



# PACKING

## Project Guide



CANADA  
4-H Alberta

## **The 4-H Motto**

*"Learn to Do by Doing"*

## **The 4-H Pledge**

*I pledge*

*My **Head** to clearer thinking,*

*My **Heart** to greater loyalty,*

*My **Hands** to larger service,*

*My **Health** to better living,*

*For my club, my community, and my country.*

## **The 4-H Grace**

(Tune of Auld Lang Syne)

*We thank thee, Lord, for blessings great  
on this, our own fair land.*

*Teach us to serve thee joyfully,  
with head, heart, health and hand.*

### *Acknowledgements*

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### *Design and Layout*

Perpetual Notion Inc. Geoff and Julie Kramer

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# INTRODUCTION

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Horses were used to carry loads long before they were used to carry people. Horse packing as we know it was developed hundreds of years ago. Genghis Khan is believed to have first used horses as pack animals 700 years ago.

Horse packing provides opportunities to enjoy nature in a way that is otherwise difficult to achieve. It requires a great deal of basic skill and knowledge. To achieve these skills and knowledge, it is necessary to study, to pay attention to details and to practice.

Packing has developed to the point where it is a combination of art and science. Packers take pride in their animals and in their ability to pack them in a professional manner.

The art of packing is not learned overnight, but takes many hours of study, practice and actual packing.

## Objectives

The goal of this program is to provide an opportunity for 4-H members to learn:

- The types of equipment available and packing equipment needed.
- To handle, care for and pack the mature equine.
- What to take on a pack trip, how much and what makes for a successful pack trip.
- To accept the results of your work and how to use these in planning goals and future endeavours.
- How to develop skills and knowledge that can be used for a lifetime as a means of enjoyment and/or a career.
- How to share knowledge gained with others.

## References

***Packing and Outfitting Field Manual***, Oliver Hill, B636R, University of Wyoming, Bulletin Room, P.O. Box 3313, Laramie, WY. 82071.

***Horse Packing in Pictures***, Second Edition, Francis W. Davis, NY: Howell Book House, 1991.

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## SUCCESSFUL PACKING

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The following is an outline of basic equipment, knowledge and skills needed for successful packing.

### **Selection of the pack animal**

This is very important, since your pack animal is a critical part of any packing. A good pack animal should be stout and rugged and have sound feet and legs. Your pack animal should also have a gentle disposition and be healthy. A prominent withers is also desirable to keep a saddle and pack from slipping off to the side. Some people use horses, others use mules or burros and recently llamas are becoming popular as pack animals.

### **Care of the pack animal**

Pack animals should be well cared for and should be groomed, fed, shod and handled properly.

### **Pack Equipment**

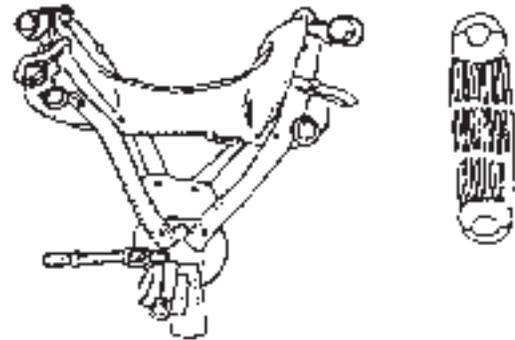
Good and proper equipment is essential. This should include the following:

- Pack saddle - several styles are available.
- Good, clean saddle pad(s).
- A stout halter with a 10 to 12 foot long halter rope.
- A lash cinch, with a 45 foot lash rope (1/2" diameter) - carry a spare.
- A pack cover, or manta (mantee) - this cover of canvas can vary in size from 6 feet by 6 feet to 10 feet by 12 feet, depending on intended uses. If you mantee everything, you will need at least two per horse.
- For slinging the mantee packs, you will need a pair of sling ropes (1/2" by 25-30 feet each).
- A 20 to 30 foot length of 1/4" or 3/8" rope to tie a mantee over a bale, bedroll, tent or whatever. Number of mantee ropes should equal the number of mantees you have.
- Panniers, in good repair (may be soft-sided or solid-sided) - panniers are the pack boxes used on pack saddles. They can be made of canvas, rawhide, wood or other materials. Some people may prefer not to use panniers.
- Hobbles and/or picket ropes - this depends on training or pack and riding horses.

