be accepted from exhibitors who, during their participation in the previous year's State event, received an official reprimand for rule violation from the Extension Horse Specialist, 4-H Horse Program Superintendent, Chair of the Division, the Show Committee or the 4-H Cornell Cooperative Extension Agent of their county of membership, 4-H NYS Cornell Horse Specialist.

Procedures

- Please refer to the "NYS 4-H Horse Show Rules" for the most complete details.
- Unless there is an official veterinarian available, the judge has the authority to dismiss from any class or the show any horse judged to be unsound or is apparently carrying a disease or other condition which would preclude appropriate or safe performance.
- The judge, ring master, division chairs or 4-H Horse Program Superintendent or Extension Horse Specialist may dismiss from any class, the show, or the grounds any exhibitor who is cruel and abusive of a horse, fails to follow or obey instruction, cannot maintain control of an unruly or inadequately trained equine or fails to cooperate with show management or other exhibitors. A kicking horse is considered unmanageable.
- **The decisions of the judges are final.**
- Tack A judge, technical delegate or division chair shall have the authority to inspect all tack and equipment and to require the removal, replacement, or alteration of any piece of equipment deemed by the judge, technical delegate, or division chair to be unsafe, inappropriate for a 4-H show or which would give the equine or the exhibitor an unfair advantage.
- Broken tack in a class will be a disqualification from class.
- Classes which are larger than the ring can safely accommodate may be split.
- Exhibitor numbers will not be given if the helmet is not officially approved. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to provide proof of approval.
- No patterns or courses will be used that will jeopardize the safety of the equine or the exhibitor. All patterns and courses for classes other than those contained in the rule book are to be posted at a reasonable time prior to the start of that class and there is to be no variation from the posted pattern or course.
- Delay of classes in classes where horses compete collectively, a warning is issued and the in gate is closed, or at the end of the one-minute call.
- In classes where equines compete individually, an order of go will be established and one minute allowed for the exhibitor to enter the ring. If jump order is used, it must be posted 30 minutes prior to the start of the class.
- If a class in which horses compete together is in progress and must be stopped due to a storm, accident or other emergency, it is recommended that the class will be held over in its entirety and no consideration will be given to the performance during the original session.
- Classes in which there are fewer than 4 exhibitors may be combined with other classes as deemed appropriate by the show officials. Classes may be sectioned by age of rider, size of equine, size of class, etc.

- Horse Show Committee will consist of: the Division Chair, Technical Delegate, Horse Show Superintendent
- The State Extension Horse Specialist will be available to help with decisions if needed or when on the grounds. If the specialist is not needed or available, the three-person committee has the authority to make decisions concerning their event.
- Adult volunteers are welcomed in a variety of tasks.
- **Supervision and Conduct**
- Protests must be made by an exhibitor or group captain, not by parents, coaches or any outside party. Protests must be confined to the exhibitor or group's own performance or placing, and in no case may a protest be made of another exhibitor's or group's score, placing or performance. (See Rule Books for more specifics).

- Protests must be made by an exhibitor or group captain, not by parents, coaches or any outside party. Protests must be confined to the exhibitor or group's own performance or placing, and in no case may a protest be made of another exhibitor's or group's score, placing or performance. (See Rule Books for more specifics).

- Protests are to be lodged with the Technical Delegate or the Division Chair prior to the beginning of the next event or class. The Technical Delegate and/or Division Chair will then determine the necessity of approaching the judge through the ring master and/or the chair.
- No parent, coach, visitor, or exhibitor may approach, question, or direct public comment to or about the judge.
- Violations will be handled on an individual by the technical delegate, division chair, superintendent, show or event committee and, in extreme or flagrant cases, the NYS 4-H Horse Education Committee and/or the Extension Horse Specialist.
- Conduct unbecoming to a parent, supervisor, or exhibitor is subject to disciplinary action. Coaching from ringside during class is considered unbecoming conduct.
- **Barn &GroundsRules**
  - No exhibitor or other youth will be permitted to sleep in the barns **All barns close at 10:00 pm**
  - When mounted, 4-H exhibitors must have their show number visibly always displayed when riding or handling the horse
  - No bareback riding on the New York State 4-H horse show grounds.
  - There shall be no riding or other use of equines within the rings or pole barn area after the rings are officially closed. **Rings close at 8:00 pm**
  - No smoking, cooking or use of any heat generating device may take place in the barns or immediately adjacent to the barns.
  - No one other than exhibitors may ride, school or train on an equine entered in the show while on the 4-H show grounds. If a youth is having a problem with an equine, please talk with the Horse Show Superintendent or Division Chairperson – justified exceptions can be made. Safety of youth and equines is
  - of primary concern.

