

Fjord Horse

APSB Standard of Excellence

- General:** The Fjord Horse is a versatile "all purpose" horse renowned for its gentleness of temperament, willingness to work, stamina and vigour.
- Height:** No upper or lower limit, but not usually under 13hh.
- Colour:** This breed characteristic is so obvious that the Fjord Horse is immediately recognisable. Its special features are its dun colouration; the stiff, trimmed bi-coloured mane and the dorsal or eel stripe which runs from the forelock to the tip of its tail. There are five colour variations:
- a) Brown Dun: light brown, brown and dark brown dun, black dorsal strip; light mane and tail.
 - b) Red Dun: light red, red and dark red dun; not a very strongly marked reddish brown dorsal stripe, mane and tail have a reddish tint (*not currently present in Australia*).
 - c) Yellow Dun: light with a reddish brown dorsal stripe (*not currently present in Australia*).
 - d) Grey Dun: (often known in other breeds as grulla): ranging from light to very dark grey, black dorsal stripe
 - e) White Dun: white all over with a faint yellowish dorsal stripe.
- In addition to the dorsal stripe, other possible markings include horizontal (zebra) stripes on legs, dark legs below the knee and sometimes dark stripes across the withers. Hairs around the muzzle may be white, or varying shades of dun. White stars are permitted on the forehead, but not encouraged.
- Head:** The head may be large but never common, with a broad flat forehead and a straight or slightly concave profile. The eyes are large and dark with a gently expression. The nostrils are large. The jowls are well rounded and strong. The ears are of small to medium size and set well apart.
- Neck:** The neck tends to be shorter than in other breeds but is well muscled with sufficient suppleness and blends into a deep chest and a sloping shoulder.

Body: The Fjord Horse has a compact body with a deep girth and well sprung ribs. The withers tend to be rounded - not clearly defined. The back is medium in length with a strong coupling. The loin is broad and strong. The croup is well muscled and well-rounded to the tail.

Limbs: The legs should be straight, conformationally correct, and possess substantial bone. The bones are flat and clean, never coarse. The size of the bone is important to body type (i.e. a heavier cannon bone on a large, heavier Fjord Horse) and the joints are proportionally large and well defined. Pasterns are sloping and of moderate length. Fore-arm and gaskin are well muscled, inside and out.

Show Presentation: A Fjord Horse should be shown with the mane trimmed in an arch to accentuate the curve of the neck. The tail should be long and full. There should be no trimming of feathers and no use of facial make-up. Hooves may be blackened and polished. Trimming of the jawline is acceptable.

A- THE BASIS FOR BREEDING AND JUDGING FJORD HORSES

The Description of the Fjord Horse

Height: There is no upper or lower limit, but the desired height at the withers is between 135 cm and 150 cm (13.1 – 14.3 Hands).

Colours and markings: The five accepted colours are brown dun, uls dun, grey (blue dun), red dun and yellow dun. It is important that the so-called primitive markings are appreciated and preserved.

A star is only accepted on a mare. Other visible markings are not accepted. *)

Hair: The forelock on mature horses covers from one half to two thirds of the head. Excessive feathering on the legs is not desirable. Tradition rules that the Fjord should have an upright mane. The horse ought to be presented with a clipped mane in a convex shape to complement the neck's top line.

The head is important when assessing breed type and character. It should be proportional, small and well defined, with a wide and flat forehead. The length from the eye to the muzzle should be short; the profile should be straight or preferably slightly dished (concave). The eyes should be large, dark and bright with a calm expression. The nostrils ought to be wide and in proportion so that the muzzle gives a "square" appearance. The jaws should be well defined. The lower jaws must not be so heavy as to make the head appear coarse. There should be sufficient width between the jaws to ensure free movement of the head or flexion of the poll. The ears should be relatively short, with a refined point at the tips and wide set. The ears should be parallel, with an outward curvature from the tip to the middle of the ear. Long pointed ears that are close together and in constant movement are not typical of the Fjord Horse.

Conformation/ structure and muscular development:

It is important that the body parts are in harmony. Variations in the breed may be accepted, but the Fjord Horse should have good depth through the heart girth and width through the barrel and a proportional amount of muscling reflecting gender and age.

The neck ought to be set high and have a convex top line. Stallions especially often have a strong neck. The Fjord for a period of time was used for heavy work, so a short, strong neck and straight shoulder was seen as an asset and favoured. Today a longer and suppler neck is desired, being more suitable for riding, driving and as a packhorse. Length at the poll and a smooth transition from the head to the neck is desired. It must be recognised that a long, thin neck is not desirable

Shoulder and withers: The shoulder region influences significantly the movement of the horse; hence today it is desirable to have a gently sloping shoulder angle, which allows forward extension of the forelimbs. (A straight shoulder was wanted when the Fjord was used for heavy work). The withers of the Fjord Horse are not typically prominent but blend smoothly into the back.

*) Further information may be found in Chap. A-The Colours of the Fjord Horse and the Primitive Markings and Chap. E- Genetics of Colour

The withers should be sufficiently well defined so as to be a good anchor point for the shoulder- and back muscles. The forehand should have the same length as the back and hindquarters.

Body and top line: The ribs should be well sprung, yet not round. The back and the loin area should be smooth and well muscled. The loins are extremely important and should be carefully assessed, as they are the bridge between the mid-section and the hindquarters. The transition between the loin and croup should be flexible and blend smoothly together. The length of the coupling/ loin should be short, yet strong and proportional to the back and the croup.

The Hindquarters: The croup should be long, broad, well muscled and sloping. Too sloping or too flat are not desirable. The tail should not be set on too high or too low and it should be carried freely and naturally. The thighs should be sufficiently long, well muscled seen both from the side and from behind, and should be set as wide as the quarters.

Legs: The forearm should be broad and well muscled. In the hind legs the thigh and gaskin muscling should be long and well developed seen both from the side and from behind. Too long a gaskin is considered a drawback for a draught horse. The legs should be correctly aligned and with adequate bone. The joints and tendons must be clearly defined and dry. A short and firm cannon bone is desired. The cannon bones ought to be clean and dry, and should not be tied below the knee.

The knee (carpal joint) should be large, and well defined.

The hock joint should be large, well developed and dry. Small ill-defined hocks are not suitable for the breed. The point of the hock must be prominent when viewed from the side. Too straight or bowed hocks are objectionable.

The fetlock joints should be strong and well defined.

The pasterns should be strong, and sufficiently long and sloping to give adequate support and elasticity. The hooves of the Fjord Horse should be well balanced and proportionately round and large, with good horn quality, the inside of the hoof wall may be slightly steeper than the outside. Good sound hooves are extremely important for the horse.

The movements are particularly important for the horse, and must reflect the conformation in sufficient elasticity and impulsion to perform an effortless walk, trot and canter. The movements should be energetic, with good balance and cadence. The Fjord Horse must move freely in all three gaits. The canter should be balanced, and free with supple and elastic forward movement. The trot shall be energetic, however excessive action is considered not typical for the breed.

Gender characteristics: The Fjord Horse should have distinct gender characteristics; the stallion should be masculine and the mare feminine.