



HORSE JUDGING

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,

my country, and my world.

Published by 4-H Alberta for the 4-H community.

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4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Welcome to the **4-H Horse Judging Project**. With this project, you will work through activities that will challenge your ability to judge both equine conformation and performance classes. This project has established assessment tools through which you will gain experience judging both conformation and performance classes.

In this unit, we will discuss judging. We will cover judging purpose, procedures, the process and giving reasons.

There is so much more to judging than simply putting those animals in the same order as the official judge. Judging in 4-H helps us to:

Judging - What It's All About

Why do we judge in 4-H?

Learn
Evaluate
Make Decisions
Communicate
Develop Confidence

No matter what type of item or animal you are judging, the steps you follow will be exactly the same. The steps are the same whether you are judging in a competitive judging competition, the show ring or the pasture.

How do you judge?

Here are the steps of judging. As you judge, complete the steps in this order. This will make your job of judging much easier.

1. **Picture the ideal item or an animal.**

Before you start judging any class, picture the ideal in your mind. What does that perfect market steer look like? What about the perfect loaf of bread? In your mind, or even on a sheet of paper, list the qualities which you feel are important in that perfect item. Rank them in order of importance.

2. **Prepare to compare.**

Judging any class means you must compare the items or animals in the class to each other and to the ideal you created and determine the advantages one has over the next. Force yourself to think comparatively. Now you are ready to actually begin judging.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

How do you judge?

(continued)

3. View from a distance.

Stand back and compare the animals. If you are judging livestock, stand about six or seven metres away and analyse the animals. Compare and contrast them in size, structure and overall appearance.

4. View from the front and the rear.

Move to the front, still looking from a distance, and view the class. Move to the back and view some more.

5. Move in for a closer examination

Now you are ready to examine the animal up close. Move in close and give each one a thorough examination. Inspect each one individually, continuing to compare it to all of the others in the class. If you are judging small items, feel them, pick them up and look at them from all angles.

6. View again from a distance

By now, you should be ready to make your decision on the placing of the class. Once you have finished your close examination, move back and view again from a distance.

7. Build a picture

Take time here to close your eyes, and build a picture in your mind of that class as it stands in front of you. This will help you when you are preparing your reasons.

8. Make your decision

By now you should have made your final decision on the placing of the class in order from most desirable to least desirable. If you have any doubts, go back a few steps and confirm your decision.

9. Mark you cards

Mark your placings on your card. Prepare your reasons. Make sure the placing on your card is the same as the one you are using in your reasons. Hand in your card to the official.

All of this, from the time you start judging to the time you complete the preparation of your reasons, will take no longer than 20 minutes.

The judge at your achievement day follows these same steps of judging when he places your horse, market steer or the dairy heifers. Watch him and you will see what I mean.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

How do you judge?

(continued)

Here are a few more hints to help make your judging job a little easier:

- U Select your easiest placings first.
- U Do your own judging.
- U Your first impression is usually best.
- U Keep comparing.
- U Remember - your reasons are important.

How is the class numbered?

Any class of four animals is always numbered one through four from left to right viewing from the rear of the class.

How can YOU become a more successful judge?

Anyone can become successful at judging any item or species. There are only two things you need to do:

- U **Think** Whenever you are judging, think about what you are doing. Be organized and follow a system.
- U **Practice** No one becomes a good judge by judging only a few classes. You must practice, practice and practice to become a better judge.

Top beef and dairy judges across the country have judged thousands of cattle. They became successful judges by thinking about what they were doing and with many hours of practice.

Why do we do reasons?

We do reasons in 4-H because they give us a chance to justify our placings. By practising judging and reasons regularly, you will soon develop a good system for judging, and be able to justify your placings.

The structure of your reasons

Good reasons have a specific structure. Whether you are presenting written or oral reasons, you should follow the same format. Reasons should have **three parts**. Let's look at each of these.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Reasons

1. The Introduction

The introduction to your reasons should be a simple statement telling the listener two things:

- U The class you judged.
- U Your placing of the class.

An example of an acceptable introductory statement is on the left.

Notice that the classes are not called cows or hay, but are called 2 year old Holstein Cows and 1st cut Alfalfa Hay. Both of these statements identify the class completely and correctly, and state your placings of the class.

You may vary the statement slightly as you become a more experienced judge. Just remember to identify the class you judged and tell the listener how you placed the class.

2. The Body

The body will be the most detailed part of your reasons. Therefore, you should spend the most time preparing this section. Here are some hints to help make the preparation of your reasons a little easier:

- U Do your analysis in pairs. There are three pairs in your reasons - a tip, a middle and a bottom pair. Compare the four animals within each of these pairs.
- U Be not only descriptive, but also comparative. It is not acceptable that you simply describe the animals in the class. You must use comparative terms to state your descriptions - words ending with “-er” and phrases beginning with “more”.
- U Make sure that all the information you provide in your reasons is true and accurate for the class. You will lose marks for wrong information.
- U State your most important points first, then go on to your less important points.
- U Follow a logical pattern on each animal or item.

“I placed this class of 2 year old Holstein Cows 3124.”

or

“I placed this class of 1st cut Alfalfa Hay 2431.”



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Reasons (continued)

- U Be thorough in your reasons. Make sure you mention all of the points which you consider to be important.
- U There are words which you should never use in your reasons. These are “good”, “better”, “best” and “nice”.
- U Use the correct terms for the items or animals you are judging. Know the meaning of the terms you are using.
- U Be positive. State the advantages one animal has over the other animal rather than pointing out the weak points of the lower animal. Avoid being negative.
- U Grant when the lower animal of the pair has an advantage over the upper animal of the pair. Keep grants short and simple.
- U Be organized. If you can show the judge that you are organized in your judging and your reasons, you will appear more knowledgeable.
- U If a placing is close, say so!
- U Be concise. If possible, get your point across in a few words rather than many words.
- U Avoid using “he”, “she”, or “it”. Refer to the animals or items by number.

As you become more experienced, you will begin to add more steps to this general structure. You will add grants and more specific information.

3. The Conclusion

The conclusion of your reasons should be a simple statement summarizing the information from your introductory statement. Again, give a complete and correct identification of the class on which you are giving reasons and your placing of the class.

An example of an acceptable concluding statement is located to the left.

Again, once you become more experienced, you may wish to vary your concluding statement slightly. This is acceptable as long as you provide complete identification and placings. In **advanced** competitions, you **may eliminate** this concluding statement.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Reasons (continued)

The general rules for written and oral reasons are the same. In both, you must provide a good presentation. It is your method of presentation which differs. Let's look closely at the presentation of reasons.

In review, your reasons should have a basic structure like this:

I place this class of . . . 3124

I placed 3 over 1 because . . .




I placed 1 over 2 because . . .

I placed 2 over 4 because . . .

For these reasons, I placed this class of . . . 3124

Presenting Your Written Reasons

Presenting written reasons is simply putting them down on paper. Follow these rules when presenting your written reasons:

-  Be neat.
-  Use correct spelling.
-  Use correct grammar.

"For these reasons, I placed this class of 2 year old Holstein Cows 3124."

or

"These are my reasons for placing this class of 1st cut Alfalfa Hay 2431."

Remember: This is not a neatness, spelling or grammar test - but what the marker cannot read or understand, he cannot mark.



Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Reasons (continued)

Presenting Your Oral Reasons

Presenting oral reasons is a little more difficult because you must present orally to the judge. Follow these rules when presenting your oral reasons.

- U Speak loudly and clearly.
- U Be pleasant.
- U Convince the judge that your reasons are right.
- U Be confident in your reasons.
- U Emphasize your most important points.
- U Avoid reading your notes.
- U Have a picture of the class in your mind.
- U Look your judge in the eye.
- U Stand straight - don't fidget.
- U Relax and have fun!

If you can combine quality content with good presentation in your reasons, then you will be sure to get a good mark.

Preparing Your Oral Reasons

One of the reasons that so many members find oral reasons so difficult is that they don't know how to prepare good notes.

As an experienced judge, you will be required to give oral reasons without any notes. To do this, you must keep a picture of the class in your mind at all times.

For beginning judges, use of notes is acceptable. The note taking system outlined to the left will help you to become more organized. Make sure you use small note cards, not large pieces of paper.

Use this note taking system and always keep a picture of the class in your mind, and you will soon be able to do it without notes.

	Class _____
	Placing 2-3-1-4
Reasons for placing:	
Grants	
2 at top of class	
2/3	3/2
3/1	1/3
1/4	4/1
4 at bottom of class	



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

Guidelines For Marking Oral Reasons

(continued)

Possible Score

Reasons (continued)

Presentation:

10

- U loud, clear, easy to hear
- U speech well-paced, not too fast
- U maintains eye-contact with audience
- U avoids reading; glancing at notes acceptable
- U stands comfortably
- U speaks to the audience confidently and convincingly
- U uses correct grammar, phrasing and sentence structure
- U avoids repetition
- U uses proper pronunciation and enunciation
- U unacceptable words "good", "better", "best", "nice"

Format:

10

- U introductory statement
- U concluding statement
- U identifies the class completely and correctly
- U compares the 3 pairs
- U logical and easily followed

Content Score:

- U Top pair 10
- U Middle pair 10
- U Bottom pair 10
- U Must be:
 - accurate comparative
 - specific thorough
 - complete

Total 50

Remember: You are NOT judging members on how they placed the class; this has already been done in the placing score. You are judging the member on WHY he or she placed the class this way.



Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Reasons (continued)

Guidelines For The Oral Reasons Judge

- 🐾 Make sure the member feels comfortable.
- 🐾 Show the member that you are interested in what he or she is saying.
- 🐾 Listen actively - don't slouch or look bored.
- 🐾 Avoid any gestures or movements which may throw the member off guard.
- 🐾 Make sure you listen to the reasons in a place where other members won't overhear you.
- 🐾 Make sure you listen to reasons in a place where you won't be interrupted by noises or other members.
- 🐾 If you are interrupted or the member stumbles, let him or her start again.
- 🐾 Don't interrupt while the member is speaking - save it for when he or she is finished.
- 🐾 Ask questions at the end of the presentation. Then you will be sure that he or she actually "saw" the class.
- 🐾 Be consistent. The absolute mark that you give the reasons is not nearly as important as being consistent across all of the cards you mark.
- 🐾 Remember - you are there to find out why he or she placed the class that way, not to tell the member his or her placing is wrong.
- 🐾 Remember - this is difficult and new to many members. Make it as easy for them as you can - we want them to try this again next time!

4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Reasons (continued)

Guidelines For Marking Written Reasons

- U This is not a spelling or neatness test - just as long as you can read and understand what is written. You will have to penalize the member if you cannot decide what the words are saying.
- U Concentrate on the task at hand - take this seriously.
- U Attempt to visualize the class as you read the card. This will make it easier for you to decide if what the member is saying is right or wrong.
- U Mark your comments directly on the card.
- U You may find it easier if you set yourself a range of marks that you will assign. Decide on a high mark and a low mark, then start working on the cards. If you find an exceptional card, you can expand your range.
- U Be consistent. The absolute mark that you give the reasons is not nearly as important as being consistent across all the cards you mark.
- U Be prepared for members who will come back to you with questions about why you marked their card the way you did.
- U Remember - this is difficult and new to many members. Encourage the members - we want them to try again next time!

Remember: You are NOT judging members on how they placed the class; this has already been done in the placing score. You are judging the member on WHY he or she placed the class this way.



Judging - What It's All About

Guidelines For Marking Written Reasons

(continued)

Possible Score

Reasons (continued)

15

Presentation:

- U logical, easy to follow
- U comparative throughout - uses descriptive comparative
- U terms - "more", words ending in "er", introduction and conclusion
- U class is identified completely and correctly
- U uses proper expressions - grant, advantage, etc.
- U this is not a spelling test - just as long as you can tell what the member is trying to say

Content:

35

Reward points for:

- U accurate information
- U thorough - covers all the points the judge mentions
- U "seeing" the animals in the class
- U uses the appropriate animal terms
- U uses the terms for body parts accurately
- U specific

Deduct points for:

- U inaccurate information
- U "canned" reasons
- U wrong use of terms

TOTAL 50



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

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Cuts

Understanding Cuts

Cuts are used to demonstrate the difficulty level in a class and to determine the score of your placing of that class.

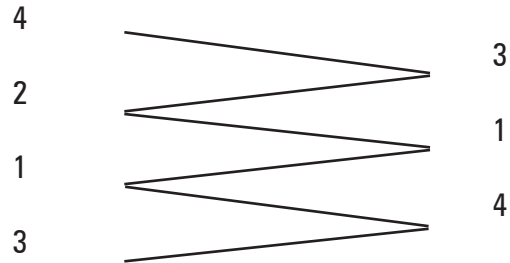
In a class of four animals, hay samples, or apples, a cut is assigned between each pair in the official placing.

e.g.

Class Placing

Cuts

Placing 4 over 2 is a fairly easy placing, 2 over 1 is difficult. 1 over 3 is again, fairly easy.

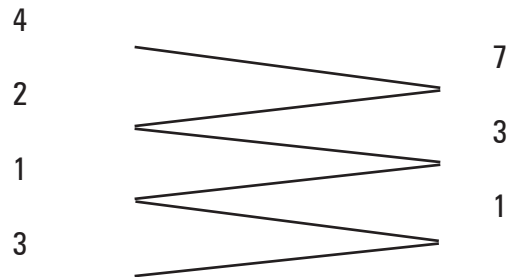


e.g.

Class Placing

Cuts

Placing 4 at the top is very easy. Placing 2 over 1 is fairly easy and placing 1 over 3 is close or difficult.



When you assign cuts to a class, there are several rules to keep in mind:

1. Your cuts may have any value from 1 to 8.
2. The sum of the 3 cuts should be greater than 6 but must be no greater than 15.
3. If the sum of your 3 cuts is 15, your middle cut must be not greater than 5.
4. If the sum of your 3 cuts is 14, your middle cut must be not greater than 8.

These rules exist only to make your scoring out of 50 work!

Remember: Higher cuts mean easier placings. Lower cuts mean more difficult placings.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Cuts (continued)

More About Cuts

Your official judge will determine the cuts on the class he placed. A change in the value of the cut will change your placings score.

Let's take a closer look at the impact of different cuts:

Example 1: Suppose the cuts are 1-2-1. The range of marks available to the contestants will be from 36 to 50 out of a possible 50.

Example 2: Suppose the cuts on the same class are 3-6-3. The range of marks available to the contestants will be from 8 to 50 out of a possible 50.

Placing	Cuts 1-2-1	Cuts 3-6-3
4-2-3-1	50	50
4-3-2-1	48	44
2-4-1-3	48	44
3-2-4-1	44	32
1-3-2-4	36	8

The series of cuts in examples 1 and 2 both indicate a class which has a close top pair and a close bottom pair. The member with placings totally backwards from the official placings would receive a placings score of 36 in example 1 and a score of 8 in example 2. With the split of 3-6-3, more emphasis is placed on the ability of the individual to properly place the class.

Example 3: Suppose the cuts are 2-1-2. The range of marks available to the contestants will be from 34 to 50 out of a possible 50 points.

Example 4: Suppose the cuts on the same class are 6-3-6. The range of marks available to the contestant will be from 2 to 50 out of a possible 50 points.

Placing	Cuts 2-1-2	Cuts 6-3-6
3-1-4-2	50	50
3-4-1-2	49	47
1-3-2-4	46	38
4-1-3-2	44	32
2-4-1-3	34	2



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)



Cuts (continued)

The series of cuts in examples 3 and 4 both indicate a class with an easy top placing and an easy bottom placing with a closer pair in the middle. Again, note the differences in the range of marks available.

Encourage your judges to put representative splits on the classes. We need to train our members to improve their judging skills and decrease the element of luck in their judging. No matter how the members placed the class, they still have the opportunity to improve their overall mark for the class by presenting a good set of reasons for their placings.

Using Cuts To Score Your Placings

When scoring your placings in any judging class, there are two methods you can use:

-  Score it yourself.
-  Use the Hormel Computing Slide.

Scoring It Yourself

Once you know the official placings and the corresponding cuts, you can score your placings.

Example	Official Placings	4-2-1-3
	Cuts	3-1-3
	Your Placings	1-4-3-2

Now let's compare your placings to the official placings. There are six possible pairs. Ask questions for each pair as you see them in the official placings. Answer the questions from your placings. Each time the answer is "No", you lose points.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Cuts (continued)

Here goes:

- Q1. Did you place 4 over 2?
A. Yes, so you don't lose any points.
- Q2. Did you place 4 over 1?
A. No, so you lose 3 + 1 points.
- Q3. Did you place 4 over 3?
A. Yes, so you don't lose any points.
- Q4. Did you place 2 over 1?
A. No, so you lose 1 point.
- Q5. Did you place 2 over 3?
A. No, so you lose 1 + 3 points.
- Q6. Did you place 1 over 3?
A. Yes, so you don't lose any points.

