

Selection and Evaluation of Horses



Introduction to Conformation

Conformation



- ⌘ What is conformation?
 - ⌘ Physical appearance due to the arrangement of:
 - ⌘ Muscle
 - ⌘ Bone
 - ⌘ Other body tissue

- ⌘ Is there a perfectly conformed horse?

- ⌘ Each breed organization has it's ideal

Conformation



- œ Before comparing horses, what is essential?
 - œ A mental picture of the ideal

- œ What is the purpose of judging?
 - œ To find within a group of horses, the horse most typical of the ideal of that breed, the second closest, etc.

Conformation



- œ Will the ideal horse of the class always possess the optimal conformation for all performance events?
 - œ It is essential to judge horses in a conformation class based on their merit *that day*.

- œ Do not attempt to predict the riding ability of an individual being shown in a conformation class

Conformation



- œ What defines conformation?
 - œ Skeleton
- œ Geometry of the horse
- œ A really competent judge must have:
 - œ A sound understanding of all parts
 - œ Also, the function of those parts

The Ideal?



- œ AQHA States:
 - œ Horse should possess eye appeal that is the result of:
 - œ Head
 - œ Harmonious blending and attractive
 - œ Throatlatch
 - œ Refined, well-proportioned with a trim neck
 - œ Shoulder
 - œ Long and sloping

The Ideal?



☞ AQHA States:

☞ Horse should possess eye appeal that is the result of:

☞ Heart girth

☞ Deep

☞ Back

☞ Short with strong loin and coupling

☞ Hip and croup

☞ Long and flat

☞ Stifle, gaskin, forearm, and chest

☞ Well defined and muscular

The Ideal?



☞ Characteristics should be coupled with:

☞ Straight and structurally correct legs

☞ Feet that are free of blemishes

☞ Should also be a balanced athlete

☞ Muscled uniformly throughout

AQHA Purpose



☞ To Preserve AQH Type by selecting:

- ☞ Well-mannered individuals in the order of their resemblance to the breed ideal and that are the most positive combination of
 - ☞ Balance
 - ☞ Structural correctness
 - ☞ Movement
 - ☞ With appropriate breed and sex characteristics
 - ☞ Adequate muscling

APHA Purpose

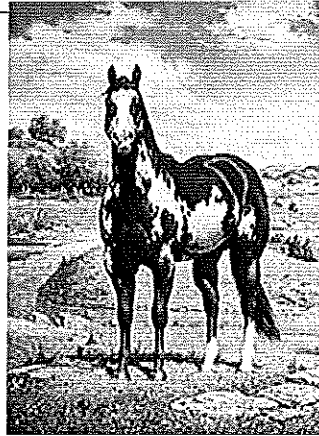
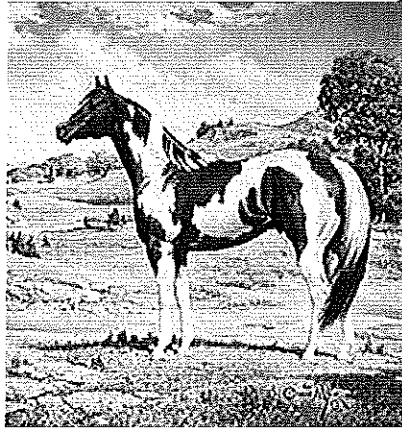


☞ Ideal standard should include

☞ but not limited to a positive combination of:

- ☞ Balance
- ☞ Breed and sex character
- ☞ Soundness and correctness of conformation
 - ☞ Particularly feet and legs
- ☞ Emphasis on correct manner of travel
- ☞ Muscling

Ideal Paint Horse



Priorities of Judging



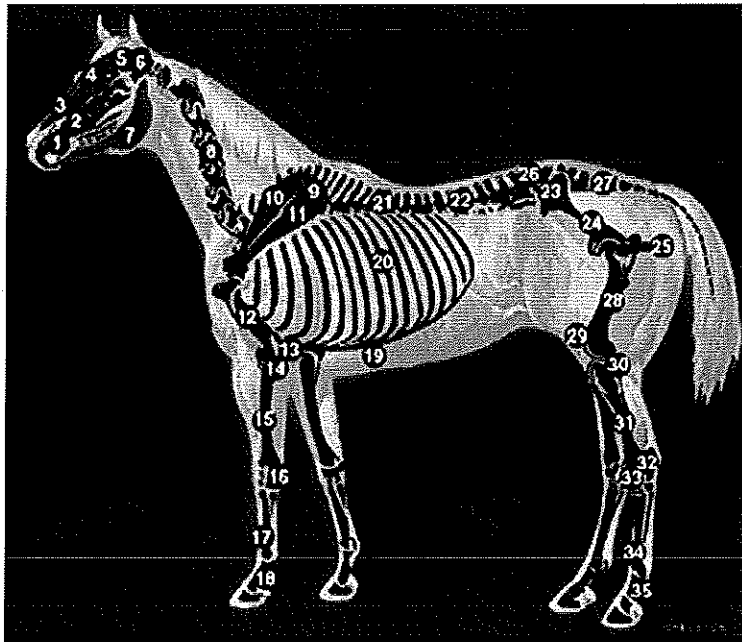
- œ What are the eight priorities?
- œ Balance
- œ Breed Type
- œ Sex Character
- œ Quality
- œ Structural Correctness
- œ Movement
- œ Size
- œ Muscling

