



Sandy Highland

Sandy Highland is from Irene, SD, and has a lifelong passion for showing horses. Some of her fondest childhood memories are of attending the State 4-H Horse Show with her mom. With over 30 years of experience as a horse trainer, she specializes in barrel horses. Throughout her career, Sandy has won numerous Futurity competitions, jackpots, and enjoys competing in Pro Rodeos as well.



Lainie Kringen-Scholtz

Dr. Lainie Kringen-Scholtz is from Madison, SD. She attended South Dakota State University with a BS in Animal Science and then attended Iowa State University where she got her doctorate. After vet school, she attended Options for Animals for chiropractic training and CuraCore for acupuncture training. Her husband, Andy, is from Springfield, MN and is an agronomist at CHS. Lainie and Andy enjoy spending time working on their acreage, going to cattle shows, barrel racing, driving the team, and spending time with family.



Libby Michaud

Libby Michaud resides in Wahoo, NE. As an AQHA judge since 2008, she has judged across the US and Internationally. Libby grew up showing 4-H, open shows, and on the local, regional and national level in AQHA. She coached the Equestrian Team at both the University of Georgia and the University of Nebraska and has given numerous clinics on both judging and horsemanship. Libby will be our North Arena judge for Tuesday and Wednesday.



Joni Ebel

Joni Ebel grew up in the Nebraska 4-H Horse Program and has numerous local, county and state 4-H horse awards in a variety of western, English and speed classes. After her 4-H career was complete, she began judging 4-H and open horse shows across Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota and has been judging for 30 years. When she is not judging in the ring, she enjoys showing in open horse shows and is a 7th grade mathematics teacher in Columbus, NE. Joni will be judging our trail classes.



Kelsey Ebke

Kelsey Ebke is the owner and trainer of Ebke Performance Horses located near Lincoln, NE. Kelsey has been involved in the Equine Industry her entire life and strives to share her knowledge and passion with others. She is a graduate of the University of Nebraska- Lincoln, where she served as the Equestrian Team President and was a member of the Reserve Congress Champion Horse Judging Team. She runs a large training program at her facility in Nebraska, that specializes in Reining and Ranch Horses, and she is known for her successful youth lesson and training program at both the local, state, and national levels. She trained and showed the Reserve High Point Open Ranch Horse at the 2024 PtHA World Championships, and several of her youth won multiple world titles under her guidance.

Kelsey is an AQHA Level 1 Judge, ABRA Judge, and has been a teacher at the University of Nebraska judges' school for the last two years. She is also the head Western IEA coach for the Big Red Elite Equestrian Team and has coached youth to both a National and Reserve National Championship in her first 5 years of founding the team. She serves on the IEA Western National Committee and strives to be involved in many facets in the Equestrian community. Kelsey possesses a deep understanding of equine evaluation and competition standards and is honored to serve as your 2026 Judge.



Brandon Kinney

Brandon Kinney lives in Sioux Falls with his wife Katie and two children. He is an inside sales rep for Animal Health International assisting customers in the upper Great Plains. Brandon grew up in Northwest Iowa helping on his grandparents' small farm and has been around draft horses all his life. His grandpa did part of the farming with horses and Brandon was always along to watch and learn from grandpa. This included plowing, sowing oats, planting corn and beans, and mowing and raking hay. His grandpa also raised Percherons for many years, and Brandon helped with the foaling, breeding, and training of the young stock. Brandon currently has two Percheron geldings that he drives for leisure when the time allows.

In his spare time, Brandon is the chairman of the Murray County Classic Draft Horse Show in Slayton, MN. This show is held every year during July and brings six horse hitches and farm teams from across the Midwest. He also assists with the Scott County Fair draft horse show in Jordan, MN and takes a trip to the SD State Fair every year to help his friend Mike Olson exhibit his Belgians in the state fair draft horse show.

Brandon is honored to judge this year's State 4-H Horse Show and wishes all the exhibitors the best of luck. He would also like to thank all the adults who put in their time and commitment to take the kids to the meetings and shows before coming to this event.

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