Now, total the points you lost. Subtract them from 50 to get your final placings score:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{Total points lost} = & (3 + 1) + 1 + (1 + 3) & \\ & = & 9 \\ \text{Your Score} & = & 50 - 9 \\ & = & 41 \end{array}$$

Your score for placings is 41 out of a possible 50 points.

Using the Hormel Computing Slide

Now for the EASY method!

The Hormel Computing Slide is designed so that all you have to do is read your score from the card. Slide in the cards with the appropriate cuts and placings, line them up and read your score. This gives you your score out of 50.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Can you score a class manually? Give it a try...

1. Official placings 2-4-1-3
The cuts are 1-5-3

Scoring the Class

What is your score if you placed the class:

a) 2-4-3-1

b) 4-2-1-3

c) 2-1-4-3

d) 3-2-4-1

e) 3-1-2-4

f) 3-1-4-2

g) 2-4-1-3

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging - What It's All About

(continued)

Scoring the Class

(continued)

- 2) Official placings 1-2-3-4
The cuts are 7-2-5

What is your score if you placed the class:

a) 2-1-3-4

b) 1-2-4-3

c) 2-1-4-3

d) 3-1-2-4

e) 4-1-3-2

f) 4-3-1-2

g) 1-2-3-4

Solutions:

- | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. | a) | 47 | e) | 19 |
| | b) | 49 | f) | 18 |
| | c) | 45 | g) | 50 |
| | d) | 30 | | |
| 2. | a) | 43 | e) | 22 |
| | b) | 45 | f) | 13 |
| | c) | 38 | g) | 50 |
| | d) | 39 | | |



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

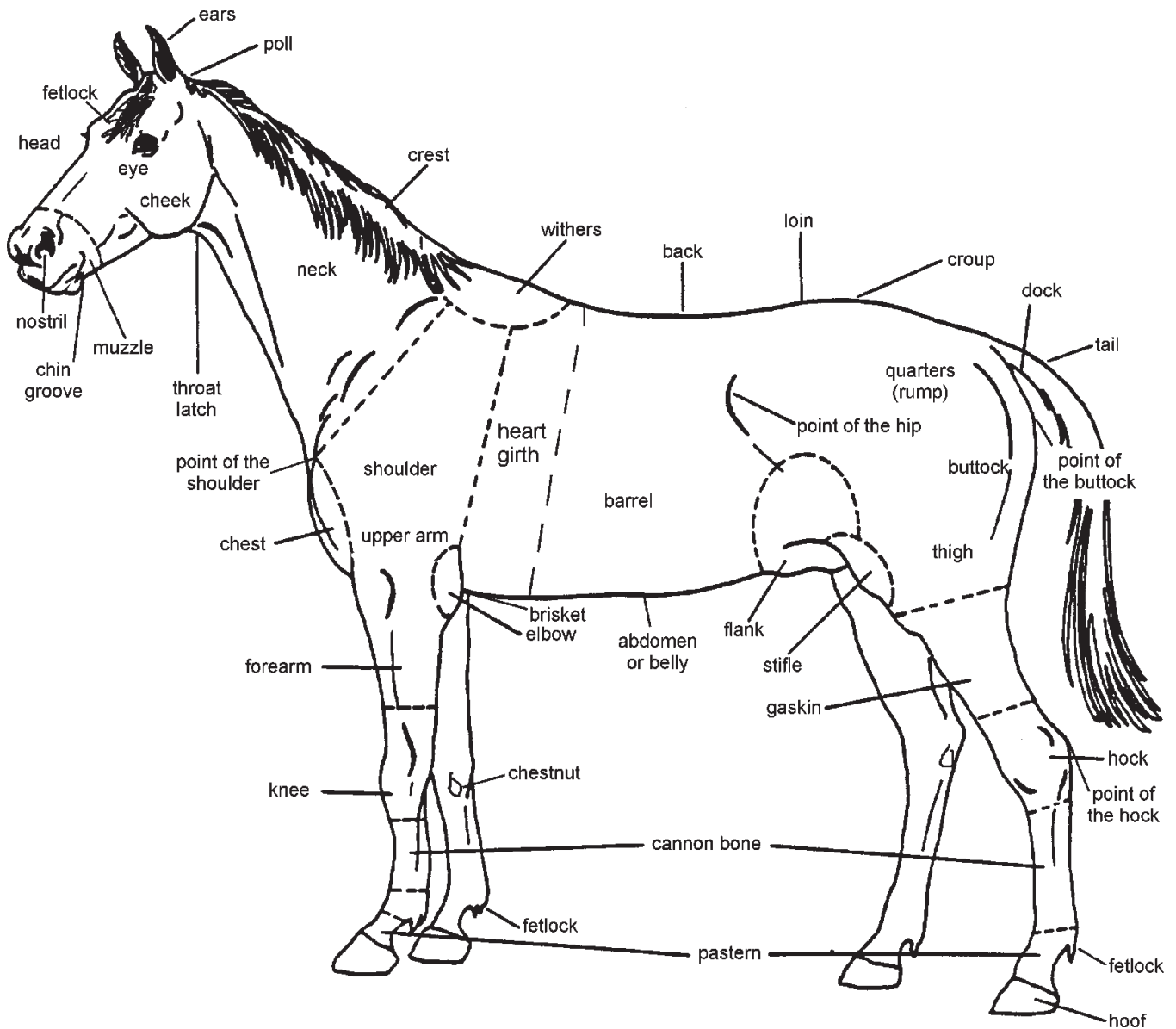
Judging the Conformation of Horses

As you work through judging horses, you will accomplish these objectives:

1. Become more familiar with the terminology used when judging horses.
2. Improve your ability to describe the ideal horse.
3. Learn how to choose the most ideal horse from a group of horses.

The first step toward accomplishing these objectives is to learn the terminology used to describe the parts of the horse.

Parts of the Horse



Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Colours and Markings

Colours

Horses come in many colours and with many different markings. The colours of horses and their corresponding descriptions are as follows:

Bay



Body colour ranges from tan, through red, to reddish-brown.



All points are black, including muzzle.



Lower legs are usually black.

Black



Body colour is true black without any light areas.



Mane and tail are black.

Brown



Body colour is brown or black with light areas at the muzzle, eyes, flank, and inside the upper legs.



Mane and tail are black.



Usually black on lower legs.

Chestnut



Body colour is dark red or reddish-brown.



Mane and tail are usually the same colour as the body, but may be flaxen.

Sorrel



Body colour is reddish or copper-red.



Mane and tail are usually the same colour as the body, but may be flaxen.



Sorrel and Chestnut are often intermixed.

White



A true white horse is born white and remains white throughout its life.



A white horse has snow white hair, pink skin and normally has brown eyes.

Albino



All white horse with pink eyes due to lack of pigmentation in the skin.




4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)




Colours and Markings (continued)

Colours (continued)

Dun

-  Body colour is yellowish or gold.
-  Mane and tail may be black, brown, red, yellow, white, or mixed.
-  Often has dorsal stripe, zebra stripes on legs, and transverse stripe over withers.



Buckskin

-  A form of dun with body colour yellowish or gold.
-  Mane and tail are black.
-  Usually black on lower legs and dorsal stripe.

Palomino

-  Body colour is a golden yellow.
-  Mane and tail are white.


Grey

-  Mixture of white and black hairs.
-  Usually born solid coloured or almost solid coloured and becomes lighter with age.



Roan

-  Any coat colour except black mixed with white hairs.
-  Present at birth and does not change as the horse ages.



Appaloosa

-  Irregular spotting of black (or brown) and white, either over the loin and hips or the entire body.

Pinto

-  Body is mixed with white and another basic body colour in distinct patterns as though paint had been splashed on the horse.
-  The two recognized colour patterns are overo and tobiano.

Paint

-  Body dark (black, chestnut, bay) with white.
-  The ideal mixture is 50/50 although paints are often more white than dark.

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Colours and Markings (continued)

Colours (continued)

Tobiano

- U White markings starting on back or sides; markings are generally quite large and distinct.
- U Legs are often mainly white.
- U Head usually dark.

Overo

- U White markings originate on belly and travel upwards not crossing the back.
- U Usually smaller patches with some shading on edges.
- U Legs, back, mane and tail are usually dark with white stocking.
- U Face may be white with blue eyes.

Definitions

Flaxen

- U Straw yellow or dirty white colour caused by a mixture of dark hair in with the white.

Dorsal Stripe

- U Darker line found down the backbone.

Transverse Stripe

- U Dark stripe that runs across the withers.

Zebra Stripe

- U Dark stripes running horizontally on the forearm, knees and cannon.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Colours and Markings (continued)

Markings

In the following diagrams note the markings commonly found on the face and legs of the horse, and the terms which are used to describe them.



Both Heels



Inside Heel

Outside Heel



Heel



Coronet Heel



Coronet



Half Pastern



Pastern



Half Stocking



Stocking



Stripe



Blaze



Bald Face



Snip



Star

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Balance

Definitions

Balance

U All of the parts of the body are in correct proportion to each other, resulting in a pleasing appearance.

Symmetry

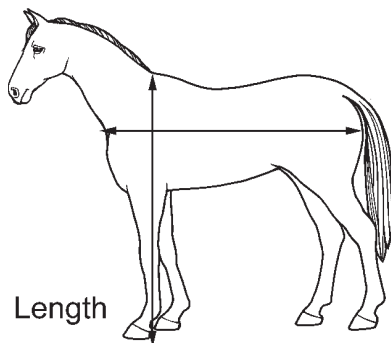
U When viewing the horse from the front and rear, divide the horse in half down the spinal column and down the middle of each limb.

U Each half should be a “*mirror image*” of the other.



Symmetry

Methods of Determining Balance



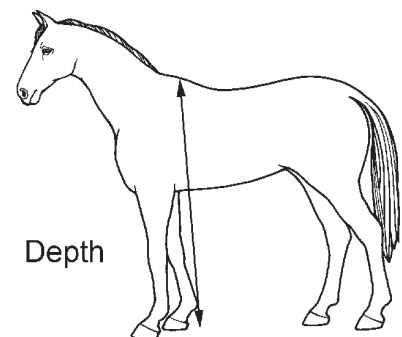
Length

Length = Height

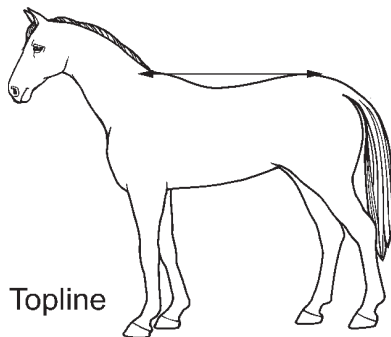
The length of the horse from the point of shoulder to the point of buttock should be equal to the height of the horse from the top of the withers to the ground.

Length of Foreleg = Depth of Heartgirth

The length of the foreleg from the ground to the elbow should be equal to the depth of the heartgirth from the elbow to the top of the withers.



Depth



Topline

Levelness of Topline

The point of the croup should be at the same height as the top of the withers.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

What is muscling?

Muscle is the tissue which contracts and relaxes to cause your horse to move. Muscling refers to how well you can see the length, definition and volume of muscling in your horse.

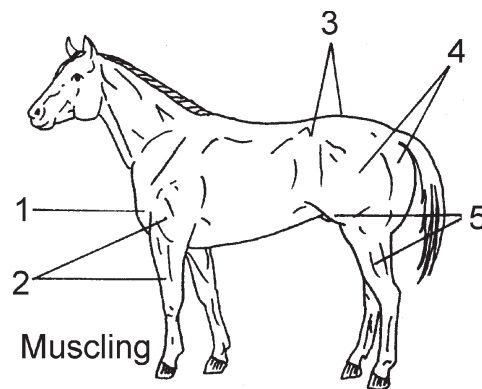
Muscling

- Length** U Long, smooth muscles are more desirable than short, bunched muscles. Long muscles give the horse a longer stride and more endurance. Bunched muscles tire more quickly and give your horse less endurance.
- Definition** U You can easily see the outline or definition of each muscle beneath the skin of your horse.
- Volume** U This is the amount of muscle. The greater the volume or amount of muscle, the greater the strength of the horse.

Where do you look for muscling?

Evaluate the amount of muscling and determine if it is desirable. To find the amount of muscling on your horse, look in these areas:

1. Chest
2. Shoulder, arm and forearm
3. Loin and croup
4. Buttock and thigh
5. Stifle and gaskin



How does muscling differ from one horse to the next?

Well-defined muscling should be characteristic of all horses. Volume, length and definition of muscling should be uniform from the front to the rear and from one side to the other side of the horse. The length and volume of muscling that the horse should possess is determined by the body type and the breed of the horse.

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Muscling (continued)

Draft Type - Clydesdale, Shire, Belgian, Percheron, and so on

Draft type horses require a greater volume of muscling compared to horses with other body types because they are bred for strength and power. Thus, volume of muscling is of greater importance than length of muscling.

Stock Type - Quarter Horse, Paint, Appaloosa, and so on

In the stock type horse, length and volume of muscling are of similar importance. Volume of muscle is required for power and quick starts, while length of muscling is required for speed and suppleness. The length and volume of muscling in Stock Type horses is intermediate to the Draft and Hunter, Saddle, Pony types.

Hunter, Saddle, Pony Types - Thoroughbred, Arabian, Morgan, Saddlebred, Welsh, Shetland Pony, and so on

These body types have the least volume but the greatest length of muscling. Length is needed for speed, endurance and suppleness in these type of horses. Length of muscling is more important than volume of muscling.

Sex Stallions

- U Should look masculine.
- U When compared to geldings and mares, stallions should show:
 - heavier, more powerful muscling
 - a larger and broader head
 - a larger muzzle and jaw
 - a thicker more muscular neck
 - more substance for larger bone.

Mares

- U Should look feminine.
- U Compared to stallions and geldings, mares should show more refinement about the head and neck.
- U Compared to stallions, mares are not heavily muscled and have less substance of bone.

Geldings

- U Should look more masculine than the mare, but much less masculine than the stallion.
- U The volume of muscling and substance of bone in a gelding will be about the same as in the mare.

Note: a lack of masculinity in the stallion or a lack of femininity in the mare may indicate a reduced ability to reproduce.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Smoothness and Bloom

Smoothness 

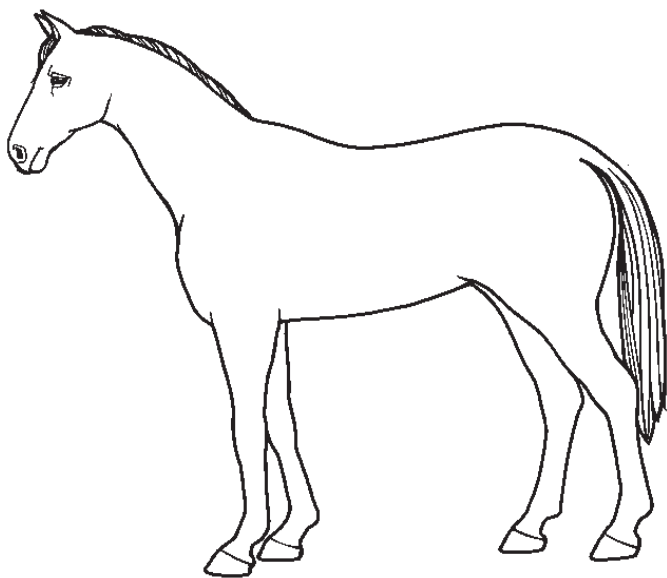
All parts of the horse's body should blend together smoothly, while having adequate muscle definition. The horse should be in good condition - neither so underweight that the ribs show, nor so overweight that there is little muscle definition.