## Examples of saddles:

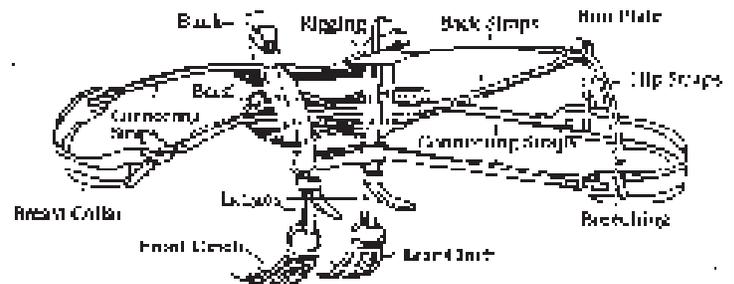
### McClellan Saddle

Shown with a horsehair cinch. Can be modified by adding a breast collar and breeching and will work as a pack saddle. Lots of rings to tie to, making it handy.



### Sawbuck or Crossback Saddle

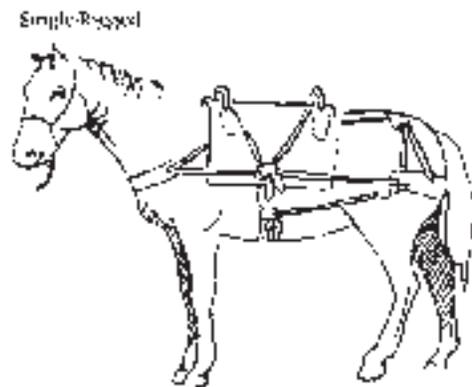
The addition of sheepskin lining on the blades can sure give your pack animal a lot more protection.



### Decker Saddle

Shows quarter strap. Can also be a helpful addition to the crossback saddle to pull cinch back from animal's elbow area. Reduces cinch sores.

Note: Be sure to remove the balled up hair and mud from the saddle blanket and the cinch before saddling to prevent sores.

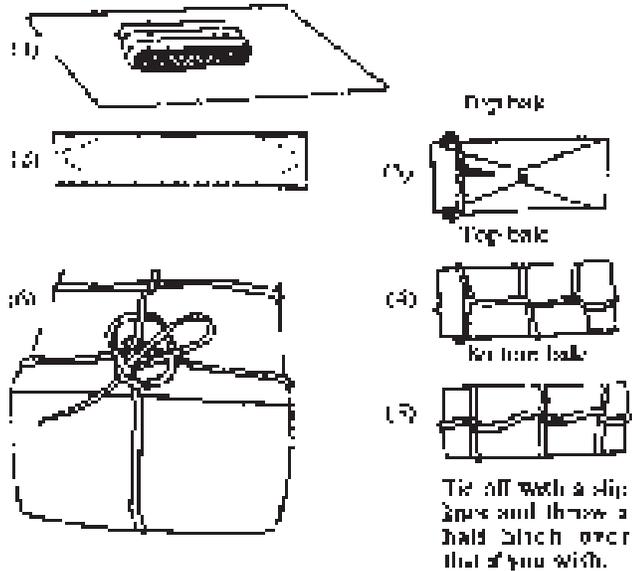


## Loading and packing

A very important factor is how much weight your pack horse can carry. A horse can carry about 12.5 per cent of his body weight (excluding the weight of the saddle), whereas a mule or burro can carry up to 15 per cent of its body weight. References refer to the proper method of putting a pack together.

## Balancing the load

Weight and balance of the load is very important to avoid sores on your pack animal. It also determines how well your pack rides. You should have a portable scale that can weight loads up to 45.5 kilograms.



## On the trail to new experiences

Proper handling of horses on the trail is very important. On the trail your horse should receive priority treatment. If you pack with a string of horses, tie them together but never tie a pack horse to your saddle. Instead, dally the rope around your saddle horn a turn or two and lead your pack animals. Be alert and cautious since you never know when a "rodeo" may start.

