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### **ATTENTION CUMMINGTON FAIR HORSE/OXEN PULLING RULES**

**Friday Night: Power Puff starting time 4pm-Age limit 15 years based on Honor System, unless there is a reason for a change**

**Limit of 1 entry per class per Driver/Owner/Family. We have an option to pull classes together or separately.**

**20' No Touch- Limit 1 Team per Driver/Owner/Family per class. We have a option to pull classes together or separately.**

**Wristbands will be give out at the scales: for HORSES-the driver and his 2 Hitchers; for OXEN-Driver and Hitcher.**

**NO ONE ELSE WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE PIT AREA THAT ISN'T WEARING A WRISTBAND. This will apply to all Draft Classes throughout the weekend.**

**These changes will continue to be in effect this year and from now on, as they worked**

**very well last year for the entire weekend. We want to continue to make these events an**

**enjoyable and safe time for everyone and in the same shorter span of time as well.**

**Thank you all for your cooperation in helping to make this a successful and safe fair!**

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### **Massachusetts Fair Association Rules Governing "Pulling Contests" Approved By Mass. Department of Agriculture Resources Bureau of Fairs updated: February 2025**

Rules prefixed by an **O** apply to oxen only. Rules prefixed **H** applies to horses only

Rules prefixed by a **P/MH** apply only to ponies / Mini Horses

All other rules apply equally to Horses, Ponies and Oxen

1. The fairs pulling events committee shall be charged with promulgating and enforcing all rules and guidelines pertaining to pulling events in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The committee shall consist of two members representing the Mass. Department of Ag. Resources. The Mass. Society for Prevention of cruelty to animals, Mass Fair's Association, Pulling Superintendents, Pull Judges, The Pony Association, Horse Association, and the Oxen pull Association.

2. There Shall be a Fair Superintendent and up to 3 judges in charge at all drawing contests. They shall be vested with the authority to disqualify any team or driver for any cause that in their judgement might be detrimental to the best interest of the public, animals or the organization conducting the contest. An official will be designated to determine proper use of the reins, whip, goad stick. The sole responsibility of 1 judge is to judge the class and ensure compliance with the rules and regulations.

3. The judges and superintendent shall be qualified in stone boat contests and shall have full jurisdiction to decide the weight of the load at any time and decide anything relative to the actual drawing contest.

4. Any individual, firm or corporation found guilty of administering drugs, which may affect the conduct, actions, endurance, strength, speed, or performance of any animal competing in any pulling competition within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, shall forfeit all prizes or monies won that day. First Offense would consist of a \$500.00 Fine and a 30-day suspension to be served from May 15 Through October 30. Second offense will result in a \$1,000.00 Fine and a 1 year suspension: a Third offense will result in the teamster being barred for life. (All Fines payable to the Mass. Fairs Association and Fran Mason, 589 Old North Road, Worthington, Ma. 01098.) Any teamster who refuses to assist the Vet in testing any animal, or who refuses to have any animal tested, will be guilty of a drug violation, punishable by a \$500.00 fine and 30-day suspension to be served May 15- October 30th.

5. Any owner and / or teamster who has been convicted or found in violation of another state's statute relating to the use of drugs or stimulants, or other animal protection statute shall be barred from participating in any contest, in this state, for a period prescribed by that state. All testing will be done before the first load or after the last load.

6. Any team disqualified by an agent of Humane Society appointed under Chapter 22C. section 57, of MGL. Shall be taken out of the contest immediately. Before any team is taken out there should be a consultation among the Humane Society, superintendent, and judges, and may be announced to the public by the judges.

7. All participants will be properly dressed. Any exhibitor, judge or superintendent who is or is suspected of drinking alcoholic beverages will be disqualified from the contest and removed from the pulling area. Breathalyzers may be used at pulling events to determine if an individual has been drinking. The drinking of alcoholic beverages in and around the ring is prohibited. Any foul or abusive language to the public or anyone connected to the draw. By the driver or his helpers, will cause the driver and his team to be disqualified immediately. First offense may result in fines up to \$250.00 and a 2-week suspension: Second offense may result in a one- year suspension and fines up to \$1,000.00: If the teamster is fined, the teamster will not be allowed to pull until fines are paid. (All fines payable to the Mass. Fairs Association and mailed to Fran Mason. 589 Old North Road, Worthington, Ma. 01098)

8. Sores and abrasions caused or likely to be irritated by the bearing surface of harnesses or yokes will deem the animal unfit for use in the contest, decision to be made by superintendent or judges. Any lame animal will not be allowed to pull. Lameness, mechanical in nature and that doesn't cause pain or suffering, as certified by a licensed Veterinarian on a health certificate dated within the previous 12 months, will be allowed to pull.

