

State 4-H Horse Show

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lead the group, one of five 4-H horse and pony clubs in Fayette County.

According to Usher the 4-Hers put on horse shows to raise funds, and also have a November banquet.

Usher has been a leader since she graduated from 4-H, about five years ago, she said. "It's a really good bunch of kids. It's enough to keep me there for 25 years," she said.

"They show very good sportsmanship — they support

each other wonderfully."

Erin Niemczyk, Wellsboro, has been in 4-H horse competition for seven years. She had been giving Hannah Driskell, Wellsboro, riding lessons when Hannah's

horse was injured.

For the state competition, then, Erin turned the reins of her own horse over to Hannah to compete in several classes. Erin won the Western riding class in 1999 and 2000.

Hannah, with four years of 4-H experience, said that "4-H has been a lot of fun. We usually have really good judges at the shows," she said.

She has also learned how to work with others, besides learning the anatomy of a horse, and what equipment is proper to use on the animals.

"It's a good learning experience, even if you don't win anything," said Erin. "It's a good experience to make it to states, just to get that far, even if you don't place, since you're

competing against other people who have made it to states.

"It's an honor to be here — it's a reward for all your hard work," she said.

Bethany Bickel, 19, Huntingdon, polished palomino Quarter Horse mare Moonlit Velvet in preparation for a grooming and showmanship class.

"Grooming is one of the hardest classes to get ready for here," she said. The horse's coat must be smooth and have no winter hair. The class also

includes showmanship, so Bickel practiced up patterns and 360s, she said.

Bickel, part of the Hoof Printers 4-H club, with 30-40 participants, has been to states eight times and been in 4-H for 11 years.

"I'm happy to be here," said Bickel. "It's a reward at the end of the year for me, to know that I put in all this hard work and this is what I can get from it."

Bickel is an ag education major at Penn State.



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Bethany Bickel, 19, Huntingdon, polishes palomino Quarter Horse mare Moonlit Velvet in preparation for a grooming and showmanship class.



Rebecca Bundy, Luthersburg, and pinto miniature horse Lady planned to compete in the yearling filly classes. Rebecca is a member of Town and County Horse and Pony Club, Clearfield County.

Photos by Michelle Kunjappu

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