Bloom 

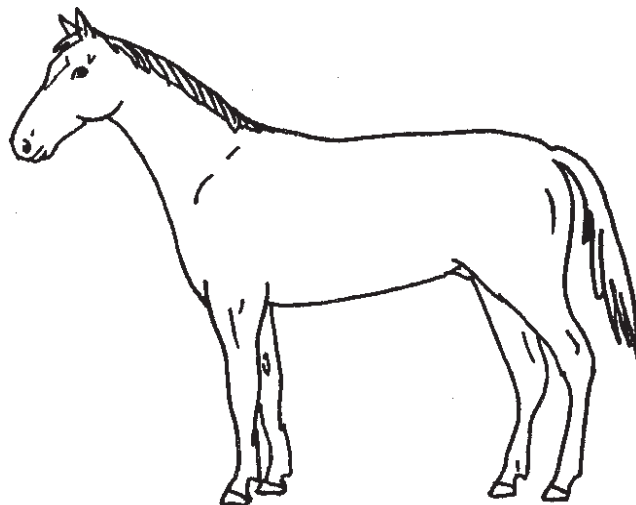
The horse's haircoat should be short and shiny. This is referred to as bloom. A dull, shaggy coat indicates that the horse may not be healthy.

The Ideal Horse

The ideal horse has specific characteristics. You will find the following characteristics in the conformation of the ideal horse. Work through these characteristics to learn more about what the ideal horse looks like.



Ideal





Poor

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)


The Ideal Horse (continued)

The Forelimbs


Side View  A line dropped perpendicular to the ground, or a plumb line, should pass through the center of the knee, cannon and fetlock, and touch the back of the heel.

Front View  A plumb line dropped from the point of the shoulder should pass through the center of the forearm, knee, cannon, fetlock, pastern and hoof.


 The knees and toes should point straight forward.


 The feet should be as far apart on the ground as the limbs are at the point of the shoulder.

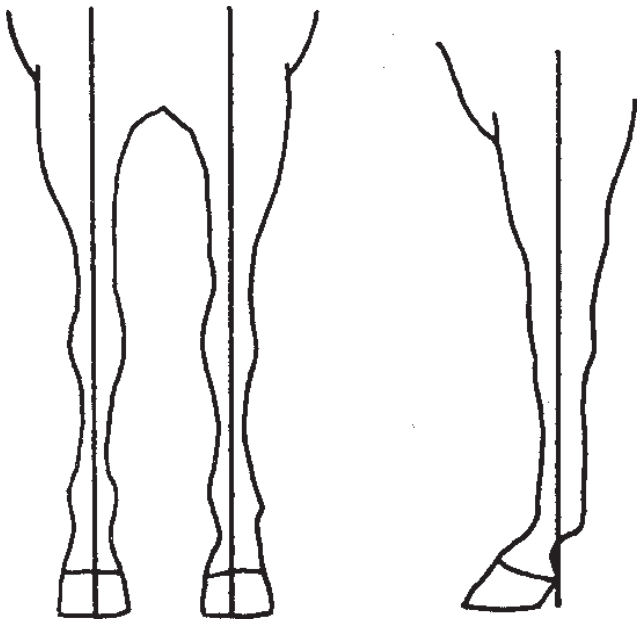
General Structure of the Forelimbs

Forearm  Long with well-defined muscling that ties in close to the knee. The muscle is large at the top of the forearm and tapers as it approaches the knee. Draft and Stock type horses will have more volume of muscle in the forearm when compared to the Hunter, Saddle and Pony types.

Knee  Large, flat and clean-cut.

Cannon  Shorter than the forearm and is wide with well-defined tendons along the back of the cannon when viewed from the side.

Pastern  And hoof have an ideal angle of 45 degrees. The hoof should be durable and of appropriate size for the horse.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

The Ideal Horse

(continued)

The Hindlimbs

Side View



A plumb line dropped from the point of the buttock should pass along the back of the hock, cannon and fetlock, and strike the ground 7.5 to 10 cm (3-4 inches) behind the heel.

Rear View



A plumb line dropped from the point of the buttock should pass through the center of the hock, cannon, fetlock, pastern and hoof. The feet should be as far apart at the ground as they are at the hock.

General Structure of the Hindlimbs

Hock



Is large, deep, wide, clean and well-defined.

Cannon



Is shorter than the distance from the stifle to the hock. Is wide with well-defined tendons along the back of the cannon when viewed from the side.

Pastern

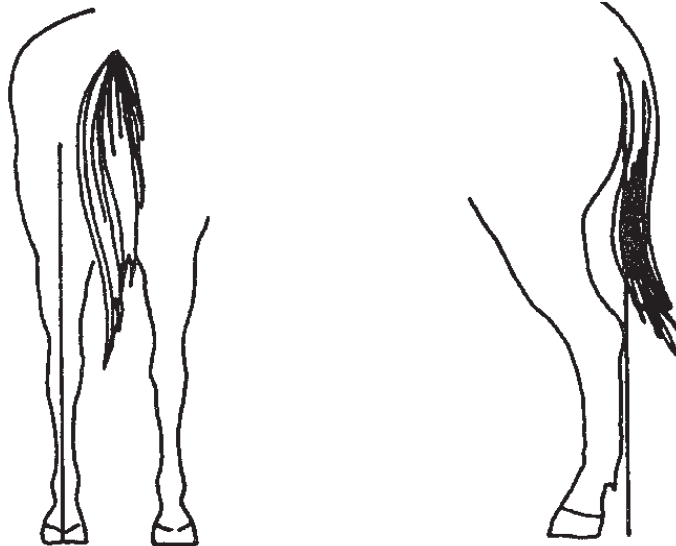


Has an ideal angle of 45-50 degrees.

Hoof



Should be durable and of appropriate size for the horse.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

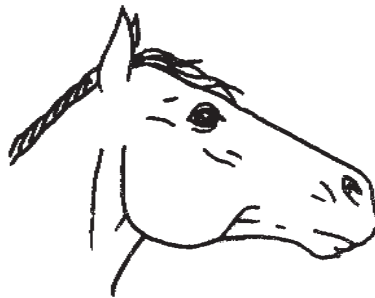
The Ideal Horse (continued)

Head (from the front)

- Shape** U Is triangular with wide set eyes, tapering to a reasonably sized muzzle.
- Eyes** U Are large and set out on the sides of the head.
- Nostrils** U Are large and flaring.
- Ears** U Are clean cut and in proportion to the size of the head.

Head (from the side)

- Shape** U Is triangular and deep from the poll to the jaw, tapering to a reasonable size muzzle.
- U The bridge of nose may be straight or slightly dished.
- U The throatlatch is clean and free from excess fat.



Good



Poor

Neck

- Length** U Is long from the poll to the withers.
- Shape** U Is clean and trim, arching from poll to withers.
- Set** U Is high and smooth into the top of the withers and high into the chest above the point of the shoulder.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

The Ideal Horse (continued)

Withers

Shape



Is long, typing smoothly into the back, and high enough to hold the saddle on securely.

Shoulder



Length and angle of shoulder are long, and sloping about 45 degrees to aid in shock absorption.

Chest and Ribs (Barrel)

Size



The chest is deep and wide when viewed from the front. The ribs are well-sprung and deep. This conformation provides room for the maximum function of the heart and lungs.



Good



Poor

Back and Loin (Coupling)

Size





Is short and wide over the top, and is well-muscled. The only skeletal support in the loin is provided by the spinal column. Therefore, adequate muscling is necessary for additional strength. Inadequate muscling and a long coupling often result in a sagging, weak topline, often referred to as a swayback.


Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

The Ideal Horse (continued)



Hip and Croup

- Length**  Is long and is well-muscled.
- Shape**  So the point of the croup is directly over the point of the hip. The croup should slope gently to the tail head.

Hindquarters (from the side)

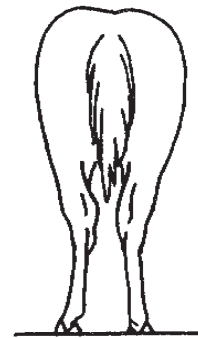
- Size**  The hindquarters are deep and well-muscled.

Hindquarters (from the rear)

- Size**  The hindquarters are deep and well-muscled. Muscling volume, length and definition depend on body type. Both the inside and outside of the legs should be well-muscled. The gaskin muscle should tie high into the stifle and deep into the hock.
- Shape**  Is well-rounded over the croup. The width at the stifle should be at least as great as the width at the point of the hip.



Good



Poor

Way of Going or Travel

The way the horse travels is the way the horse moves. Ideally, both the front and hind legs should move forward in a straight line, without any deviation to the inside or outside. This is the most efficient way of moving. It places the least stress on the limbs. The horse should also move with a long, fluid, ground clearing stride rather than a short, choppy stride. A horse that drags the toes will kick up dust when he moves.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

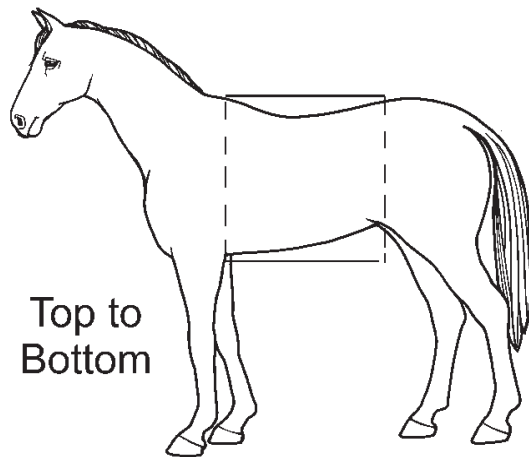
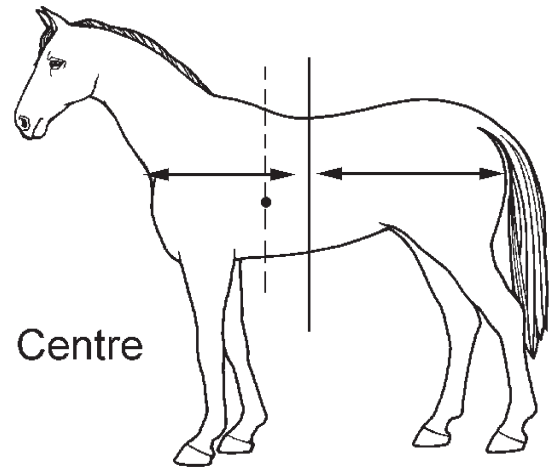
Additional Methods of Determining Balance in the Horse

Balance and Symmetry

Center of the Horse

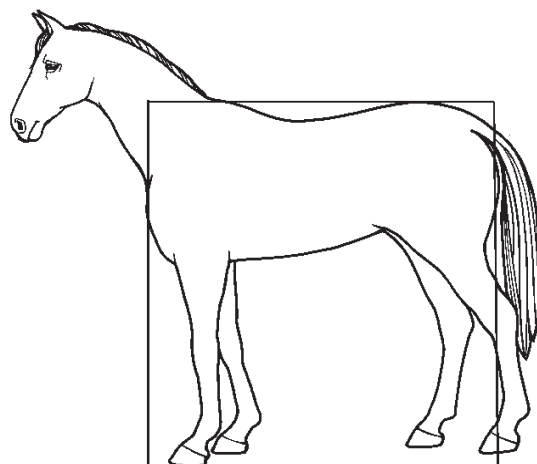
When the horse is divided through the center of the back, the forequarter (not including the head and neck), should be equal in size to the hindquarter.

Note that the center of gravity is different from the center of the horse. Because of the weight of the head and neck, the center of gravity is just behind the elbow when the horse is standing. When the horse is divided through the middle of the back, approximately 60 per cent of the weight is carried on the front legs, because of the additional weight of the head and neck.



Top to Bottom Line Ratio

The well balanced horse has a shorter top line (from the point of the withers to the point of the hip in comparison to a longer bottom line (from the point of the elbow to the stifle).



Square

Draw a box around the horse so that:

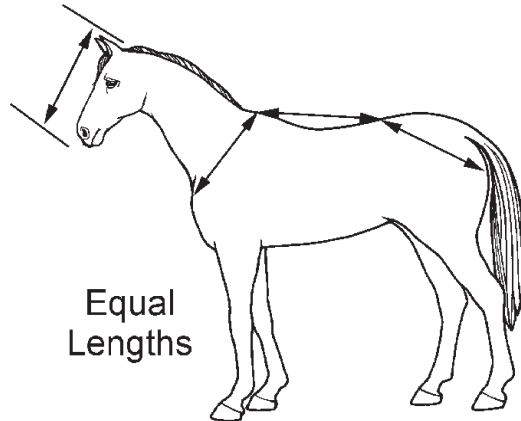
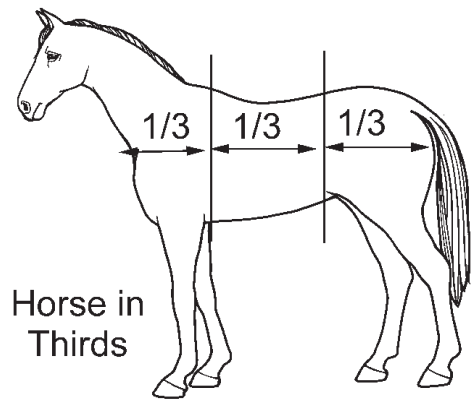
1. The width of the box is equal to the length of the horse from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock.
2. The height of the box is equal to the height of the horse from the top of the withers to the ground.
3. On a well balanced horse, this box will form a square - all sides are equal.

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Balance and Symmetry (continued)

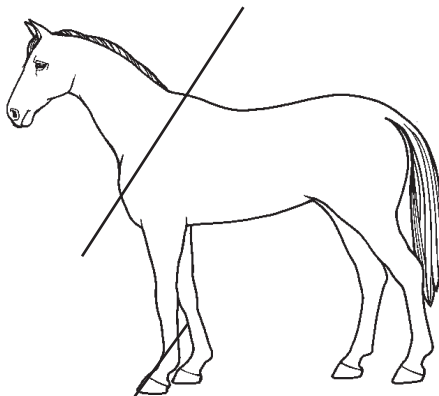
Divide the Horse in Thirds

Divide the horse into thirds by dropping lines down from the top of the withers and the point of the hip. The length of each of these three segments should be the same.



Equal Lengths

In the well balanced horse, the head, neck, shoulder, topline and hip lengths should be approximately equal.



Parallel

In the well-balanced horse, the slope of the pastern and the slope from the point of shoulder to the withers should be parallel. They should both have a slope of 45 degrees.

Quality and Refinement

Refinement is a general lack of coarseness.

The factors closely associated with quality and refinement are:

1. A refinement of body parts - the horse should be smooth and clean-cut, not coarse.
2. Tendons and joints should be well-defined, not fleshy.
3. Short, shiny haircoat.
4. Tight, thin skin.
5. Hard, smooth, durable hooves.
6. Obvious sex character.




4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)





All horses fit into one of the five following body types. Each of these types has specific characteristics which separate it from the next body type.

Body Types



Draft Type

-  Clydesdale, Shire, Belgian, Percheron, and so on.
-  Heavily muscled, large framed, large boned.
-  Used primarily for plowing, pulling, driving and other hard work.




Stock Type

-  Quarter Horse, Paint, Appaloosa, and so on.
-  Well-muscled, deep bodied.
-  Center of gravity is close to the ground.
-  Used primarily for short-distance racing, roping, reining, cutting, pleasure and gymkhana events.




Saddle (Gaited) Type - Arabian, Morgan, Saddlebred, and so on

-  Longer muscled, longer neck and body, more refinement, higher set arching neck, higher tail carriage, often more animated movement.
-  Used primarily for pleasure, park and driving.

Hunter Type

-  Thoroughbred, Warmbloods, and so on.
-  Larger, longer bodies, deeper hearted, longer muscled.
-  Used primarily for long-distance racing, jumping, cross-country, three day eventing, dressage, pleasure.

Pony Type

-  Welsh, Shetland Pony, and so on.
-  Usually 14.2 hands or less, usually resemble Stock Type or Saddle Type breeds, generally shorter neck and body.
-  Used primarily for children's mounts and driving.

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults)

(continued)

Head

Roman Nose

- U The bridge of the nose has a rounded or convex shape when viewed from the side.
- U Restricts the horses's frontal vision.

Pig Eye

- U Small eyes which are set too far back into the head.
- U Restricts vision, especially to the rear.
- U Horse often has a nervous or unruly disposition.

Platter Jaw

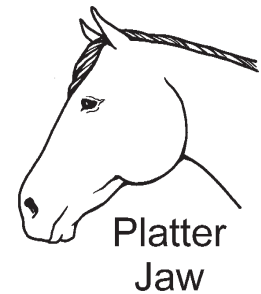
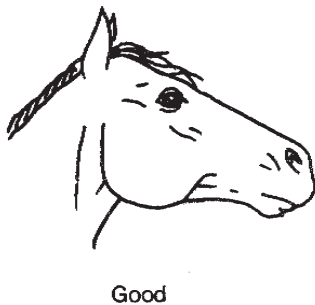
- U Excessively large jaw.
- U Most commonly found in Stock Type breeds.
- U Reduces the ability of the horse to flex at the poll.
- U May restrict breathing, blood ciruclation and swallowing.