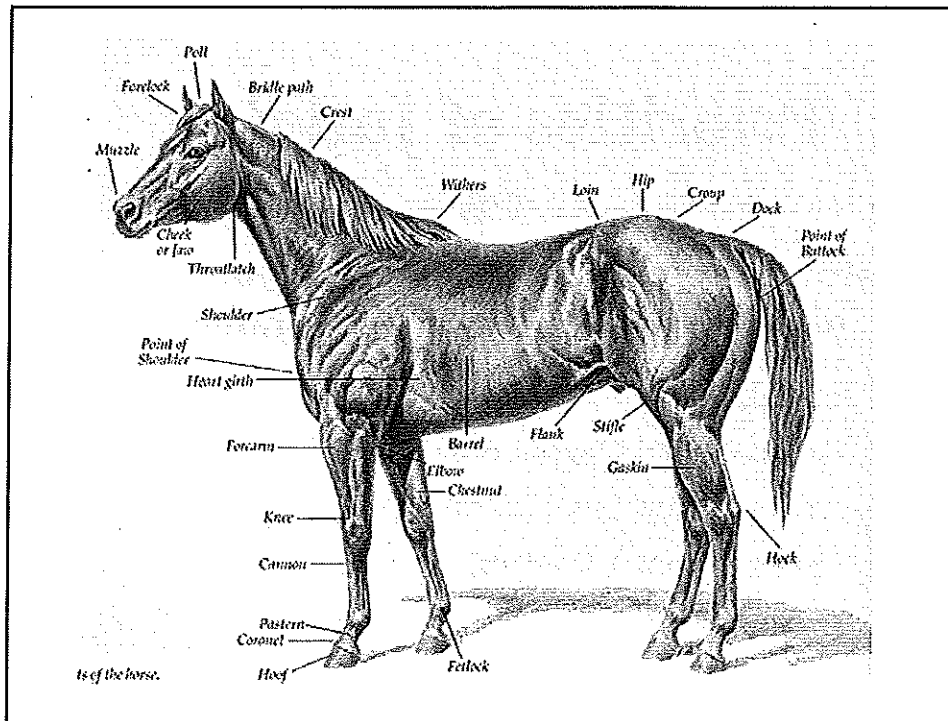
Priorities of Judging



Rating conformation depends on objective evaluation of four traits:

- Balance
- Structural Correctness
- Breed and Sex Character
- Degree of Muscling





Parts of the Horse



What is the ideal head?

Length of head

Ears

Eyes

Nostrils

Jaw

Mouth

Muzzle

Figure 12. Head conformation

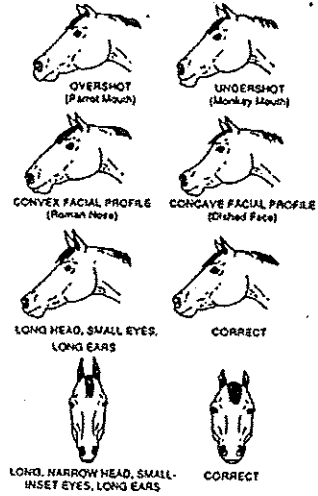
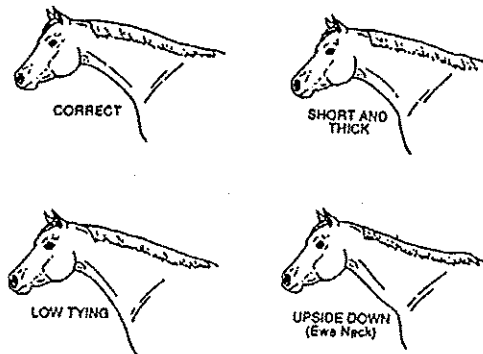
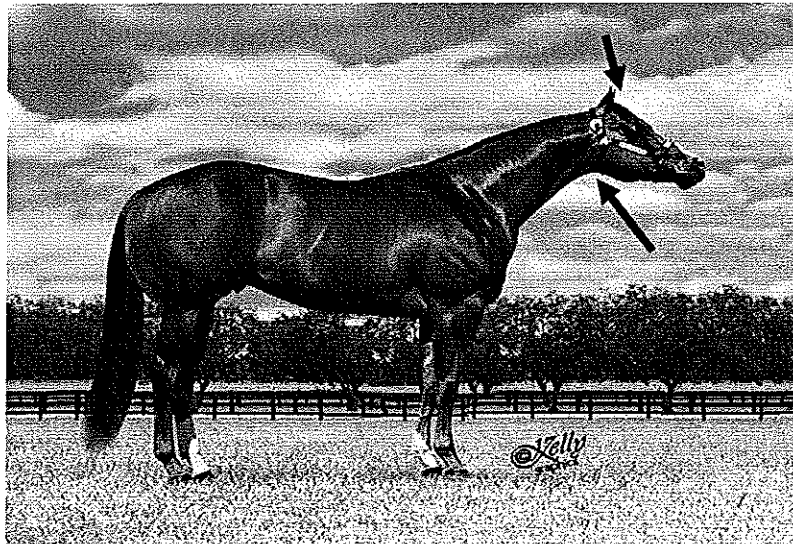