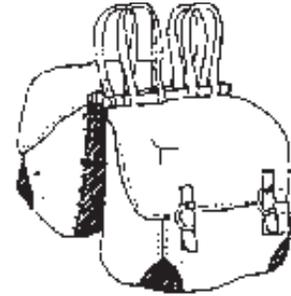
## Safety

Always keep safety foremost in all situations!

## Examples of panniers:

### Canvas Pannier

Shown with pipe or dowell and a lid. There are all-leather panniers of this type also. Some have leather ends and some have leather corners.



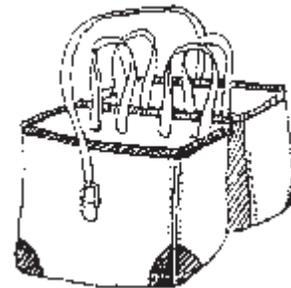
### Rawhide Pannier

With 3/8" steel rod or hardwood framework beveled to fit horse's side. Heavy and rugged.



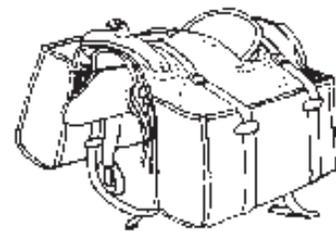
### Heavy Canvas Panniers

With 3/8" rope sewn into top edge. Has strap over top to hold sleeping bags, tents, or other items packed on top of panniers.



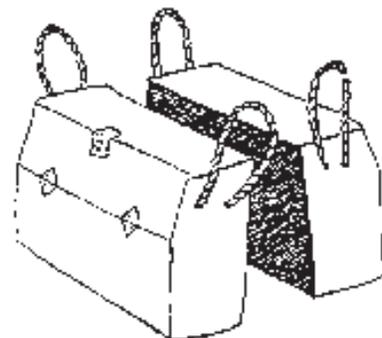
### Stock Saddle Panniers

These can be rolled up and tied behind your saddle and carried until you are ready to use them.



### Wooden Box or Grub Panniers

Can also be covered with fiberglass. Shelves and compartments are handy. Can double as a small table in camp also.



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## OTHER THINGS YOU'LL NEED TO KNOW

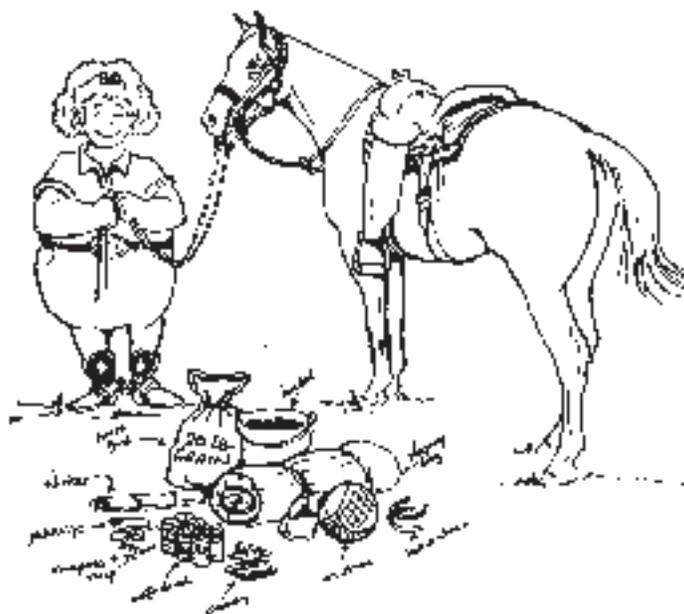
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In order to achieve the art of packing and have a successful pack trip, you will need to have additional knowledge about:

- Camping equipment needed
- Type and amount of horse feed
- Other horse equipment and supplies needed
- Cooking equipment
- Food and menus
- First aid supplies for humans and horses
- Personal gear
- Ropes, knots and splices - you will need to know types of ropes, uses and knots for preparing gear.
- Hitches - there are many different hitches that can be used in packing. You need to know several of these, for what type of pack (load) they are used and how they are tied.
- Trip itinerary - details about the trip: time, route, destination, topography, etc.