Parrot Mouth

- U Top jaw is longer than bottom jaw.

Overshot

- U Bottom jaw is longer than top jaw.



Neck

Ewe Neck

- U Neck appears to be "turned over".
- U Restricts flexation at the poll.
- U Horse tends to throw head upward.
- U Restricts vision.

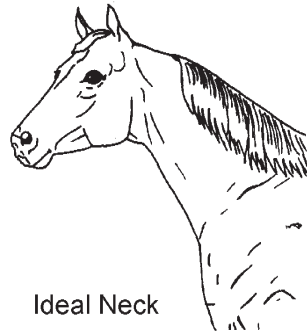
4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

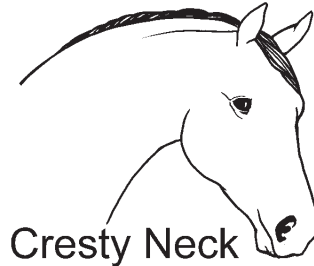
Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults) (continued)

Cresty Neck

- U Excess fat deposits on the crest of the neck.
- U Increase the weight carried on the forelegs.



Ideal Neck



Cresty Neck

Shoulder

Steep Shoulder

- U Shoulder angle steeper than 50 degrees.
- U Decreases the length of stride.
- U Increases concussion or pressure on the forelegs.

Chest

Narrow Chest

- U Legs are too close together.
- U Legs may interfere when horse travels.

Extra-Wide Chest

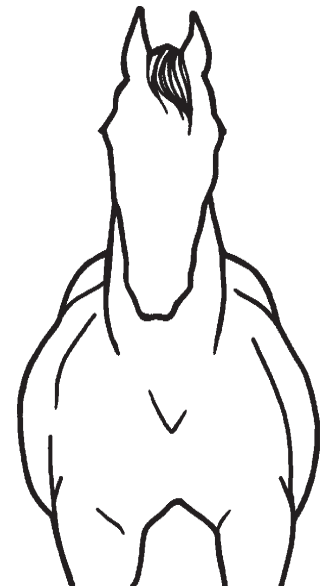
- U Legs set too far apart.
- U Causes a laboring, waddling stride.



Ideal Chest



Narrow Chest



Wide Chest

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults) (continued)

Topline

Mutton Withers

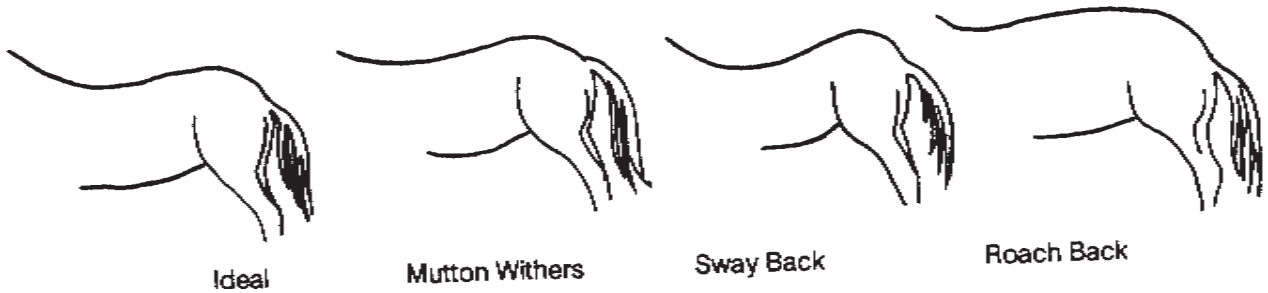
- U Low, wide withers.
- U Withers are prone to injury if saddle slides forward.
- U Hard to keep the saddle in place - prone to slip to one side.

Sway Back

- U Weak topline.
- U Usually seen in older horses.
- U Usually seen in horses with long backs and, or loins.
- U Restricts ability to pull legs forward beneath the hindquarters.

Roach Back

- U Loin has a rounded (convex) appearance when viewed from the side.
- U Restricts flexibility.



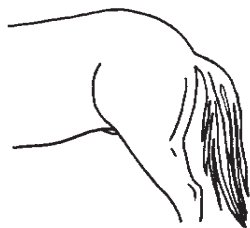
Hip and Croup

Goose Rump

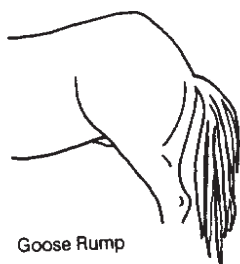
- U Hip is too steep when viewed from the side.
- U Decreases the length of stride and speed.
- U Increases concussion on the hindlegs.

Rafter Hip

- U When viewed from the rear, the width at the point of the hip is greater than the width at the stifle.
- U The hip is too flat over the top.
- U Indicates a lack of muscular development.
- U Horse may interfere during travelling due to lack of muscular support.



Good Rump

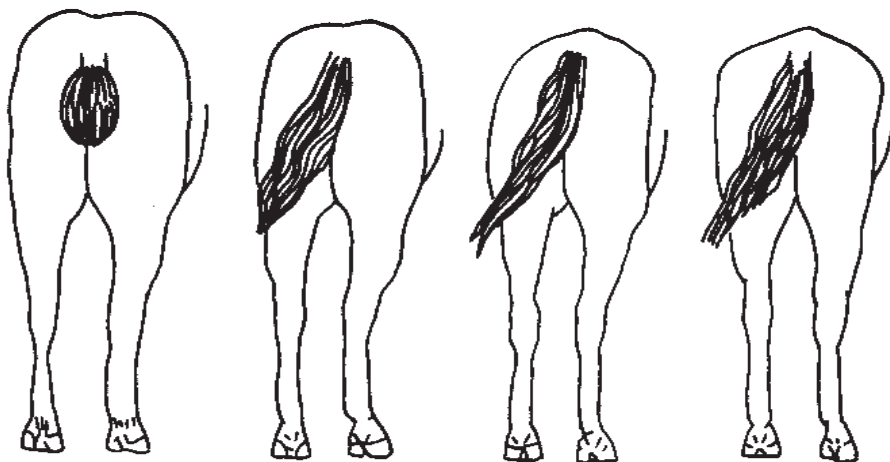


Goose Rump

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults) (continued)










Ideal Broad Double Hindquarters of a Draft Horse

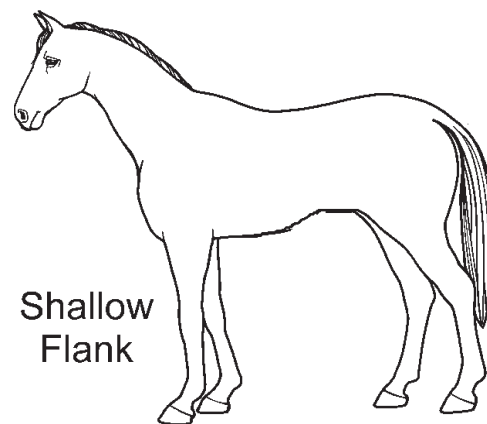
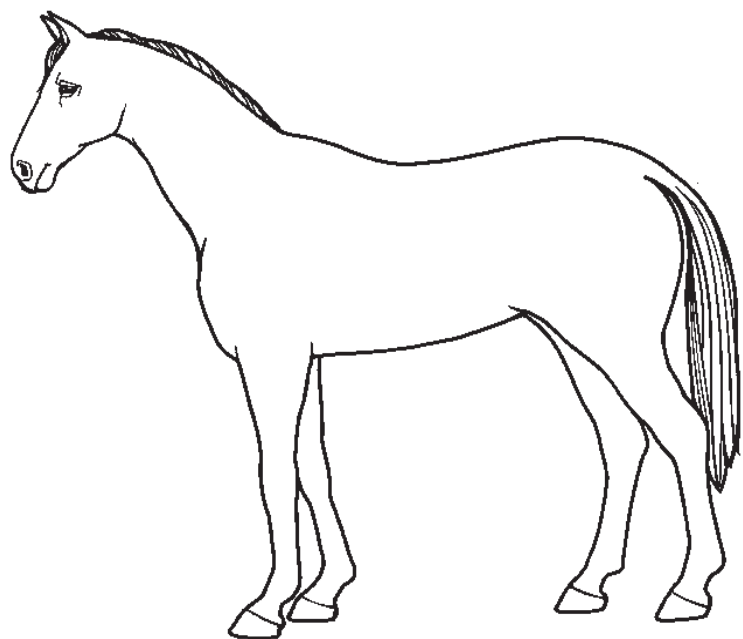
Ideal "Pear Shape" of the Quarterhorse

Normal Hindquarters with square thighs

Rafter Hip

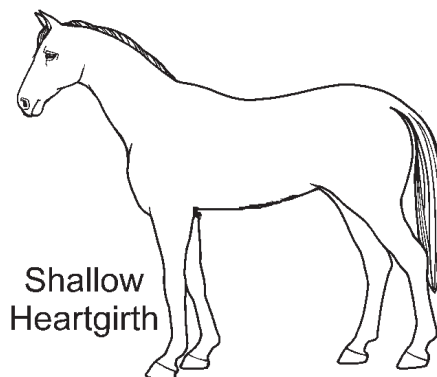
Heartgirth and Flank

- Shallow**  Depth from withers to elbow is less than the length from elbow to ground.
- Heartgirth**  Restricts the capacity for heart and lungs.
 May decrease endurance of the horse.
- Shallow Flank**  Pronounced narrowing in the flank region.
(cut up in the  flank)  Decreases capacity of digestive system.
 Decreases the foal carrying capacity in mares.



Shallow Flank

Ideal



Shallow Heartgirth

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults)

(continued)

Feet and Legs

Two or more defects in the feet and legs may appear together. For example: buck knees and bench knees, base narrow and toe out, and so on.

Front Leg Defects - Viewing from the Side

Buck Knees (Over at the Knee)

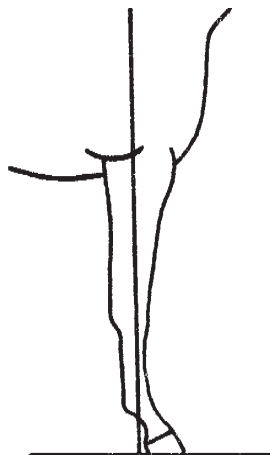
- U The knee is forward of a line that bisects (divides in half) the foreleg.
- U This horse will be susceptible to bowed tendons

Calf Knees (Back at the Knee)

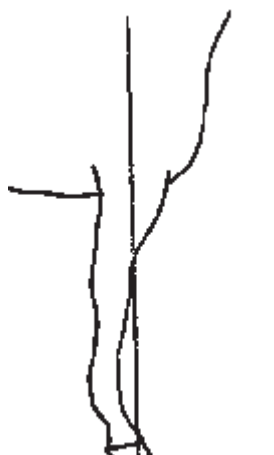
- U The knee is behind a line that bisects the foreleg.
- U Places excess stress on the front of the knee and strain on the tendons.
- U This horse will be susceptible to chip fractures of the knee and bowed tendons.
- U More serious than buck knees.

Tied-In at the Knee

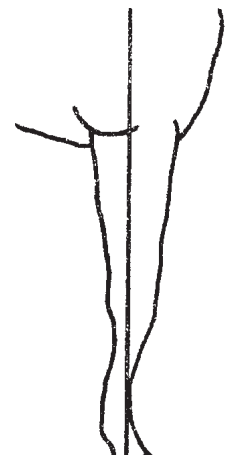
- U The flexor tendon appears to be too close to the cannon bone just below the knee.
- U This horse will be susceptible to bowed tendons.



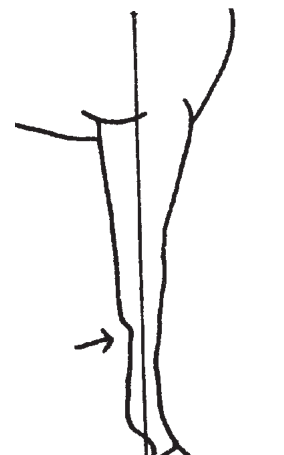
Ideal Front Leg



Calf Knees



Buck Knees



Tied-In at the Knee

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults) (continued)

Front Leg Defects - Viewing from the Front

Knock Knees

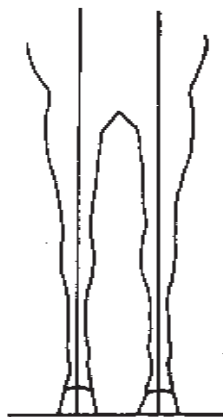
- U The knees lie inside parallel lines bisecting the forelegs.
- U Places excess stress on the outer knee and strain on the inside ligaments of the forelegs.

Bowlegs (Brandy-Legged)

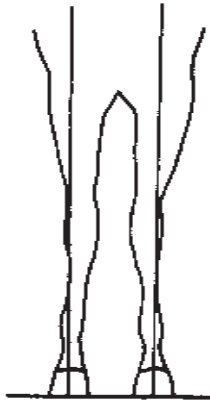
- U The knees lie outside parallel lines bisecting the forelegs.
- U Places excess stress on the inner knee and strain on the outside ligaments of the forelegs.

Bench Knees

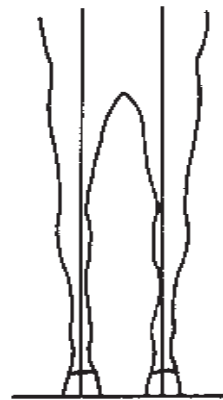
- U The cannon bone is offset to the outside of the knee.
- U Places more stress on the inside splint bones.
- U More susceptible to splints or knee chips.



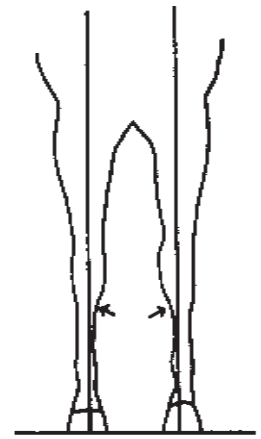
ideal



Knock Knees



Bow Legs



Bench Knees



Sickle Hocks

Hind Leg Defects - Viewing from the Side

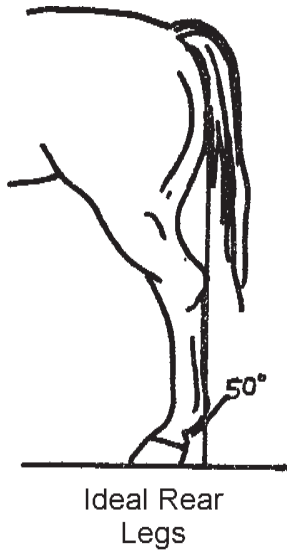
Sickle Hocks

- U Excessive angulation of the hock joint.
- U The horse appears to be standing under from the hock down.
- U Places excess strain on the planter ligament.
- U Susceptible to curbs.

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults)

(continued)



Hind Leg Defects - Viewing from the Side

Post-Legged

- ⊖ Insufficient angulation of the hock joint.
- ⊖ The entire leg appears too straight.
- ⊖ The hindleg is usually set ahead of a line dropped from the point of the buttock.
- ⊖ The pasterns are usually also too straight.



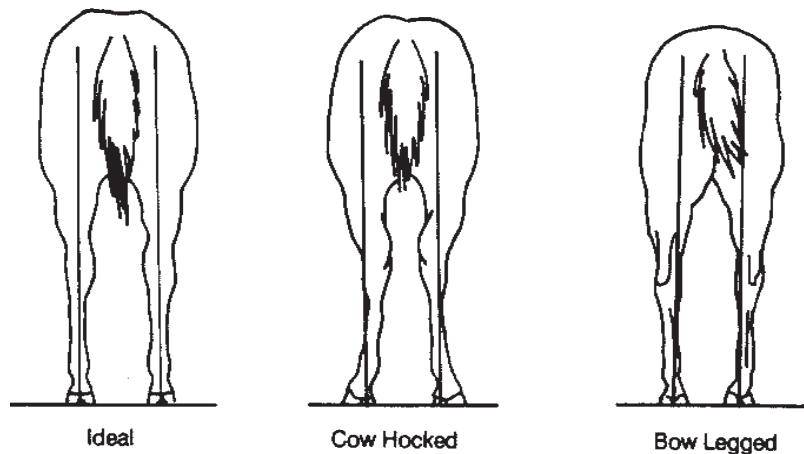
Hind Leg Defects - Viewing from the Rear

Cow Hocks

- ⊖ The hocks are too close together and point toward one another, causing the feet to be widely separated and often point outward.
- ⊖ One of the worst hind leg defects.
- ⊖ Place excess stress on the hock joint and strain on the ligaments.
- ⊖ Susceptible to bone spavins, curbs or thoroughpins.