- **Awards and Premiums**

- Consecutively numbered and appropriately colored rosettes will be awarded to no more than 10 entries in each class.

- Each exhibitor of an equine will be awarded a “day premium” for each of the total number of days during which classes in the division or divisions in which they are entered are compete.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

2026 New York State Horse Council
Board of Directors Election

NYSHC members are invited to participate in the 2026 Board of Directors election. Choose the voting method that works best for you.

OPTION 1 | VOTE ONLINE

Scan the QR code with your phone camera, or visit the link below. Complete the Google Form and submit your ballot.
https://forms.gle/BcBfB8iWax1NKsnG7

OPTION 2 | VOTE BY EMAIL

Complete the ballot included in this newsletter and email it to **LMRuotolo@yahoo.com**.

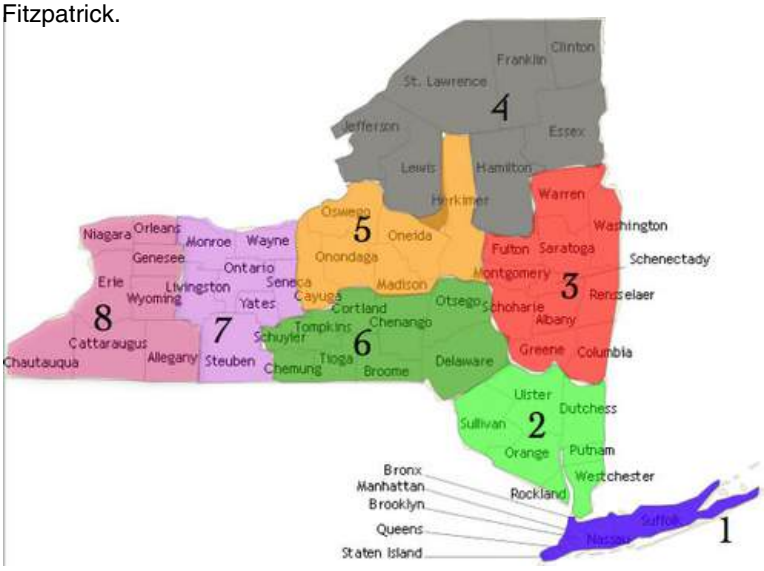
OPTION 3 | VOTE BY MAIL

Mail your completed ballot to:
Lissette Ruotolo
PO Box 32
Amherst, NY 14226

VOTING DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 15, 2026
Mailed and emailed ballots must be received by this date.

WHO CAN VOTE?

NYSHC members may vote for **one nominee for each Executive Board position**. For Regional Board positions, vote only for the open positions in **your own region**.
Unsure which region you belong to? Contact a member of the nominating committee: Lissette Ruotolo, Lindsey Lindke, or Stephanie Fitzpatrick.



2026 New York State Horse Council (NYSHC) Ballot for Board of Directors

We thank the membership for your time and consideration. Please send the ballot to Lissette Ruotolo to PO Box 32, Amherst, NY 14226 or email to LMRuotolo@yahoo.com to be received by November 15, 2026.

EXECUTIVE BOARD POSITIONS

Directions for Executive Board Position Voting: If you are a member of the NYSHC, please vote for one nominee for each of the following positions.

President:

- ☐ Colleen Segarra

Vice President:

- ☐ Clifford Harris

Secretary:

- ☐ Vacant

REGIONAL POSITIONS

Directions for Regional Board Position Voting: If you are a member of a Region, please vote for one candidate for each position open in your Region. **Only vote for candidates in the Region you are a member.** If you are unsure which Region your membership is in or if you chose to be a member of any Region, please ask a member of the nominating committee (Lissette Ruotolo, Lindsey Lindke, or Stephanie Fitzpatrick) and we will assist you.