Figure 13. Neck conformation



Head

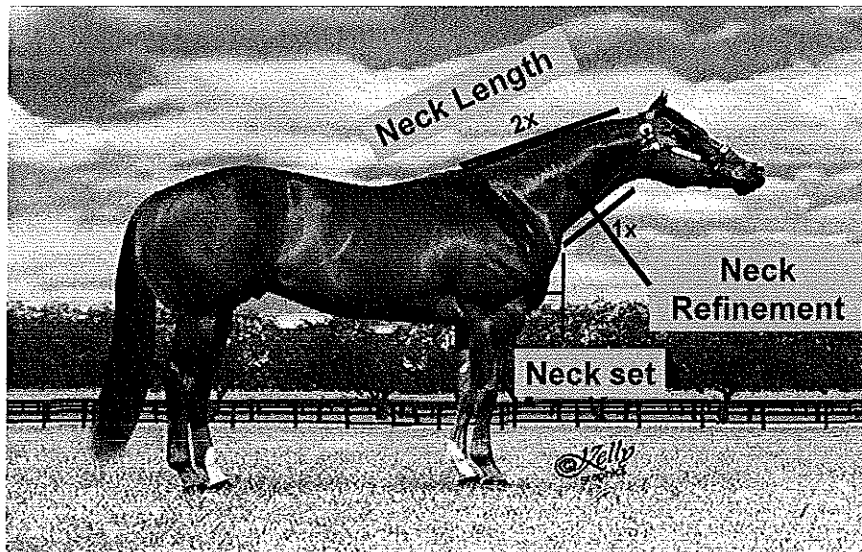


Parts of the Horse



- ⌘ What is the ideal neck? Throatlatch?
 - ⌘ Ideal neck would ~ be a 2 to 1 ratio top to bottom
 - ⌘ A horse that is short and heavily muscled will have
 - ⌘ Shorter, thicker neck than taller horse with less muscle
 - ⌘ Neck is proportional to the horse's what?
 - ⌘ Overall length and height

Neck



Parts of the Horse



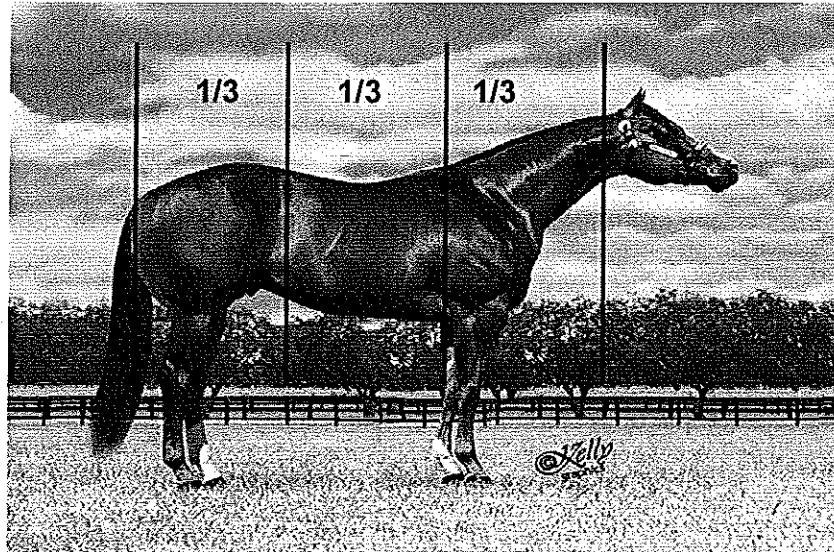
- ⌘ What is the determining factor in the ratio of the top to bottom line of the neck?
 - ⌘ Slope of shoulder. Why?
 - ⌘ As shoulder becomes more sloping what happens?
 - ⌘ Top line becomes longer in relation to the bottom line
 - ⌘ As the shoulder becomes straighter
 - ⌘ Ratio of the top to bottom line smaller