Bow-Legged

- ⊖ The hocks lie outside parallel lines bisecting the hind legs.
- ⊖ May cause interference because horse moves narrower at the ground than at the hock.
- ⊖ Places excess stress on the hock joint and strain on the ligaments.
- ⊖ Susceptible to bog spavins, curbs or thoroughpins.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults) (continued)



Ideal Front Legs

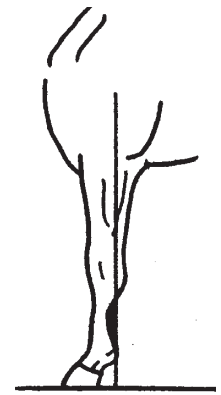


Ideal Rear Legs

Front and, or Hind Leg Defects - Viewing from the Side

Front Leg - Standing Under (Camped Under)

- U The entire foreleg from the elbow down is too far under the body.
- U Place excess weight on the forelegs.



Camped Out

Rear Legs - Standing Under (Camped Under)

- U The entire hindleg is placed too far forward under the body.
- U The horse may also be sickle-hocked or post-legged; stress is the same as for sickle hocks or post-legged, respectively.



Camped Under

Front Legs - Camped Out

- U The entire foreleg from the elbow down is too far forward.
- U Places excess stress on the front of the knee and strain on the ligaments and tendons.



Camped Out

Rear Legs - Camped Out

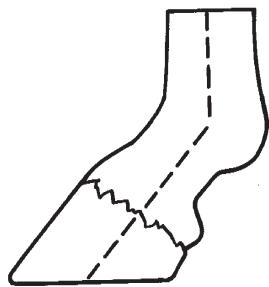
- U The entire hindleg is placed too far backward.
- U The horse may also have steep rear pasterns and, or be sickle hocked; stress is the same as for sickle hocks.



Camped Under

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

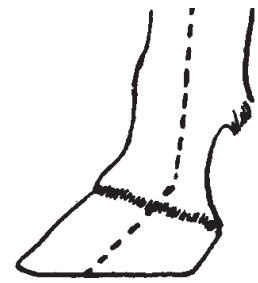
Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults) (continued)



Correct Pasterns

Steep Pasterns

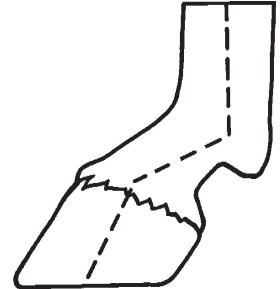
- Often accompanied by a steep shoulder.
- Pastern length may be short or long.
- Increases the effect of concussion on the fetlock joint, pastern joint and navicular bone.
- Called a "club foot" if the hoof angle is also too steep.
- Predisposed to osselets, ringbone and navicular disease.



Steep Pasterns

Weak Pastern

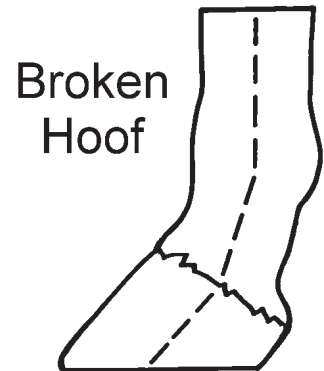
- Usually too long and sloping.
- In extreme cases, the fetlock may touch the ground when the horse travels.
- Predisposed to injury of the tendons, ligaments and the fetlock joint.



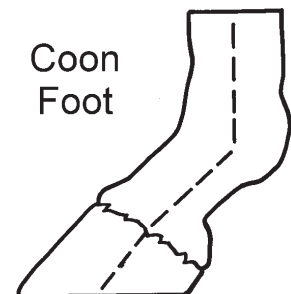
Weak Pasterns

Broken Hoof or Pastern Axis (Angle)

- The angle of the pastern and the angle of the hoof are not the same.
- When the pastern is more sloped than the front wall of the hoof, it is called a "coon foot".
- Places additional strain on the tendons and ligaments.



Broken Hoof



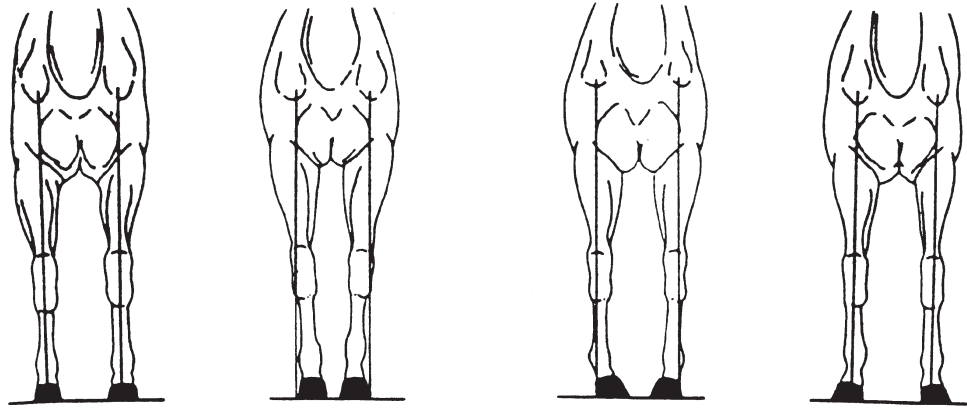
Coon Foot

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses

(continued)

Conformation - Deviations from Ideal (basic faults) (continued)



Ideal

Base Narrow

Pigeon Toed

Toes Out

Front and, or Hind Leg Defects - Viewing from the Front, Rear

Base-Narrow

U The forelegs (hindlegs) are closer together at the ground than at the top of the leg.

Base-Wide

U The forelegs (hindlegs) are farther apart at the ground than at the top of the leg.

U May be accompanied by toe-in or toe-out (most common) conformation.

U Places more weight and stress on the inside of the legs.

U Predisposed to windpuffs, ringbone and sidebone.

Toe-In (Pigeon Toed)

U The toes point toward each other.

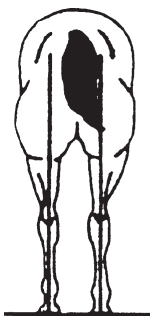
U Usually seen with base-narrow conformation.

Toe-Out (Splay-Footed)

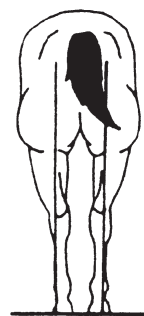
U The toes point away from each other.

U May be seen with either base-narrow or base-wide conformation.

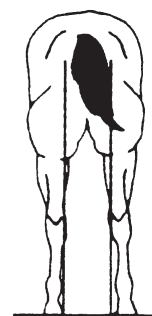
U Usually present if the horse is cow-hocked.



Ideal



Stands Close



Stands Wide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Travel (Way of Going) - Deviations From Ideal (continued)

Viewing from the Front/Rear

Padding (Winging Out)

- U Throwing the feet woutward while in motion.
- U Usually associated with toe-in conformation.

Winging (Winging In, Dishing)

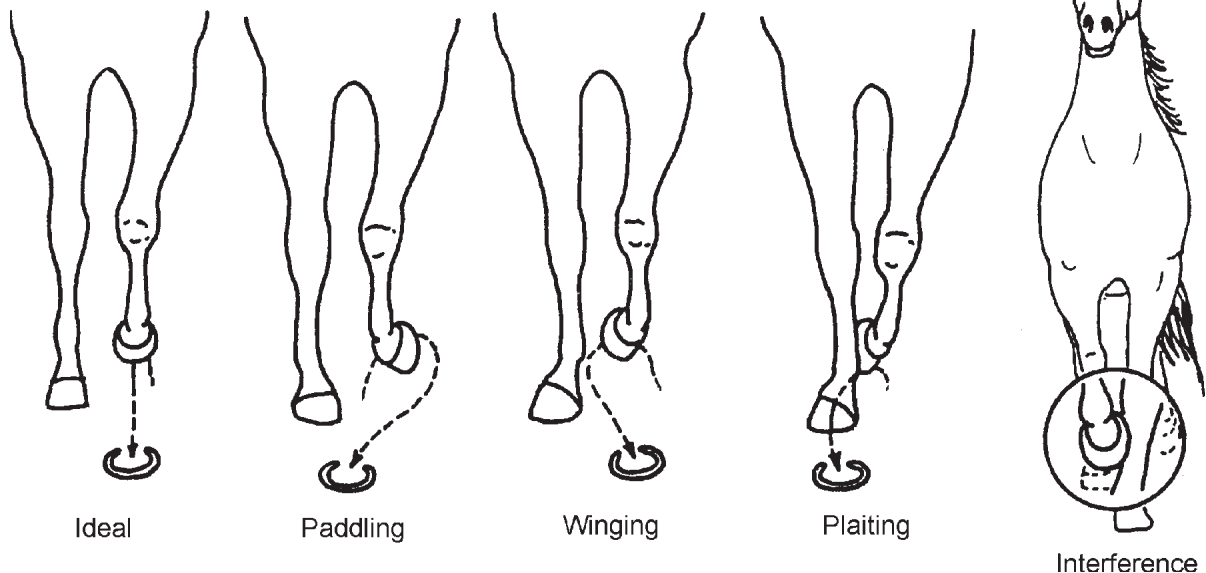
- U Throwing the feet inward while in motion.
- U Usually associated with toe-out conformation.
- U More serious than paddling since it may lead to interference when the horse moves.

Plaiting (Rope Walking)

- U Twisting of the striding leg around the supporting leg so that the horse appears to be walking a tightrope.
- U One forefoot may appear to land directly in front of the other.
- U More serious than paddling since it may lead to interference and stumbling.

Interference

- U When one foreleg (hindleg) strikes the opposite foreleg (hindleg) while in motion.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

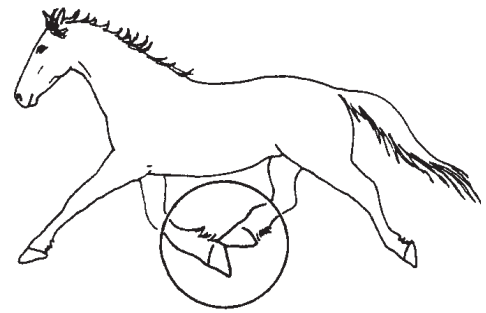
Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Travel (Way of Going) - Deviations From Ideal (continued)

Viewing from the Side

Overreaching

- U The hindfoot strikes the heel of the forefoot before the forefoot leaves the ground.
- U If the horse is shod, the front shoe may be pulled off by the hindfoot.



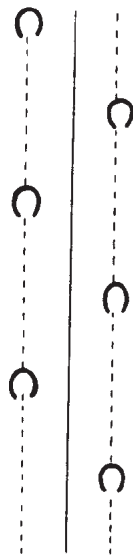
Overreaching

Forging

- U The toe of the hindfoot strikes the sole or shoe of the forefoot while in motion.

Scalping

- U The toe of the forefoot strikes the coronary band of the hindfoot. "Sound" describes a horse that has no problems or injuries that affect its movement and its usefulness. Soundness is extremely important because the efficiency in a horse's performance is dependant on its ability to move. When you look at a horse, it is important to watch for unsoundness and blemishes. The difference between these two terms is in how they affect the horse.



Normal - moves in a straight line



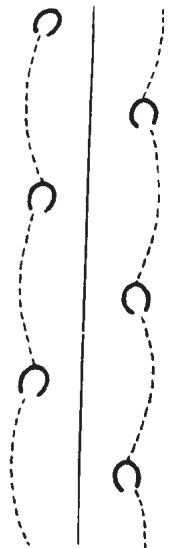
Base Wide



Winging-in and Splayed Feed



Base Narrow



Paddling and Pigeon Toed

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Unsoundnesses and Blemishes

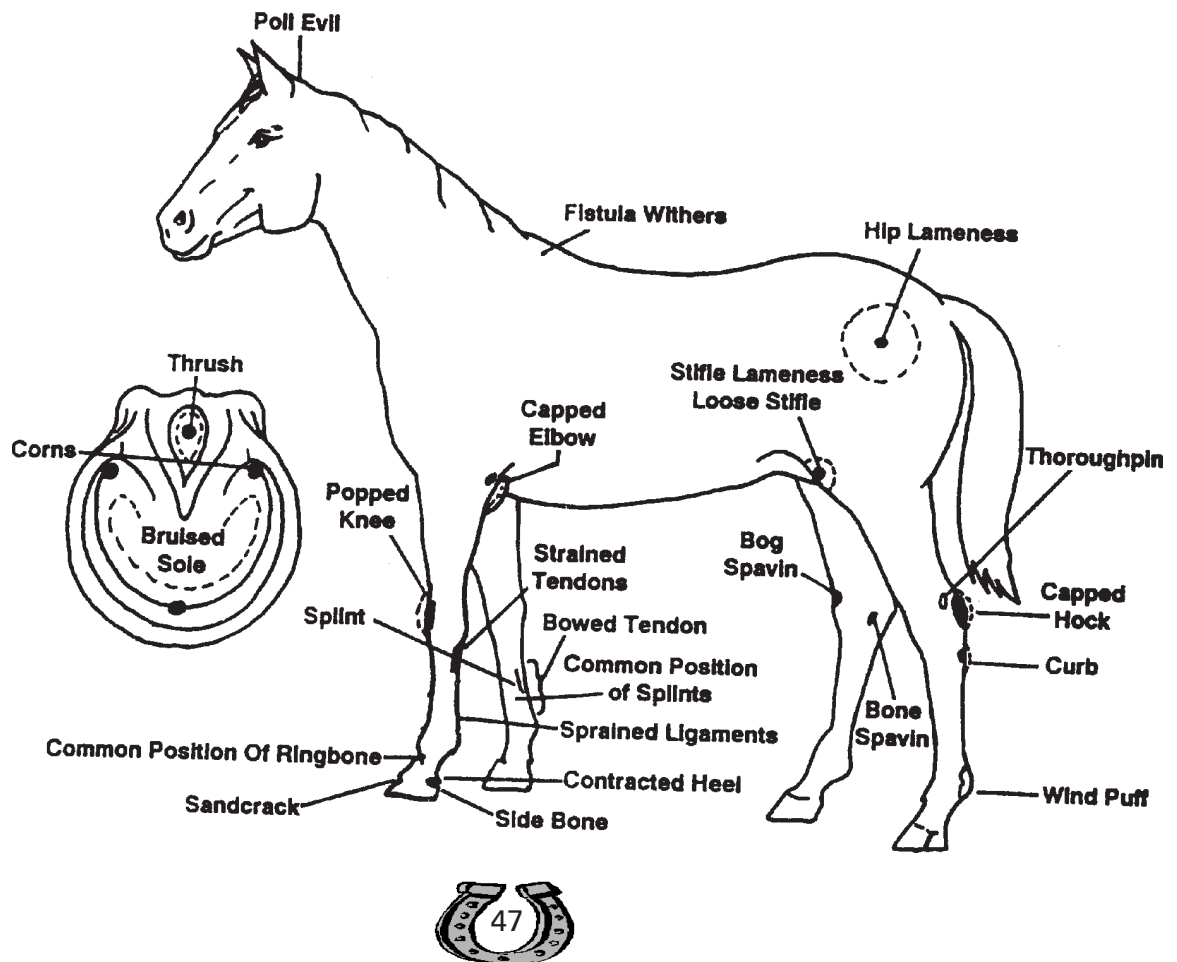
“Sound” describes a horse that has no problems or injuries that affect its movement and its usefulness. Soundness is extremely important because the efficiency in a horse’s performance is dependant on its ability to move. When you look at a horse, it is important to watch for unsoundness and blemishes. The difference between these two terms is in how they affect the horse.

Blemishes are an injury or imperfection which affects the appearance of the horse, but not its usefulness. For example wire cuts, rope burns, and so on.

Unsoundness is an injury or abnormality which affects the value of the horse and its usefulness. They may cause lameness or, in some other way, affect the horse so that it cannot be used.

So while blemishes may not look nice, they don’t affect how useful the horse will be. If your horse has an unsoundness it may often be lame or may be restricted in what you can use it for.