This project will assist 4-H members in developing decision-making skills and in developing an inquiring mind. Members will need to seek out references and the assistance of people who have expertise in packing.

Members will have to determine what type of equipment they want to use and how to use it. These are just a few of the many decisions they will need to make in this project.



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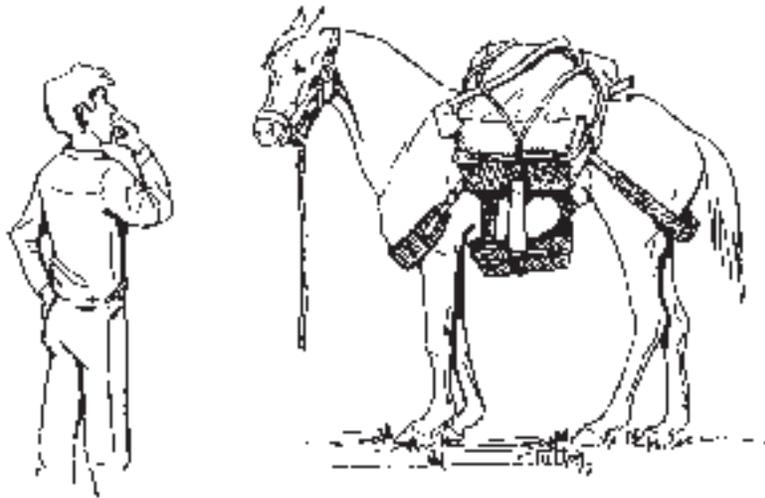
## POSSIBLE FAIR EXHIBITS

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The following are examples that could be developed for fair exhibit(s):

- Pair of panniers - made by exhibitor
- Pack saddle tree, decker - made by exhibitor
- Pack saddle tree, sawbuck - made by exhibitor
- Complete pack saddle, decker - made by exhibitor
- Complete pack saddle, sawbuck - made by exhibitor
- A journal on the pack trip - kept from start to finish
- Poster(s) or displays of knots, splices, hitches, equipment needs, menus and food needed, trip itinerary
- Poster and/or display about safety

4-H members may develop demonstrations and speeches related to packing. Members may also share knowledge and experiences with others in the area of leadership.



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## LEVEL ONE

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- Describe three conformation traits of a good pack horse.
- Describe proper care of a pack animal.
- Name and identify two styles of pack saddles (Decker or Sawbuck).
- Explain why a clean saddle pad is essential.
- Describe a proper halter and rope for leading a pack horse.
- Demonstrate proper grooming of a horse prior to saddling.
- Select a halter and lead rope appropriate for packing.
- Name and identify the parts of a pack saddle.
- Read an article or book or view a video about packing.

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## LEVEL TWO

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- Describe what a lash cinch is and how it is used.
- Select a proper mantee for a given use.
- Explain the use of the mantee.
- Explain the use of mantee ropes.
- Select and explain the use of sling ropes.
- Describe two types of panniers and how they are used.
- Explain three important safety factors in leading a pack string.

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## LEVEL THREE

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- Explain the importance of weighting the packs.
- Explain the importance of balancing the load.
- List the most important factors in packing horses.
- Properly mantee a load (suggested demonstration load: straw or hay bale or sack of grain).
- Demonstrate balancing of pack weights.
- Properly sling the manteed loads on the packhorse.
- Properly balance pannier weights.
- Properly load the panniers on the horse.
- Tie two of the following hitches on his/her packhorse: single diamond, double diamond, squaw or Arizona.
- Design a display for an exhibit.

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## LEVEL FOUR

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- Explain proper use of hobbles and/or picket ropes.
- Place a class of up to four horses based upon their conformation for packing.
- Demonstrate proper hobbling and/or picketing of his or her horse.
- Plan a pack trip for two people and four horses for four days, including all equipment, feed, menus, food and travel itinerary.
- Carry out an overnight pack trip.
- Give a demonstration about packing.

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## LEVEL FIVE

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- Carry out a pack trip of two to five days.
- Plan a pack trip for two people and four horses for over four days that begins at a point over 100 miles away (including transportation and all costs).
- Teach a club or group how to pack.

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