☐ **Central Region (includes the following Counties: Oneida, Herkimer, Madison, Onondaga,Cayuga,Oswego)**

- ☐ Vice President: Gary Slate

☐ **Finger Lakes Region (includes the following Counties: Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Livingston,Seneca, Yates, Steuben)**

- ☐ Director: Vacant

☐ **Northern Region (includes the following Counties: Essex, Franklin, Clinton, Hamilton, St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis)**

- ☐ Director: MaryBeth Green
- ☐ Director: Vacant

☐ **Southern Tier Region (includes the following Counties: Cortland, Otsego, Delaware, Broome, Tioga, Chemung, Schuyler, Tompkins, Chenango)**

- ☐ Vice President: JoanneFrechette(currentlyadirector,willopenadirector position)
- ☐ Director: Vacant
- ☐ Director: Vacant

☐ **Southeast Region (includes the following Counties: Suffolk, Nassau, Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Bronx)**

- ☐ VicePresident: Vacant
- ☐ Director: Ahmed H Zubair
- ☐ Director: Vacant

☐ **Mid-Hudson Region (includes the following Counties: Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Sullivan, Ulster)**

- ☐ VicePresident: ShannonBudnik
- ☐ Director: Vacant
- ☐ Director: Corrine Weber

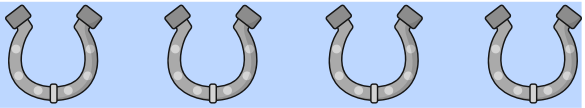
☐ **Capital Region (includes the following Counties: Washington, Warren, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Albany, Greene, Columbia, Schoharie, Montgomery, Fulton, Saratoga)**

- ☐ VicePresident: FionaFarrell
- ☐ Director: Vacant
- ☐ Director: Vacant

☐ **Western Region (includes the following Counties: Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Alleghany, Wyoming, Erie, Genesee, Orleans, Niagara)**

- ☐ VicePresident: LissetteM.Ruotolo
- ☐ Director: Jodi Gray
- ☐ Director: Barb Cunningham

Finger Lakes Region Update



Western New York is heading into fall after a challenging summer for many of our parks and trails.

Storm Damage & Trail Closures

Eight tornadoes ripped through Western New York, causing extensive damage to area parks and trails. The Letchworth Parade Grounds entrance remains closed indefinitely, as does the Portage-to-Letchworth section of the Genesee Valley Greenway. Current conditions and closure updates can be found through the Rochester Trail Riders Trail Report:
https://rochestertrailriders.com/trail-reports/

Northampton Park Trail Proposal

An additional public meeting was held regarding the proposed trail changes at Northampton Park. Updated maps, information, and materials from the meeting are available through Monroe County:
https://www.monroecounty.gov/parks-northamptontrailstudy

Hunting Season Reminder

Hunting season is underway. Some state-managed parks and recreation areas allow hunting, while Monroe County Parks do not permit hunting. Before heading out, riders should check the official website for the park they plan to visit for hunting information, seasonal trail closures, and other alerts. Links to official park pages are available here:
https://rochestertrailriders.com/trail-maps/

Ride the Challenge & Help Restore Our Trails

Rochester Trail Riders is helping support storm-damage recovery at Letchworth State Park and the Genesee Valley Greenway through its Trail Challenge Program. All proceeds from new registrations for the State Parks and Greenway Challenges will go directly to the Friends groups supporting these areas.

Learn more and sign up:
https://rochestertrailriders.com/challenges/

—Lindsay LaBella

Northern Region Update

Northern Region has been relatively quiet.

Mary Beth Green noted that in speaking with board members of the Central NY Reining Horse Association that they have seen exhibitor growth in their competitions this year held at the NYS Fairgrounds. This seems promising for the sport and the equine industry in NY.

Karen checked in with a couple of shows that have utilized the NYS Fairgrounds for many, many decades to get the managers' experiences with the fair administration. One manager stated that the boots-on-the-ground personnel (arena workers, grounds crew, etc) are the best anywhere and he manages shows all over. However, they also mentioned that dealing with the "office" was incredibly challenging and felt that not only little was done to try to ensure event success, but in fact that it seemed quite the opposite. The second manager has worked for a huge event that is classified by the USEF as a Heritage Competition; one that has operated continuously for years with a positive impact on the equestrian world and community at large. The show is at risk of not being held due to the lack of support from the NYS Fairgrounds in trying to work with show management during some potential conflicts at the facility. This information will be brought to the next meeting of the Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations to push for improved communication and cooperation between the fairgrounds and stakeholders. Please reach out to me, the Northern Regional VP, Karen Lassell, if you have other stories to share.