The following is a list and description of common unsoundnesses (**U**) and blemishes (**B**) to watch for when selecting or judging horses. Some are classified as both **B** and **U** because blemishes may be unsoundnesses, depending on their severity.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Unsoundnesses and Blemishes (continued)

Blindness (U) - a complete lack of vision in one or both eyes which may be caused by injury or disease. Blind horses will not react to quick motions near the affected eye(s). Blindness is hereditary.

Bog Spavin (B, U) - a soft filling of the natural depression on the front and inside of the hock joint, usually due to faulty conformation or injury. This rarely causes lameness.

Bone Spavin (Jack Spavin) (U) - a bony enlargement on the inside and front lower hock where the hock tapers into the cannon bone, usually due to faulty conformation or injury. This usually causes lameness.

Bowed Tendon (B, U) - an enlargement of any or all of the tendons and ligaments behind the cannon, caused by excess stretching of the tendon due to stress or faulty conformation. This occurs most commonly in the forelegs.

Bucked Shins (B, U) - inflammation of the periosteum or bone covering on the front side of the cannon bone. This is characterized by a painful swelling along the front of the cannon bone. The horse will usually try to rest the affected leg(s). It is seen most frequently in young horses which are subjected to hard, fast work. Lameness is usually temporary if the horse receives adequate rest.

Capped Elbow (Shoe Boil) (B) - a soft fluid-filled or firm swelling at the point of the elbow.

Capped Hock (B, U) - a firm enlargement on the point of the hock, due to injury. This can, but rarely does cause lameness.

Contracted Heels (B) - the hoof is narrower than normal (contracted), especially at the heels. This is most common in the forelegs and is often due to improper shoeing. This may be an indication of founder or navicular syndrome.

Cresty Neck (B) - the crest of the neck is thickened by excess fat deposits. This condition increases the weight carried on the forelegs and may be an indication of laminitis.

Curb (B, U) - an enlargement of the ligament found on the upper rear part of the cannon below the hock (the planter ligament). This is caused by injury or faulty conformation and may cause lameness.

4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Unsoundnesses and Blemishes (continued)

Fistulous Withers (B, U) - an inflammation of the withers, usually caused by bruising.

Founder (Laminitis) (U) - an inflammation of the sensitive laminae of the foot. It is often characterized by horizontal “founder rings” in the hoof wall and is usually more severe in the front feet. In severe cases, the horse may stand camped out in front to relieve pressure on the front feet.

Heaves/Broken Wind (U) - difficulty in forcing air out of the lungs due to a loss in elasticity in the lungs. This is usually more noticeable after exercise as the horse contracts abdominal muscles forcibly to expel air. This is usually accompanied by a chronic cough, heave line and most often occurs in older horses. The horse is unsound for strenuous work.

Hernia (U) - the protrusion of any internal organ through the body wall, usually seen in the abdominal, umbilical or scrotal areas.

Monkey Mouth (U) - a hereditary condition in which the lower jaw is longer than the upper jaw.

Mutton Withers (B, U) - low, wide withers. This type of withers are prone to injury if the saddle slides forward.

Navicular Syndrome (U) - a chronic degenerative process of the navicular bone, navicular bursa and deep flexor tendon. The primary causes are strenuous work, concussion and poor conformation, e.g. small feet, steep pasterns and shoulders. It rarely affects the hind feet. Horse may point the most affected foot or stand with the forefeet extended forward. The horse will try to land toe first when travelling to avoid frog pressure and concussion, making the stride is short and choppy. No cure exists, but drugs, corrective shoeing and some surgery may be used to ease pain.

Osselets (B, U) - an enlargement, either fluid-filled or bony, on the front side of the fetlock joint, generally slightly off-center of the front of the leg. The horse may travel with a short, choppy stride. It is usually caused by stress and concussion from hard work or faulty conformation. Lameness is usually temporary unless the bone growth interferes with joint mobility.

4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Unsoundnesses and Blemishes (continued)

Parrot Mouth (U) - a hereditary condition in which the lower jaw is shorter than the upper jaw.

Poll Evil (U) - an inflamed area between the ears usually caused by a bruise in the poll region.

Popped Knee (Water on the Knee) (B, U) - a swelling of the front of the knee, usually caused by injury or concussion.

Quittor (B, U) - a deep-seated inflammation of the hoof which drains pus through the coronary band. This is caused by a direct injury such as puncture wounds, cuts, interference, etc. It is usually only a temporary lameness if treated early.

Ringbone (U) - bony enlargement(s) on one or more bones and, or joints of the pastern region. It is most common in the forelegs and is caused by injury or faulty conformation.

Roaring (U) - characterized by a whistling or roaring sound occurring with inspiration, especially with increased respiration from exercise. This is caused by paralysis of the muscles of the larynx, often due to a lengthy respiratory infection. Most cases can be corrected surgically.

Sand Cracks (B) - cracks in the hoof wall. They may start at the coronet and go down, or at the bottom of the hoof wall and go up. This is usually caused by injury or interference, improper hoof care and alternating wet or dry conditions.

Sidebone (B, U) - bony enlargement(s) above and to the rear of the hoof, a result of ossification of ligaments. It is most common in the forelegs and is usually caused by concussion due to faulty conformation.

Splint (B) - a calcification (bone growth) on the inside or outside of the cannon bone, at the junction of the cannon bone and the splint bones. It is most commonly found inside the front cannon and is usually due to injury or faulty conformation. It rarely affects the horse after the initial lameness has disappeared.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Unsoundnesses and Blemishes (continued)

Stifled (U) - also known as Upward Fixation of the Patella. It occurs when the stifle is fully extended. The patella (which corresponds to the kneecap in the human) becomes displaced and locks in place above the stifle joint. It may release on its own or may require manual manipulation. This is seen most frequently in post-legged horses and once this occurs, the ligaments are stretched and the horse will be prone to stifling again. It may be surgically corrected.

Stringhalt (U) - an involuntary flexion of the hock during movement. It may affect one or both hind legs. The cause of this is unknown and the action is accentuated when the horse is turned or backed. It is most noticeable after the horse has rested. Severe cases may be corrected surgically.

Sway Back (B, U) - a weak topline. This restricts the ability of the horse to pull its legs forward beneath its hindquarters.

Sweeny (B, U) - atrophy or shrinkage of the shoulder muscles. In advanced cases, the shoulder appears flat and the shoulder blade or scapula is readily visible. Caused by a direct injury to the suprascapular nerve which serves the shoulder muscles. The nerve does not regenerate, so the performance ability of the horse is limited.

Thoroughpin (B) - a puffy swelling the hollow above the hock joint. It is moveable by hand pressure from one side of the hock to the other and is usually due to injury or faulty conformation. It rarely affects the horse after the initial lameness has disappeared.

Thrush (B, U) - a condition of the frog of the hoof characterized by a black, foul smelling discharge. It is an anaerobic condition (meaning that it thrives on a lack of oxygen) and usually results from wet conditions.

Windpuffs (Windgalls) (B) - puffy, fluid-filled swellings at the top of the fetlock joint. It is usually a result of heavy work or unconditioned stress.

4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

The Relationship of Form to Function

The definition of form to function, according to Dr. Marvin Beeman, is:

Form to Function

“For each particular function of the horse, there is a particular form that will enhance that function.”

The following points are related to this definition of form to function. Consider these points when evaluating the horse:

- U The horse is an athlete. We must evaluate the structures which contribute to its ability to perform and remain sound. Most unsoundnesses are a direct result of additional stress, strain and concussion resulting from poor conformation.
- U Conformation is heritable, whether it is good or bad.
- U Conformation and breed type should be evaluated against a standard of excellence. Most breed associations establish a standard of excellence for their own breed.
- U No one part of the horse is of greater importance than another. Each part has a specific function and a role to play.
- U Factors which you should consider when determining the severity of a particular deviation include:
 - a. The degree of deviation. Is it slight, moderate, or severe? For example slightly sickle hocked versus severely sickle hocked.
 - b. The likelihood that the deviation will lead to unsoundness or decreased usefulness. For example a horse that is slightly buck-kneed is less likely to become unsound than a horse that is slightly calf-kneed because the knee is designed to bend forward.
 - c. Other existing deviations which may make the horse more susceptible to unsoundness. For example a horse with steep pasterns and small feet is more likely to become unsound than a horse with steep pasterns and adequate size feet.
 - d. The intended use of the horse. For example a horse with small nostrils may be unsound as a race or endurance horse, but may be fine if used as a children’s mount.

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Form to Function (continued)

The Functional Aspects of Conformation

The form of the ideal horse will give this horse superior function. Let's look at each of the body parts and see how their form relates to their function.

1. Head

The size of the head should be in proportion to the size of the horse.

If the head is too large

- U The center of gravity is shifted forward.
- U The horse tends to be a heavy mover.
- U Vision may be restricted.

If the head is too small

- U The center of gravity is shifted backward.
- U The horse tends to be light in front.
- U There is inadequate room for the teeth and other internal structures in the head.

The head should be of a **triangular** shape to increase the cranial or brain capacity. If the bridge of the nose is rounded, as in the roman nose, frontal vision is restricted.

The **eyes** should be large and wide set to increase the horse's field of vision. When the eyes are small and set back into the head, as in pig eyes, vision is restricted, especially to the rear and the horse often has a nervous or unruly disposition.

The **nostrils** should be large and flaring to increase the airflow in and out of the lungs.

The **throatlatch** should be wide and clean to provide room for breathing, swallowing and circulation, and to increase the ability of the horse to flex at the poll. An excessively large jaw, such as the platter jaw will reduce the ability of the horse to flex at the poll and may restrict breathing, blood circulation and swallowing.

4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Form to Function

(continued)

2. Neck

Because the horse uses the head and neck as a balancing arm, adequate **length** is required to maintain equilibrium and balance. With increased length of muscle, the range of movement of the shoulder and the length of the stride will increase.

If the neck is too long . . . the weight of the forehead increases.

If the neck is too short . . . the length of stride and suppleness decrease, as is often associated with a thick, heavy neck.

A neck with a clean, arched **shape** is more flexible, especially at the poll. the shoulder rotation and the length of stride will also be increased. The ewe neck restricts flexation at the poll, restricts vision, and the horse tends to throw head upward. A cresty necked horse carries more weight on the forelegs.

The **depth** and **set** of the neck also affect the horse's function. A trim neck set high into the shoulder decreases the weight on the forehead. A thick or low set neck increases the weight on the forehead.

3. Withers

Withers of a longer length have a greater area for muscle attachment. These muscles are required for:

1. Raising the head and neck.
2. Moving the head and neck from side to side.
3. Rotation of the shoulder.
4. Extension of the spine.

Long withers are frequently associated with well-sloped shoulders.

Low, wide withers, referred to as mutton withers, are prone to injury if the saddle slides forward. It is hard to keep the saddle in place on mutton withers since the saddle is more likely to slip to one side.

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Form to Function (continued)

4. Shoulder

The horse's front leg is attached to the body only by muscle and tendons. The front legs are a sling which holds the body.

A **long** shoulder or scapula increases the area of attachment and length of muscles, providing greater shoulder rotation, forearm extension and length of stride.

The **slope** of the shoulder is measured along the scapular spine to the top of the withers, not from the point of shoulder. A well-sloped shoulder provides shock absorption and allows the foreleg to be raised higher to allow the stride to be fully completed before the foot strikes the ground. A more sloping shoulder provides freedom of movement, elasticity of gait, lightens the forehand and decreases concussion. A steep shoulder decreases the length of stride, increases concussion on the forelegs and gives the horse a rougher gait.

The **muscling** of the shoulder should be long and well-developed for strength and absorption of concussion. Too much muscle increases the weight on the forehand and decreases the freedom of movement.

5. Arm

The **size** affects the function. The arm should be relatively short but well muscled. A well-sloped shoulder is usually accompanied by a fairly upright arm which allows for greater forward extension of the foreleg. An arm which is too long restricts the movement, and muscles tire quickly. An arm which is too short decreases the length of the stride.

6. Chest

The chest should be **wide, deep** and **well-muscled**. This will increase the ability of the horse to move laterally. A chest that is too wide produces a laboring, waddling stride. When the chest is too narrow the horse may interfere when travelling.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Form to Function (continued)

7. Barrel

The horse needs **depth** of heartgirth and **spring** of fore rib to provide adequate room for the maximum function of the heart and lungs. A lack of depth and spring of rib decreases the capacity of the heart and lung. A deep flank and spring of rear rib increases the digestive capacity and the foal carrying capacity in mares.

8. Back and Loin

The only skeletal support in the loin is provided by the spinal column. Therefore, adequate **muscling** is necessary for additional strength. A swayback horse has restricted ability to pull its legs forward beneath the hindquarters. A roach back horse has restricted flexibility.

9. Hip and Croup

A **long** hip and croup have longer muscles which increase the length of stride.

The **shape** of the hip and croup vary according to body type. A more level hip and croup provide a long, flowing stride, while a more sloping hip and croup allow the hind legs to drive further underneath the body for power and speed.

A rump which is too steep, or a goose rump, decreases the length of stride and speed, and increases the concussion on the hindlegs. A rafter hipped horse may interfere during travelling because of the lack of muscular support.

10. Hindquarters

A **well-muscled** hindquarter is necessary for strength and power. The volume and length of muscling depend upon body type.



Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Form to Function (continued)

11. Feet and Legs

a. Forearm

A **longer** forearm allows for greater extension of the foreleg. Long muscling provides greater contraction and lift of leg. Volume of muscling provides power and support for the lower leg.

b. Knee

The **size** of the knee affects the function of the horse. A large, clean, flat knee increase the area of attachment for tendons, ligaments and muscles, and increases the area of support to reduce stress on the knee.

A buck kneed horse is susceptible to bowed tendons. A calf kneed horse is susceptible to chip fractures of the knee and bowed tendons. Calf knees are more serious than buck knees because the knee does not bend backwards.

A horse which is tied-in at the knee is predisposed to bowed tendons.

Knock knees cause excess stress on the outer knee and strain on the inside ligaments of the forelegs. Bowlegs cause excess stress on the inner knee and strain on the outside ligaments of the forelegs. Bench knees cause more stress on the inside splint bones and the horse is predisposed to splints or knee chips.

c. Gaskin

A **longer** gaskin (tibia) allows greater extension of the hindleg. Long **muscling** provides greater contraction and lift of the leg. A greater volume of muscling provides power and support for the lower leg.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Form to Function

(continued)

d. Hock

A large, clean, flat hock provides greater surface area for the attachment of tendons, ligaments and muscles and increases the area of support to reduce stress on the hock.

Sickled hocks place excess strain on the plantar ligament. A sickle hocked horse is predisposed to curbs.

A post-legged horse has excess stress placed on the front of the hock joint and on the stifle joint. A post-legged horse is predisposed to bog spavins, thoroughpins, and bone spavins or upward fixation of the patella.

A cow-hocked horse has excess stress placed on the hock joint and strain on the ligaments. A cow-hocked horse is predisposed to bone spavins, curbs or thoroughpins.

Bowed legs cause excess stress on the hock joint and strain on the ligaments. A bow-legged horse is predisposed to bog spavins, curbs and thoroughpins.

e. Cannon

The **length** of the cannon bone affects the function of the horse. A short cannon bone is stronger than a longer cannon bone. There is less mass to extend causing the horse to have a longer stride.

f. Fetlock Joint

A large fetlock joint provides greater surface area for the attachment of tendons and ligaments and reduces stress to the joint.

g. Pastern

The **length** and **angulation** of the pasterns are important. Moderately long, sloping pasterns help to absorb concussion.

Steep pasterns increase the effect of concussion on the fetlock joint, pastern joint and navicular bone. A horse with steep pasterns is predisposed to osselets, ringbone and navicular disease.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging the Conformation of Horses (continued)

Form to Function (continued)

A horse with weak pasterns is susceptible to injury of the tendons, ligaments and the fetlock joint. A broken hoof/pastern axis or angle places additional strain on the tendons and ligaments.

h. Hoof

Adequate hoof **size** is necessary so the stress and concussion are distributed over a larger area.

i. Deviations Affecting the Entire Foreleg and or Hindleg

If the horse is camped under in front, there is excess weight on the forelegs. If the horse is camped under in the rear, the horse may also be sickle hocked or post legged.

If the horse is camped out in the front, there is excess stress on the front of the knee and strain on the ligaments and tendons. If the horse is camped out in the rear, the horse may also have steep rear pasterns and, or be sickle hocked.

If the base of the foot is narrow, this may be accompanied by toe-in or toe-out conformation. There is more weight and stress placed on the outside of the legs and the horse is predisposed to windpuffs, ringbone and sidebone.