9. Teams deemed uncontrollable or teamsters losing control, that go beyond the Defined pit area, will be immediately disqualified by the superintendent or judges, and removed from the contest. Each fair will mark a Defined pit area and make it known at the driver's meeting prior to the start of each class. In addition, any driver that pulls the load beyond the defined pit area will be penalized- 1st offense will be loss of that hitch: 2nd offense is disqualification for the day and forfeit the entire day's premiums.

10. **HP-** All Horse and Ponies to compete in contest, other than free -for – All Teams, Shall be weighed in no earlier than 3 hours before the first class. Horses will be marked by numbers when weighed. Check weighing will be permitted before the 3 hour period prior to the first class. Horses must wear halters while on scale. All Horses and ponies will be weighed in the presence of a delegate appointed by the fair, organization or person who is conducting the contest. The delegate shall present weigh-bill to the teamster a copy of which shall be kept by said delegate certifying the horses or ponies name and description as certified by a negative Coggins certificate, will be required to pull in Massachusetts. All paperwork will be with the teamsters at the exact time of weighing. Scale shall be balanced with a person standing on it, this person shall hold all horses or ponies. The person holding the horses or ponies shall be appointed by the delegate if he/she is unable to do so himself/ herself. The delegate must sign the weighing certificate. It is the judge's discretion of whether animals can be weighed with or without blanket coverage.

11. **MH-** Mini Horses do not have to be weighed or measured – This is left to the discretion of the fairs.

12. **O** – All oxen will be weighed in front of the sponsoring delegate: Micro Chips- RFID tags will be required. Suggested weight classes shall be 1,600, 2,000, 2,400, 2,800, 3,200 Free for All weighing not required. All weight classes will be advertised and in fair books prior to the event.

13. **O-** All weight classes will increase 100 lbs. for Labor Day weekend events and remain in effect until the end of the season.

14. **P** – All owners/ponies must have proof of measuring by NE.Draft Pony Association to pull in a contest. All Suggested weight classes shall be under 1,200 lbs: 1,200-1,400 lbs: and Free For All. All weight classes will regulated and advertised by the sponsoring fair and must be detailed in the fair book and online.

15. **H-** Horse Suggested weight classes: 1 – day events-3,000lbs: 3,001-3,300 lbs:3,301-3,600lbs: Free for All. 2-day events weights will be at the discretion of the fair. If pull sponsor wants to change the weight classes, all weights shall be advertised prior to the pull.

16. **HPO-** Once the Team has been weighed, there will be no switching of horses, ponies or oxen. Split teams will be allowed to compete for premiums. Any claimed owner must remain with his horses, ponies or oxen for the duration of the contest.

17. **H/P/MHO-** Starting Load: maximum of 4,000lbs. for all weight classes and 5,000 lbs. for Free for All classes. Added loads in each class at the discretion of the judges depending on the type of pull. At no time after weight has been increased, may it be decreased.

18. Pulling positions to be determined by drawing of numbers just before each class.

19. All teamsters to compete in contest shall have their teams ready at the published time and must attend drivers meeting. All classes will close at the completion of the first heat of each class.

20. There shall be a time limit of five (5) minutes. Time will be taken out while the boat is being repositioned for the next hitch. The time kept by the announcer, or appointed timekeeper.

21. Method of Pull: Three hitches with a 5- minute limit. The boat to be pulled back to the starting pin after each hitch. There will be no heading of horses. Teams to be driven by one teamster only. The starting point of the boat shall be properly marked to indicate same starting point for all loads. The distance of each pull will be measured from the center of the boat to the most recent pin. All teams will be allowed three hitches to Qualify the load. The boat shall be returned to the starting pin after each hitch. Option: Oxen pullers may have the option to have 5 hitches from the pin while staying hooked to the boat, with a 5-minute time limit. At no point should the boat begin at 72" or more from the starting pin. Teamster may request that the boat be set back to the pin. 5- hitch pulls must be publicly pre-Advertised prior to that day. Also length of qualified pull shall be determined by the Superintendent of pull must be advertised

22. **P** – Use of the reigns is prohibited for any other purpose than to guide the team. Hats and hands on the hindquarters only. Hands must always be insight.

23. **MH**- These pulls are No-Touch.

24. **H**- 3 inches or more constitutes a hitch.

23. **O**- 3 inches or more constitutes a hitch.

24. **P**- 3 inches or more constitutes a hitch.

25. Over the rail: If an animal's foot strikes dirt outside the rail, it constitutes a hitch with no credit for the distance pulled. Teams must remain within the rail while hitched to the boat. Teams must be Unhooked from the boat if they step over the rail.

