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–Breed Standards

## BREED STANDARDS

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Uniformity of type has long been a marked characteristic of the Clydesdale and there is no breed of heavy horse so famous for its quality, cleanness of joints, hardness of bone, cleanness and correct setting of hock and length and slope of pastern, whilst as for action, the Clydesdale is unrivalled. The general appearance of the Clydesdale can be assessed whilst the horse is standing in the optimal position of supporting itself equally well on each leg. The Clydesdale is also observed when in motion, at walk and trot. The preferred characteristics are as follows:-

### THE HEIGHT

The height of the Clydesdale horse should range to over 17 hands. When the horse is fully matured it should be evenly balanced. Viewed from the side, the body should show plenty of depth, and from the front or rear should appear broad and thick. The depth of the body, through the chest and length of leg, should be approximately the same. Such proportions allow the Clydesdale's weight to be used to the best advantage.

### QUALITY

Quality in the horse is manifested especially in the bone, skin and hair. As well, the general conformation should indicate a degree of superiority. The bone of the Clydesdale should be hard and dense, with strong, compact cellular structure. The hair or 'feather' down the back of the cannon is an indication of the quality of the bone, and should be long, fine and straight.

### THE HEAD

The head of the Clydesdale should be in proportion to the body. The face may either be straight or slightly Roman nosed. The muzzle should show thin rather than heavy lips, which should come together evenly and with a wide open nostril. The eyes should be rather oval than round, prominent, reasonably large and have thin smooth eyelids. When the iris of the eye is colourless, the eye appears to be white with a 'wall eye' as a result. The sight of such an eye is quite as good as that of having a dark coloured iris. There should be plenty of width between the eyes and the forehead should be slightly arched, tapering away above the eyes to the poll. The ears should be pointed, of medium size and thin of texture, having a covering of fine hair.

### THE NECK

The neck should be of moderate length, muscular yet not too thick, arched and well laid into the shoulder. The head should merely set into the neck at the right angle. A good head, neck and shoulders denote character, giving the animal a good outlook.

### THE SHOULDERS

The shoulders should be moderately sloped and provide a sufficient collar bed. The shoulders should be fairly wide, well muscled, and the top should be carried close to and tapered into, the back. The arm of the Clydesdale should be comparatively short, wide and muscular. This places the leg sufficiently under the body to provide the desirable position and action. The knee, viewed from the front, should be broad and flat, tapering to the cannon and, when viewed from the side, should be straight from the shoulder to the fetlock joint. The tendon at the back of the knee should contribute to give depth and strength.

### THE CANNON

The cannon of the fore leg should be long, wide, lean and flat as viewed from the side. The tendons should show prominently. The long hair or 'feather' should spring from the back of the tendon and not from the sides of the cannon. It should be soft to touch and straight. The fetlock should be wide, when viewed from the side, and narrow viewed from the front, fine and well directed. The pastern should be fairly long and sloping, so as to relieve concussion in the course of action.

### THE FOOT

The foot must be sound and healthy. A good hoof head, with wide open heels and strong quarters, is preferred, otherwise a horse may have a tendency to develop unsoundness. The feet should preferably receive attention from when the animal is a foal until it is fully matured.

### THE CHEST

The chest of the Clydesdale should be deep, wide, low and of large girth, indicating strong constitution with ample space for vital organs. The back should be short, broad and strongly supported, and slightly inclined upwards towards the croup. The loin should be short, wide and strongly muscled. This portion of the back should be short and as wide as possible, and the ribs long, well sprung and close together.

### THE FLANKS

## THE HIND QUARTERS

The hind quarters are the great source of driving power. The hips should be wide, but in harmony with general body proportions, and well muscled. The croup should be long, as seen from the side, wide as viewed from behind, and with sloping arch from the hips to the setting of the tail. It is important that the tail be attached high.

## THE THIGH

The thigh should be short, but heavily muscled. The hock is one of the most important points of the horse, as it is in this joint that the strain on the muscles, during action, is concentrated. The hock, should be broad, viewed from the side, and narrow, viewed from the front, its point being prominent, and the joint as a whole, when viewed from the side should be well supported by a wide cannon below. The hock should be turned slightly, and close to each other, the cannon straight not 'cow hocked' when viewed from the rear. The hocks should not show fullness or swelling.

## THE HIND CANNONS

The hind cannons, like the front ones, should be broad when viewed from the side and thin when viewed from the front. They should be perpendicular, in line with the hind quarters. The hind fetlocks, as in the case of the front ones, should be wide, whilst the pasterns are less oblique than those of the fore legs. The hind feet are somewhat smaller than the front ones, not as round, but with good hoof heads and wide open heels.

## THE HIND LEGS

The hind legs, like the front ones, should be set into the body, not on the outside of the quarters, but well under, so that the muscles on the quarters project wider than the muscles on the thighs. The toes of the hind feet should incline slightly outward. There should be a good length from the point of the hock to the ground.

## THE ACTION

The action of the Clydesdale should be even, the hind and fore action should be in unison. The hind feet should be planted forward as deliberately as the fore ones, which should be evenly carried forward. At the walk, the hind foot should cover the imprint of the front foot as a minimum. Short stepping is a fault in the working horse. The hocks should be turned slightly inward. In trotting, the Clydesdale horse should bend the legs at the knees and hocks and, from the hind view, the inside of the hooves or shoes should be seen at every step.

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**Reference:** An article printed in August 1928 by the CCHS in their "Horse News Annual" in relation to a description of the Clydesdale.

*These Breed Standards were approved by the Federal Council in September 2001*



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