Our Youth Scholarship recipient's bursar's office has processed Addisyn Spano's award as she works towards becoming an equine veterinarian.

Brochure Committee

Brochure Committee Report by Sharon Slate, Central Region Director and co-chair Brochure Committee

We've had a number of requests for brochures this summer. Three of the most popular have been "Why You Should Join….", "Trail Riding Etiquette", and "Meeting a Horse on the Trail". We've also been receiving requests for larger amounts at a time, from 50 to as large as 500. Since education is one purpose of the Horse Council, we are pleased to see that so many brochures are "getting out there" and available to the public. All of our brochures have been requested at one time or another this summer and fall. Sunshine Horses rescue, who are Central Region members of Horse Council, took some brochures of "Rehoming a Horse" to provide to owners of horses that they cannot take into their care. Our inventory is quite low, and some brochures are entirely depleted. We will review the amounts we have and then ask the board for another grant to reprint those we need to replace.

https://nyshc.org/post.php?pid=102

Thank You To Our Fall Ride Sponsors:

Davis Trailer World * Stefan Hay Company
Chobani * Farm Credit East
Platinum Performance * US Rider
Top Bedding * Val McCloskey
Taylor Tack and Field

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Farm Credit East

Stefan Hay Company

US Rider

Top Bedding

Davis Trailer World

Chobani

Platinum Performance

Fall Horse Health: 7 Things Every Horse Owner Should Know

Preparing Your Horse for the Changing Seasons

As the colorful leaves begin to fall and temperatures drop across New York State, horse owners should start preparing their equine partners for the colder months ahead. Fall is an important time to evaluate your horse's health, nutrition, and management routine.

Here are seven important veterinary considerations to help keep your horse healthy and comfortable as we transition into winter.

1. Don't Overlook Hydration
As temperatures drop, some horses drink less water, increasing the risk of dehydration and impaction colic. Provide constant access to clean, fresh water and check troughs and buckets frequently. During freezing weather, heated water sources can help encourage adequate consumption.

2. Evaluate Body Condition Before Winter
A thick winter coat can hide weight loss. Fall is an excellent time to assess your horse's body condition and make necessary nutritional adjustments. Older horses, hard keepers, and horses with dental issues may need additional attention to maintain a healthy weight throughout winter.

3. Review Your Parasite Control Program
Fall is an important time to discuss parasite management with your veterinarian. Fecal egg counts, pasture management, and an individualized deworming program can help protect your horse while reducing unnecessary treatments and the development of parasite resistance.

4. Schedule a Fall Wellness Examination
A routine veterinary examination can help identify health concerns before winter. Discuss your horse's vaccination history, dental health, nutrition, and any changes in behavior or performance. Vaccination recommendations should reflect your horse's age, lifestyle, travel schedule, and exposure risks.

5. Watch for Seasonal Laminitis Risks
Cool nights and sunny fall days can affect sugar levels in pasture grasses. Horses prone to laminitis, particularly those with metabolic conditions, may require restricted grazing or other management adjustments. Consult your veterinarian about safe pasture access for at-risk horses.

Fall Horse Health: 7 Things Every Horse Owner Should Know Continued

6. Prepare for Changes in Exercise and Turnout
Shorter daylight hours, muddy conditions, and colder temperatures often lead to changes in riding and turnout schedules. Maintain regular movement whenever possible, monitor footing conditions, and adjust exercise gradually. Horses spending more time indoors still benefit from appropriate daily activity.

7. Know the Warning Signs of Colic
Changes in forage, water consumption, and daily routines can contribute to digestive problems. Watch for signs such as pawing, repeatedly lying down, looking at the flank, reduced manure production, or loss of appetite. If you suspect colic, contact your veterinarian promptly.

A Healthy Fall Leads to a Healthier Winter
A little preparation now can make a significant difference in your horse's health and comfort throughout the winter months. Every horse is different, and working closely with your veterinarian will help you develop a seasonal care plan tailored to your horse's individual needs.

The New York State Horse Council encourages responsible horse ownership through education, awareness, and proactive equine health management.
Educational information only. This article is not a substitute for individualized veterinary advice.