26. Any team deliberately driven over the rail will be disqualified for the contest

27. All teams shall remain in the ring at all times, until the class is completed or unless excused by The judge.

28. In case of a tie on the longest distance, the second longest distance already pulled will take the Top placing.

29. Changing teamsters: No teamster may be changed after pulling the first load in any class except for an emergency, then only when permitted by the judge

30. **H/P/MH**- Interferences of evener men. No assistance other than hitching. Evener men WILL NOT go ahead of evener and are to remain silent and no waving of the arms while a team is being setup or is hitched to the load.

31. **O** – Hitchers will not be allowed to twist the tails or use the chain or any other device to stimulate the cattle.

32. Classes shall be publicized in the premium booklet or by fair/ pull.

33. **O** – Twisted whip with a braided lash or goad stick may be used in the pit or on the fairgrounds. The Goad stick must not be over 4' long and must not exceed ½" diameter on the small end. The goad stick may be taped with tape but not weighted. The goad shall have no brad on it. Plastic goad sticks may be used but must be wrapped with black tape. Any driver Any driver causing a welt, swelling or drawing blood

with the whip or goad stick will be fined \$100 per infraction. Second offense may include suspension.

34. **O-** The whip or goad stick shall only be used to guide the oxen outside of the pit area. The whip or goad may be used lightly to place the oxen, after being hitched to the boat. Then the oxen may be touched only once to start and only once while the boat is in motion. 2 hits only to the animal or yoke, There will be NO RUNNING OF THE TEAMS WITHIN THE RING AND PIT AREA. No use of the butt end of the whip or goad will be allowed.

35. **O –** The chain shall not be hitched to the boat while it is under, around or in front of the oxen's legs. ( Only when the chain is between the animals.)

36. **O-** No driver shall strike the oxen in the face except to guide the animal with an open hand, The goad stick or whip may be used lightly in the area of the animal's ears and horns for the steering of the animals only. No use of hands as a twitch on the nose, or in the nostrils.

37. The only persons allowed in the pit areas are fair officials, drivers, the persons hitching to the boat, agents of the humane society under Chapter 22C, Section 57, M.G.L. and the bureau of fairs Inspectors, only pertinent personnel allowed and at the discretion of the judges.

38. **O –** All calves over the age of (12) months must be castrated to show or enter any classes.

39. **O -**The age of the oxen and steers should be judged as of the day of the event.

40. **H-** The number of times a horse draws will be left up to the discretion of the fair.

41. **HP-** No animals will be blindfolded. Open bridles will be allowed, but the blinders must be properly attached so far as to not be free swinging or bent around so it causes discomfort to the horses eye.

42. **H-** In horse pulls the use of the reigns as a whip is prohibited. The light use of the reigns on entry to the pit and while the team is making its draw, will be limited to the area from the root of the tail to the bottom of the round. IN A SIDE ARM MOTION ONLY. Hands must always be insight. The use of the reigns after the boat has stopped or any place on the grounds in prohibited. Lines must be doubled. Reigns may be taped together only if the no wider than the width of your hand with a single wrapping of tape. No swinging of the reigns over the horses. No twirling over the horses backs.

43. The pit shall be covered the day before the draw, when it is possible.

44. Participation in pulling events within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been determined to be a privilege and not a right. Participation in these events are discretionary, Individuals are only permitted to enter these contests if the judges, superintendents and fairs deem it advisable. Individuals who blatantly disregard these rules and regulations and place animals or the public at risk will not be allowed to these family events.

45. If any accidents should arise and warrants a hearing, a majority of the Massachusetts Agricultural Fair Association Pulling Events Committee can make a decision pertaining to, but not limited to, disciplinary action. Any infractions are to be made known to the offending party by certified mail within 30 days of the infraction. The offending party has the right to either pay the fine or appeal the decision within 30 days

of receipt of notification. Failure to acknowledge notification will result in suspension from all pulling events until fine (S) have been paid, or the decision of the committee has been revoked.

46. STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP – The signature on said form verifies that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the Massachusetts Fairs Association Rules Governing Pulling Contests and that the judge (S) decisions in these competitions are FINAL.

47. Any variation of these rules shall be in the spirit of aforesaid rules and at the discretion of the judges.

48. **H O** -All animals that will be pulled at Mass. Fairs Association Sanctioned pulling Contest Will have microchips oxen are to have RFID Tags and Horses are to be microchipped with the same type of microchip that can be read with a hand wand. This will be enforced for 2025 pulling season. All microchip information shall be shown on the Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CIV) paperwork