If the base of the foot is wide, this may be accompanied by toe-in or, more commonly, toe-out conformation. This places more weight and stress on the inside of the legs and the horse is predisposed to windpuffs, ringbone and sidebone.

If the horse toes in, or is pigeon toed, more weight and concussion is placed on the outside of the pastern and hoof. If the horse toes out, or is splay-footed, more weight and concussion is placed on the inside of the pastern and hoof.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Judging Performance Classes

Western Attire

Western riding apparel is trendy and styles change from year to year. Different breeds can have different styles. It is useful to contact a few breed associations to become familiar with what is accepted. Riders should wear a neat, attractive and coordinated outfit. Basic western attire consists of a long-sleeved shirt, a neck tie or bolo, pants, a western belt, a western hat and western boots. Suitcoats, vests and chaps are popular in different areas and for some classes. However, such items are not accepted in all competitions. Check the rules for each competition for required and restricted attire. Western accessories include jewellery, gloves and spurs. All accessories should be kept to a minimum.

English Attire

English riding apparel is traditional and there are definite style preferences. The coat should be tailored, made of wool or polyester and should be a dark colour, including dark gray, black, blue, brown, or pinstripe. The pants should be beige, light gray, canary or rust breeches. Long or short sleeve shirts are accepted, in white, pastels or pinstripe. The shirt should include a choker or white stock tie. Black velvet or velveteen-covered hunt caps with safety harness are preferred. Tall black hunt boots should be made of leather or rubber. Check the rules for each competition for required and restricted attire.

Showmanship

An important skill that every horseman should master is the ability to effectively handle and show a horse in-hand. In showmanship classes the skill of the handler and the turnout of the horse are being judged rather than the quality of the horse. Turnout is the overall appearance of the horse and includes health, condition, grooming and the horse's tack. The handler's attire should be neat and clean but not elaborate, and it should not detract from the horse. The object of showmanship is to train the exhibitor for proper halter and conformation class techniques.

Western Showmanship

Western style horses should be shown in a halter, although it is common for Arabians and Morgans to use a show bridle.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Showmanship

(continued)

Hunt Seat Showmanship

Contestants usually use hunter- or sport-type horses. The attire requirements for the Hunt Seat exhibitor include a hunt cap, boots, coat, and breeches. Hunters are shown in a snaffle bridle, posed with the front legs square and the hind legs slightly separated, with one hind leg perpendicular to the ground. Judges often request a side view of the horse while it is trotting, in order to assess length of stride. The handler may carry a whip if it is in concordance with the show rules.

Saddle Seat Showmanship

Contestants usually use the animated breeds such as Saddlebreds, Arabians and Morgans. Saddle seat attire consists of a solid colour suit (coat and jodhpurs in black, blue, gray, green, beige, or brown), derby and jodhpur boots. Horses are shown in a full bridle (including both a curb and snaffle). The handler guides the horse from the left side by holding the curb reins. The snaffle reins are over the horse's neck, lying on the withers. Horses are shown at a walk and trot, allowing sufficient rein so that the horse can move freely and in a straight line. When the horse is stopped, you should stand in front and face the horse at rein's length. Horses are generally set up with legs somewhat stretched but the judge may ask the exhibitor to bring the horse's legs under the body for inspection.

Each breed association and show has its own set of rules or variation of rules for showmanship. Handlers and judges must know the rules that are specific to each show they participate in. The responsibility for knowledge of the rules is entirely yours. Items to check include, but not limited to:

- a) Appropriate attire
- b) Acceptable tack
- c) Type of hoof dressing or polish allowed
- d) Shoeing regulations
- e) Style of mane and tail, length of bridle path, and other customary clipping practices
- f) Exhibitor's stance in relation to the judge
- g) Manner in which exhibitor changes direction with the horse
- h) Type of questions the judge may ask exhibitor as part of the competition

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

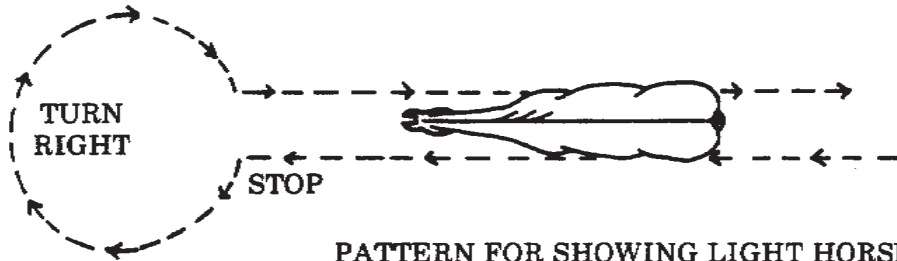
Showmanship

(continued)

Showmanship Class Routine

(commonly used but not breed specific)

Exhibitors enter ring leading their animals at an alert walk in a counter clockwise direction unless otherwise directed by the judge. Handlers walk on animal's left side, holding lead shank in right hand, near halter. The remaining portion of lead is held neatly in safely in the left hand. A tightly coiled or rolled lead shank will be considered a fault in showmanship. Animal shall lead readily at a walk or trot.



PATTERN FOR SHOWING LIGHT HORSE INDIVIDUALLY AT HALTER.

After the judge has lined up the class in front of spectators, the judge will call on each exhibitor to move his/her horse individually, using a pattern similar to the one to the left.

When moving their horse, they should be sure that the judge gets a clear, unobstructed view of the animal's action. Allow the horse sufficient lead so that he/she can move freely and in a straight line. They should lead their horses from their left side the required distance, stop and turn to the right around their horse.

It is mandatory that the judge post the pattern he/she will ask for at least one hour prior to the commencing of the class; however, if the judge chooses to bring back exhibitors for consideration of final placing, the final pattern need not be posed. Judging will be based on the performance of this pattern and the "Quarter System".

The "Quarter" System

Exhibitors should keep one eye on the judge and one eye on their horse at all times. In order to do this safely, a system called "Quarters" is used. This system for the handlers movement around their horse while showing in showmanship is as follows:

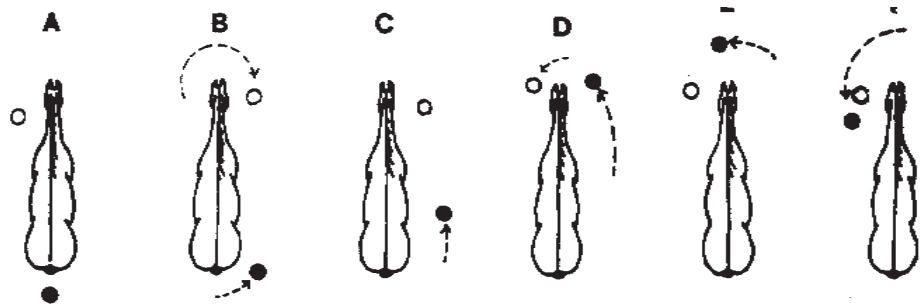
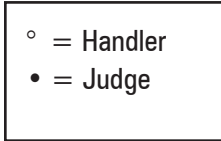
Imaginary lines bisect the horse into four equal parts as seen in the diagram below. (Note : the quadrants will be numbered I, II, III and IV for ease of identification.) One line was across the horse just behind the withers. The other imaginary line runs from head to tail.

When the judge is in I, the handler should be in IV. As the judge moves to II, handler should move to I. When the judge moves to III, the handler moves to IV. As the judge moves up the horse to IV, the handler returns once more to I.

Showmanship

(continued)

The "Quarter" System (continued)



This method is based on safety as the handler can keep the horse's hindquarters from swinging toward the judge, should the horse become excited.

Posing

When posing their horses, exhibitors should stand toward the front facing the horse with their toes facing the horse's shoulder. They should not stand directly in front of the horse and always in a safe position where you can keep your eye on the judge. Horses are posed with their feet squarely under them.

Judging Showmanship

The showmanship class is judged on the exhibitors ability to fit and show a horse at halter. The horse is merely a prop to demonstrate the ability and preparation of the exhibitor. Showmanship is usually evaluated in the following four major categories:

1. Cleanliness
2. Position of the handler ("Quarters")
3. Performance of the pattern
4. Overall impression

The ideal showmanship performance consists of a poised, confident, neatly attired exhibitor leading a well groomed and conditioned horse that efficiently performs the requested pattern with promptness, smoothness and precision.

The horses should walk and trot next to their handler, so they are not dragging their horses around the arena. It should be trained to stop and stand squared up. Handlers are not permitted to touch their horse to move its legs. When exhibitors execute a simple pattern, they should always travel straight toward and straight away from the judge.

4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Showmanship

(continued)

Judging

Showmanship

(continued)

A quick glance back, toward the judge, demonstrates attention to this detail. Exhibitors should be careful not to crowd the exhibitors next to them when in a side by side position, nor the exhibitor in front when lined up head to tail. The exhibitors should keep their horses alert and be aware of the position of the judge at all times and should respond quickly to requests from judge and officials. All exhibitors should keep showing until the entire class has been placed and has been excused from the ring.

Each part of the exhibitors performance (execution of the pattern and execution of “quarters”) would be scored out of a scale, such as the following:

- 10 The perfect run. Excellent pattern. Absolutely correct showmanship. No deviation from the ideal. The beautiful showman who does everything correctly with style.
- 9 The near perfect run. May lack the style or beauty of a 10. Very correct showmanship, excellent pattern.
- 8 The excellent run. Correct pattern, good to excellent showmanship. Some beauty and style.
- 7 The good run. Pattern basically correct. Good showmanship. This run lacks sparkle. Nothing wrong, just not exciting.
- 6 Small error in pattern. Errors in showmanship. No sparkle. Errors are beginning to outweigh the good.
- 5 Major pattern or showmanship errors.
- 4 Major errors in both pattern and showmanship.
- 0-3 Off pattern, horse refuses to trot, and so on.

4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Showmanship

(continued)

Judging Showmanship

(continued)

Common Faults Against The Showmanship Exhibitor

- U Not correcting mistakes made by the horse. Exhibitors should recognize quickly, and correct faults of their horse.
- U Talking to other people during the class. Exhibitors should not be distracted by persons or things outside the ring.
- U Placing the horse's legs by hand or kicking the leg to move it.
- U Not leading the horse correctly (poor position, shank too long or short or held incorrectly) or too slowly.
- U Not stopping the horse before turning, at the walk or trot.
- U Loud verbal commands to the horse.
- U Horse resisting the halter.
- U Over showing the horse. When judge is observing other animals let your horse stand if posed reasonably well. Undue fussing and manoeuvring are objectionable.
- U Standing between the judge and the horse.
- U Turning the horse in the wrong direction.
- U The judge having to move to avoid the horse.
- U Poorly fitting equipment.
- U Allowing the horse to urinate or defecate. Also, allowing a stud or gelding to dangle.
- U Touching the horse for any other reason than smoothing hair. The only time a horse can be touched by its handler in a showmanship class is to make adjustments after the judge has inspected something.

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Western Riding

Equitation

Equitation classes are designed to evaluate the rider's ability to execute, in concert with their horse, a set of manoeuvres prescribed by the judge. These manoeuvres should be executed with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise, confidence and maintaining a balanced, functional and fundamentally correct body position. The general rules dictate that a rider is judged on seat, hands, performance of the horse, appointments of the horse and rider and the suitability of the horse and rider to each other. The performance of the horse is not considered more important than the method used to obtain that performance. Many judges also award points on the rider's use of leg aids.

Entries enter the arena at a walk or jog and are judged at a walk, jog and lope in both directions of the arena. Individual workouts or patterns may be required (at the judge's discretion).

Regardless of the procedure the class can be judged the same way. A scoring scale of 1 to 20 may help you to evaluate the riders. The following guidelines are an example of how a scoring scale may be used:

19-20	The perfect run. Excellent pattern. Absolutely correct position. No deviation from the ideal. The beautiful rider who does everything correctly with style.
17-18	The near perfect run. May lack the style or beauty of a 19-20. Very correct position. Excellent pattern.
15-16	The excellent run. Correct pattern. Good to excellent position with some beauty and style.
13-14	The good run. Pattern basically correct. Good position. This run lacks sparkle. Nothing wrong, just not exciting.
11-12	Small error in pattern. Errors in position. No sparkle. Errors are beginning to outweigh the good.
9-10	Major pattern or position error.
7-8	Major errors in both pattern and position, leads, gaits, etc.
0-6	Off pattern. Horse bucks, balks, and so on. Once the pattern is scored, the rail work may be used to break any ties or extremely close scores from the pattern work.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

Western Riding

(continued)

Western Pleasure

Pleasure classes are judged on the horse's performance, manners, presence, suitability to purpose and sometimes conformation. The gaits required include the walk, jog and lope. Sometimes extended jog and/or lope may be requested. These gaits are performed in both directions of the arena and the judge will ask for any transitions from gait to gait.

Good pleasure horses have a free-flowing stride of reasonable length in keeping with their individual conformation. They should cover a reasonable amount of ground with little effort. Ideally, they should have a balanced flowing motion. Pleasure horses should carry their head and neck in a natural, relaxed position, having a bright expression with ears alert. They should be shown on a reasonably loose rein, but with light contact and control. They should be responsive yet smooth in transitions when called for. When asked to extend, pleasure horses should move out with the same flowing motion. Maximum credit should be given to flowing, balanced and willing horses which give the appearance of being fit and a pleasure to ride.

The attitude of the western pleasure team should be one of confidence and brilliance. The horse's performance (the way each horse performs the gaits, how it reacts to the rider's aids and the style with which it executes the gaits) is of major importance. Disobedience is severely penalized and horses should respond quickly to commands in a controlled manner.

Trail

There are certain standards for judging trail horses at a horse show. These are fairly standard for most breeds. In general:

1. A trail horse class is judged on the manners of the horse, responsiveness to the rider and attitude as they work at least six obstacles.
2. A course is posted prior to the class to inform the riders of the direction the class is to be worked, gaits and any additional instructions.
3. There may be a time limit or a maximum number of refusals at each obstacle. Usually, three refusals results in a disqualification. Fall of the horse or rider is an automatic disqualification at most shows.
4. The judge may ask the horses to work on the rail to break ties. The rail work will be equal in value to one obstacle.

4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Western Riding Obstacles

(continued)

Trail (continued)

The obstacles fall into two groups: mandatory and optional. The gate, step over and bridge are mandatory at many breed shows.

The other three obstacles are selected by the show committee. These should be suited to the exhibitors and horses. The judge may make changes if he feels an obstacle is unsafe.

Equipment

Equipment for a trail class is much the same as for Western Pleasure. Hobbles may be necessary if romel reins are used.

Rider

The basic seat is the same as for Western Pleasure but the body positions will vary according to the obstacle. As the rider works the horse the reins will be held in one hand that is kept clear of the horse and saddle. The rein hand may be changed to work an obstacle under special conditions. If spurs or romel are used to cue the horse, they must be used behind the cinch.

Judging the Obstacles

Gate

The horse must sidepass to the gate and stand while the rider opens the gate. The horse goes through the gate so that the hand of the rider remains on the gate. Pivot at the end of the gate, sidepass to close the gate. Hand of the rider stays on the gate through the whole process. Pause briefly before going to the next obstacle.

Stepovers

Lower the head as the stepover is approached. Keep head down until the last stepover is cleared. Stride is adjusted to clear all of the obstacles. Spacing in the stepovers should not be affected. Hooves hitting the obstacle should be minimum.

Bridge

The horse should appraise every obstacle they come into contact with. It should cross over the bridge quietly with a minimum of resistance and head lowered. Pausing in the centre of the bridge is not essential, but it should not be rushed when crossing.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

Western Riding

(continued)

Trail (continued)

Other Obstacles

The horse should be judged against what is considered proper behaviour and should show alertness and intelligence. The horse should work with a minimum of resistance and show an interest in what he is doing.

Scorecard

You may develop your own scoring system for trail classes. It should include the class name and number, the number of the horse and the names of the obstacles. You may choose a number scoring system for the performance of the horse. Allow space on your scoresheet for railwork. Although railwork is not required, it is often used to break ties. The following is a sample scorecard.