Veterinary references
The article is original educational content informed by established equine health guidance. These are useful references:

- AAEP Internal Parasite Control Guidelines — revised 2024.
- AAEP Equine Vaccination Guidelines — core and risk-based vaccination recommendations.
- AAEP Horse Vaccine Guide
- AAEP Horse Owner Resource Library — additional educational material on colic and preventive care.

From the Racetrack to the Show Ring: My Experience at the Thoroughbred Makeover

By Lindsay Lindke, Hunters Ridge

Each fall, the Retired Racehorse Project (RRP) brings together Thoroughbreds, trainers, owners, and horse enthusiasts from across the country for the Thoroughbred Makeover at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky. The event celebrates the versatility of retired racehorses and showcases their ability to transition into successful second careers.

This year, I had the opportunity to attend the Thoroughbred Makeover as a trainer, accompanying one of my clients who brought a horse to compete. It was an incredible experience to see so many Thoroughbreds excelling in their new careers and to be surrounded by people who share a passion for these talented horses. One of the highlights of the event was reconnecting with friends from throughout the horse industry. The Thoroughbred Makeover brings together people from a wide variety of disciplines, all with a common goal: giving retired racehorses the opportunity to succeed beyond the racetrack.

A Second Career for Thoroughbreds

The Thoroughbred Makeover highlights just how versatile these horses can be. From hunters and jumpers to dressage, eventing, barrel racing, and other disciplines, the competition demonstrates that a horse's racing career can be just the beginning.

For anyone considering purchasing an off-track Thoroughbred, fall can be an excellent time to start looking. As racing seasons and individual racing careers come to an end, horses may become available for new homes and second careers. Finding the right horse now can provide an opportunity to spend the winter developing a training foundation and preparing for the following year's competition.

Of course, not every retired racehorse is suited for every rider or discipline. Taking the time to evaluate a horse's temperament, soundness, athletic ability, and training needs is an important part of making a successful match.

From the Racetrack to the Show Ring: My Experience at the Thoroughbred Makeover, continued

An Exciting Week and New Opportunities

For me, this year's event was about more than just competition. While in Kentucky, I also sold my horse to a breeding farm, where she will begin another chapter of her life as a broodmare.

We also purchased another Thoroughbred with plans to return next year and compete in the Graduate division. It's exciting to have another horse to develop and another goal to work toward.

Experiences like this remind me why I enjoy working with Thoroughbreds. They are intelligent, athletic, and incredibly versatile horses that have so much to offer beyond their racing careers.

Could an OTTB Be Your Next Horse?

If you've ever considered bringing an off-track Thoroughbred into your barn, I encourage you to learn more about the Retired Racehorse Project.

Whether you're interested in competing, retraining, adopting, or simply supporting the transition of racehorses into second careers, there are many ways to get involved.

With thoughtful selection, proper care, and patient training, these horses can go on to rewarding careers in a wide range of disciplines.

Perhaps this fall is the perfect time to find your next equine partner and begin preparing for the 2027 Thoroughbred Makeover!

Learn more: www.therrp.org



Linda Fuller and Lindsay Lindke cheering on another rider



Sienna Geasling with her horse Blue Vortex and groom Juliet Nicholson



Blue Vortex and Sienna Geasling

New York State Horse Council, Inc
2027 Membership Form
Memberships are for the calendar yearJan.1-Dec. 31

Please Print Legibly

Please check one:

Name/Age of Member # 1_____ ☐ Renewal ☐ New Membership

Names/ages of other Members (if Family membership) _____

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Club/Business/Farm Name_____

Mailing Address_____

City_____ State____ Zip Code_____ County_____

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Website_____ Volunteer Availability/Interests_____

Please check the NYSHC Chapter you wish to join. A portion of your dues is transferred to that chapter for their activities.

___ General Membership (no chapter affiliation)

___ Putnam County ___ Westchester County

___ Cattaraugus/Chautauqua Counties ___ Sullivan County ___ Western NY

___ OrangeCounty ___ UlsterCounty

Would you like to make a donation to the New York State Horse Council, if so amount/?_____

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Please check which you want. Insurance is not available with these.

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*All memberships include one vote at the General Meeting

*All memberships include one newsletter from NYSHC quarterly either in hardcopy or by e-mail.

Check newsletter delivery _____E-MAIL ____HARD COPY (snail mail)

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