Class #8 Youth Trail Horse 14-18												
horse #	gate	logs	bridge	pivot	backthrough	jump	sub total	rail work	appointments	manners	total	placing
26	4	5	5	1	2	4	21	4	10	3	387	3
13	5	4	4	3	5	4	25	3	10	4	43	1
8	3	4	4	3	4	4	22	4	10	5	41	2
6	4	4	3	4	3	1	19	5	9	4	35	4

4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

English Riding A. Showmanship

Common English Show Classes B. English Pleasure

1. English Pleasure Horse or Hack, English Pleasure Pony or Pony Hack
2. Road Hack Horse or Road Hack Pony
3. Open English Pleasure Horse or Pony All Breeds
4. Show Hack Horse Or Show Hack Pony
5. Maiden Horse
6. Junior Horse

C. Conformation

D. English Equitation

1. Hunt Seat
2. Saddle Seat
3. Maiden Rider

English Pleasure Horse

1. English Pleasure Horse or Hack, English Pleasure Pony or Pony Hack

Type and Characteristics

Head well shaped, attractive and proportionate; mane may be roached; natural(not set) tail; strong; well shaped neck with good length of rein; good strong sloping shoulders; medium high withers the same height as the croup; chest indicative of strength; moderately muscled forearm; back well proportioned with height; powerful across the loin; good depth of girth; well shaped proportionate quarters showing strength; sloping pasterns of good length; feet of proportionate size. The horse and pony must present an appearance of overall substance with refinement. Soundness is required and blemishes may be penalized. Braiding of mane and tail is optional.

Class Routine and Judging

To be shown at a flat-footed walk, normal trot and easy canter; not to gallop; light contact to be maintained. To be judged on 45% performance, 40% manners and 15% conformation.



English Riding

(continued)

English Pleasure Horse (continued)

2. Road Hack Horse or Road Hack Pony

Type and Characteristics

Head well shaped, attractive and proportionate; mane may be roached; natural(not set) tail; strong; well shaped neck with good length of rein; good strong sloping shoulders; medium high withers the same height as the croup; chest indicative of strength; moderately muscled forearm; back well proportioned with height; powerful across the loin; good depth of girth; well shaped proportionate quarters showing strength; sloping pasterns of good length; feet of proportionate size. The horse and pony must present an appearance of overall substance with refinement. Soundness is required and blemishes may be penalized. Braiding of mane and tail is optional.

Gaits

The walk: straight, four beat and flat-footed with medium contact.

The trot: straight and true; may be required as follows:

 normal on light to medium contact

 strong trot

The canter: normal on light to medium contact

Hand gallop under control

Class Routine and Judging

Horses to enter ring at a walk. To be shown at a flat-footed walk with a reasonably loose rein, trot, strong trot, easy canter and hang gallop. To be judged on 55% performance, 20% substance, 15% conformation and 10% manners.

3. Open English Pleasure Horse or Pony All Breeds

Classes may be divided into Saddle Seat or Hunter Seat. To be shown at a flat-footed walk, normal trot and easy canter; not to gallop; light contact with the horse's mouth; to be judged on manners, performance, quality and conformation. Tack and personal appointments to be appropriate to the seat being ridden.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

English Riding

4. Show Hack Horse or Show Hack Pony

(continued)

English Pleasure Horse (continued)

Type and Characteristics

Head neat, finely drawn and elegant. Mane must not be roached and may be braided; neck of sufficient length with a trim throat latch; neck to blend into shoulders which are medium width and not too heavily muscled; medium high and well defined withers the same height as croup; chest well developed but in proportion; forearm not too heavily muscled; back moderately short but well proportioned with height; moderately deep girth and well shaped proportionate quarters; sloping pasterns of good length; feet of proportionate size. Show hacks must have vitality, animation, presence, balance and clean fine limbs showing supreme quality. Soundness is required and blemishes may be penalized. Braiding of mane and tail is optional.

Gaits

The walk: straight, four beat and flat-footed

The trot: free, light and crisp, may be required as follows:

- U On contact in a more upright frame
- U Collected with rider sitting
- U Extended - on contact- medium speed with legs moving forward with impulsion and the rider posting or sitting.

The canter may be required collected, normal or extended

Hand gallop under control

Class Routine and Judging: Horses to enter ring at a walk. To be shown at a walk, trot, canter and hand gallop; collected and extended gaits to be called for; to stand quietly. To be judged on 55% performance, 20% quality, 15% conformation and 10% manners.

Conformation

Hunter On The Line

In order to assess the quality of breeding animals, most shows offer conformation classes, in which the horse's overall body structure is evaluated as well as his travel and action at the walk and trot. Horses are exhibited in a halter or bridle by a handler who is on foot. For the purpose of determining eligibility for competition, the age of the horse shall be computed by the calendar year, starting on January 1, of the year foaled. There may be a number of different classes for all ages of horses and different sexes. Emphasis shall be placed upon type, conformation, substance and quality. Lameness disqualifies a horse in a conformation class.



4-H Horse Judging Project Guide

English Riding

(continued)

Conformation

(continued)

If you think your horse merits being shown in halter, you should present him to the judge with an open mind. If the judge does not place your horse in the ribbons, it may be that you have overlooked a major fault or are simply too fond of your horse to see his flaws.

The conformation hunter is traditionally shown in a hunt snaffle and enters alongside the handler on a loose rein, either at a walk or a trot, depending on the judge's instructions. To have a hunter squared-up, all legs are visible from a side view, one front and one hind leg should be offset slightly from the others. For all other breeds (Morgans, Arabians, Saddlebreds) are exhibited similarly to each other, although there are some important differences, such as whether it is customary to use a show halter or a bridle. They are generally required to stand still with all four feet flat on the ground and the front legs perpendicular to the ground. The rear legs may be placed slightly back, rather than in the square position of the stock horse.

English Equitation Classes

Equitation, or horsemanship, is the art of riding, requiring correct overall rider position and proper use of the natural aids: the mind, hands, legs, seat and upper body. Equitation classes are judged on the performance of the rider, not the horse, although a well-trained horse certainly helps to show a rider's skills.

During equitation classes, errors are bound to occur. Rider's ability is not automatically discounted if the horse makes a mistake. How the rider reacts to the error and corrects the situation is more important. Is the rider aware that the horse has made a mistake? Does the rider allow the horse to continue inaccurately? What is the rider's reaction to the horse's error? Is the rider's response immediate and appropriate? Does the rider not only know how to correct a mistake, but how to prevent it from occurring again? Does the rider retain composure or does the performance begin deteriorating with the first mistake?

The ideal equitation horse is a seasoned horse that is well trained and dependable. It boosts the rider's confidence if the horse's temperament is calm and pleasant. A brilliant but unstable mount is not as good a candidate for an equitation rider as the average performer that is consistent and honest. Although the horse does not need to have spectacular conformation, it should be made well enough to allow it to perform its job well.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

English Riding 1. Hunt Seat Equitation:

(continued)

English Equitation Classes (continued)

Hunt seat equitation includes flat and over fences classes. The contestants will be asked to perform on the flat and over fences with equal emphasis on the two performances.

Class Routine on the Flat

Class to enter ring. A reasonable length of time should be allowed before the class is called order, after which the gates will be closed and not further entries admitted. The class will proceed at least once around the ring at each gait - walk, trot and canter, and on command, reverse and repeat. They shall then line up on command and execute individual test at the judge's discretion. The judge may ask questions concerning horsemanship, anatomy of the horse, tack, stable management and any others.

Class Routine Over Fences

Classes should be held over reasonable hunter fences. Each contestant will enter the ring and may circle once if desired before approaching the first fence. The rider shall then proceed around a course of not less than six jumps, keeping an even pace throughout. The fall of horse and rider and/or 3 disobediences shall cause the entry to be eliminated from the class.

Tests

The approved tests for hunter seat equitation are:

- U Dismount and mount
- U Rein Back
- U Individual performance
- U Figure eight at trot, demonstrating change of diagonals
- U Figure eight at canter, with simple change of leads with not less than one, or more than four trotting steps.
- U Gallop and stop
- U Extended trot
- U Sitting trot
- U Trot and canter without stirrups
- U Change horses
- U Change leads on a straight line down centre with simple change
- U Counter canter on the rail
- U Ride a strange horse supplied by the committee
- U Demonstration of about one minute on own mount. Rider must advise the judge beforehand what he/she plans to demonstrate.
- U Pull up between fences except in a combination





4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

English Riding

(continued)

English Equitation

Classes (continued)

-  Jump low fences, at walk, trot or canter
-  Jump a strange horse supplied by the committee
-  Jump without stirrups
-  Change of leads with flying changes

2. Saddle Seat Equitation

Saddlebred, Arabian, and Morgan horses are often shown in saddle seat tack and corresponding attire, but many of the comments in the hunt seat equitation are applicable here. The rail work called for is the same as for Hunter Seat Equitation, but the style is more elevated, animated, and flashy without becoming exaggerated or extreme. The performance should be formal yet light, crisp yet correct, exuberant yet easy. The rider should give the overall impression of competency with style and polish.

In Saddle Seat Equitation classes, riders should convey the impression of effective and easy control and show the judge that he or she has the ability to present a horse.

Class Routine

Competitors enter the ring turning to the right and proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction. The class proceeds at least once around the ring each gait (walk, trot and canter; slow gait and rack are additional gaits in Five-Gaited classes) and on command, will reverse and repeat. The order to reverse may be executed by turning either towards or away from the rail. Entries shall line up on command and any or all riders may be required to execute any appropriate tests included in the requirements for specific classes. When individual tests are called, the Judge's opinion shall be a 50 - 50 analysis of the railwork and the individual tests.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

English Riding

(continued)

English Equitation

Class (continued)

Individual Tests

- U Pick up reins (only in line-up).
- U Circle at a trot.
- U Performance on rail.
- U Performance around ring.
- U In the line up, feet disengaged from stirrups. Feet engaged.
- U Change of diagonals down centre of ring or on the rail.
- U Execute serpentine at a trot. A series of left and right half circles off centre of imaginary line where correct diagonal must be shown.
- U Figure eight at trot demonstrating change of diagonals.
- U Execute serpentine at a canter on correct lead demonstrating a simple change of lead.
- U Back for not more than eight steps.
- U Circle at the canter on the correct lead.
- U Figure eight at canter on a correct lead demonstrating simple change of lead. Figures are started in the centre of two circles so that one lead change is shown.
- U Change leads down centre of ring or on the rail demonstrating simple change of lead. The Judge must specify exact lead change to be executed and the beginning lead. In a simple change of lead the horse is brought back to a halt/walk and restarted into a canter on the opposite lead from the halt or walk.
- U Ride without stirrups for a brief period of time, no more than 1 minute at the trotting phase. Riders may be asked to engage stirrups at a halt or walk.
- U Demonstrate ride of approximately one minute on own mount. Movements must be selected from above tests. The rider must advise the Judge before hand what ride he plans to demonstrate. Used for championship classes. Demonstration ride should be written out in advance to the class. A copy given to the Judge and one for the announcer; just in case the Judge asks for this test.

3. Maiden Rider

This class is a equitation class and is for a rider that has not placed first in any previous riding classes.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

English Riding

(continued)

Basic Equitation Seat (Classic Seat or 3 Point Contact Seat)

To evaluate a basic equitation seat, the body will be separated in 4 separate parts.

1. The Lower Leg
2. The Base Of Support
3. The Upper Body
4. The Arms And Hands

The Lower Leg

The lower leg is the most important element that determines the rider's stability. The balls of the rider's feet should rest on the bar of the iron stirrup with toes forward and heels down with exerting just enough pressure to keep the iron in place. The weight of the leg should fall into the heel so that the heel is lower or level with the toe. The line of the foot from the heel to toe should point directly forward. The ankle must remain flexible. The stirrup leathers should hang straight down, perpendicular to the ground. The lower leg contact should be distributed evenly from the inner knee to the lower calf and should slope back slightly. The rider's knee and toe should be in line vertically.

The Base Of Support

Refers to the position of the rider's weight in the saddle. The rider should sit in the lowest part of the saddle with hips square with the horse's hips. The weight of the rider's body should be carried equally on both seat bones. If your weight is evenly distributed then the resulting angle of the body will be 90 degrees to the saddle. Contact with the saddle should be made with the inside of the thighs but should not be gripping. It is particularly important that the seat, thighs, and knees should lie relaxed on the saddle as this allows the part of the leg just below the knee to rest against the horse's side.

The Upper Body

The shoulders should be held natural, relaxed, level and straight but not rounded or stiff. They should form an imaginary vertical line from elbow to heel. The back should be straight without being rigid. Head should be carried up and forward without tension in the neck. Riders should look in the direction in which they are going. The upper body must be vertical in order to permit the riders to look forward without rounding their back or leaning forward. The elbows should remain close to the body.



4 - H Horse Judging Project Guide

English Riding

(continued)

Basic Equitation

Seat (Classic Seat or 3 Point Contact

Seat) (continued)

Common Faulty Hand Positions (English)

Watch out for these common faults:

1. Palms down - the tendons of the wrists and arms are twisted and stiff
2. Palms up - fingers turned up and stiff, hollow wrists - makes the hands too tense.
3. Open hands with loose fingers - allow the reins to slip through and become too long.
4. Curled or bent wrists lose their elasticity.
5. Riders that allow either hand to cross over their horses neck.

The Arms And Hands

Like the shoulders, the elbows should also be relaxed, permitting the elasticity and suppleness required to maintain proper contact with the horse's mouth. The elbows should be slightly in front of the rider's body and form a straight line from the bit through the hands to the elbow. It is vitally important that riders be able to move their hands independently of their body. Their hands must move in harmony with the horse's mouth. When the horse moves its head and neck the rider's hands must be with that movement. This hand movement is made possible by the suppleness and mobility of the rider's shoulders and elbows. Wrists must remain supple, but they should not bend. When riders take up the reins they should feel some weight in their hands. Ideally, they should have the same feel in their hands at all times and at all paces. This is known as the "contact".

Angles Of The Upper Body In Movement:

Four joints are important in equitation:

- 1) **the ankle**, between the foot and the lower leg
- 2) **the knee**, between the thigh and the lower leg
- 3) **the hips**, between the thigh and upper body
- 4) **the elbow**, between the forearm and the upper arm.



Judging Horses Levels 1-4

Member's Name _____

Level One	Level Two	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Explain how "balance" is used when judging the conformation of horses and 4 ways to measure the balance of a horse's conformation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge three classes of conformation (each one being a different breed). For one class, write written reasons, present oral reasons to one person for another class and present oral reasons to your entire club for the final class.	_____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify 10 descriptive words used for judging the conformation of horses.	<input type="checkbox"/> Explain nine ways to measure balance and symmetry of a horse's conformation.	_____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and describe 10 common conformation faults to watch for when judging the conformation of horses.	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe five faults in the way a horse travels, to watch for when judging a horse's conformation.	_____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Attend a workshop about judging (club or regional).	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe 10 common unsoundnesses to watch for when judging a horse's conformation...	_____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Judge the conformation of a class of four light horses and provide written reasons for your placings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate a workshop for your club about how to judge horse conformation.	_____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Judge the conformation of a class of four sport horses and provide written reasons for your placings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge a class of showmanship (4 handlers) and provide written reasons for your placings.	_____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Judge the conformation of a class of four heavy horses and present oral reasons for your placings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attend a local open show and, from the stands, judge a class of showmanship and compare your placings with the official judge. Make arrangements to meet with the judge afterwards to discuss the class.	_____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate a workshop for your club about how to organize and write written reasons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Read a book (other than your 4-H manual) about judging equine conformation.	_____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Explain the importance of using comparisons when judging and giving reasons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Participate in the Provincial 4-H "Let's Judge" Program.	_____ _____ _____
Leader's comments: _____ _____ _____ Leader's Signature: _____	Leader's comments: _____ _____ _____ Leader's Signature: _____	

Level Three	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Explain how to evaluate the proper seat of a rider. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Explain the difference between pleasure and equitation classes and what to look for in each. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Explain how to evaluate the way a rider mounts and dismounts their horse. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Judge a pleasure class of four riders (english or western) and provide written reasons for your placings. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Judge an equitation class of four riders (english or western) and present oral reasons for your placings. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Attend a local open show and, from the stands, judge each of the above classes and compare your placings with the official placings of the judge. Make arrangements to meet with the judge afterwards to discuss one or two of the classes. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Participate in the Provincial 4-H "Horse Classic" Program. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Read a book or watch a video about judging equine performance classes. _____	
Leader's comments: _____	
Leader's Signature: _____	

Level Four	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Research and judge a performance class (four competitors) of your choosing that you have not yet judged (dressage, jumping, cutting, heavy horse hitch, trail, etc.). Provide written and present oral reasons for your placings. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Interview the judge of a local show (open or professional), asking questions such as; what training did they do to become a judge?; What is it like to judge an entire show?; etc. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Participate as a junior judge at a 4-H horse club achievement day or at a local open show. _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Participate at the Provincial 4-H Multi-Species Judging Competition. _____	
Leader's comments: _____	
Leader's Signature: _____	