Parts of the Horse



- ⌘ All horses are basically proportional
 - ⌘ But not necessarily balanced
- ⌘ What is the single most important characteristic in equine selection?
 - ⌘ **Balance**
- ⌘ What is balance determined by?
 - ⌘ Skeletal structure

Determining Balance



Parts of the Horse



- ∞ Nothing is more critical to balance than what?
 - ∞ Slope of shoulder

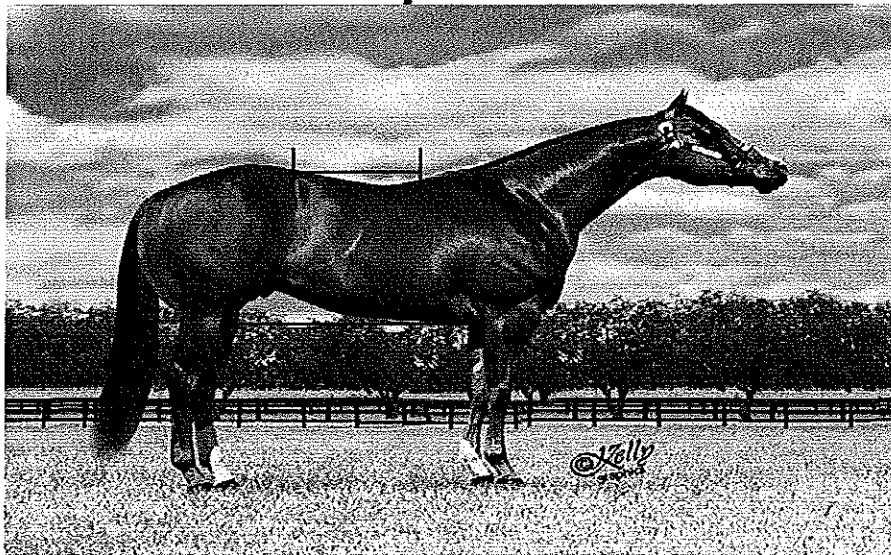
- ∞ What happens when the slope of the shoulder changes?
 - ∞ Top to bottom line ratio of the neck changes.
 - ∞ Ratio of the length of the back to length of the underline changes

Parts of the Horse



- ⌘ What happens when shoulder becomes straighter?
 - ⌘ Withers move forward, resulting in what?
 - ⌘ Longer back
 - ⌘ Length of underline is not affected
 - ⌘ Thus the appearance of a tube
 - ⌘ So what is the ideal top line to underline ratio?

Top Line



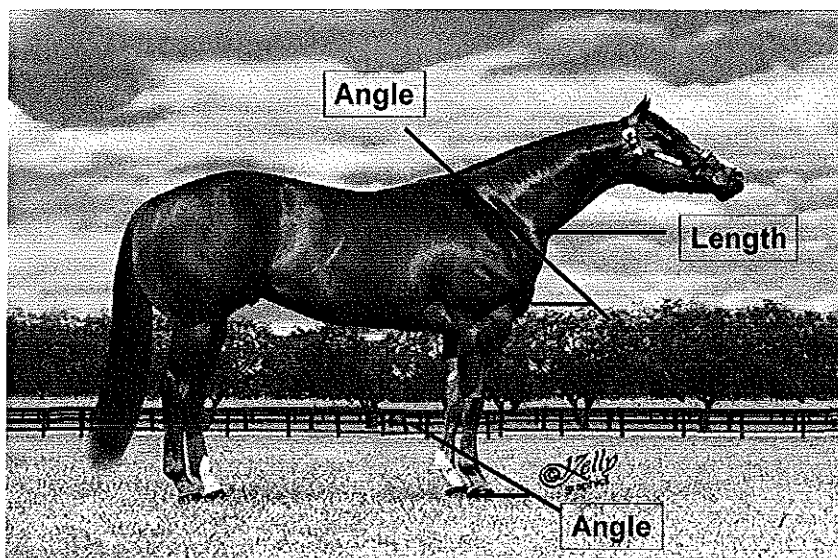
Parts of the Horse



- ⌘ When the shoulder is straight, the other angles of the horse's body will be straight too.
 - ⌘ Short, steep croup
 - ⌘ Straight stifle
 - ⌘ Straight pasterns

- ⌘ In general:
 - ⌘ Angle of pasterns will correspond with
 - ⌘ Angle of the shoulder

What is the ideal slope to the shoulder?



Parts of the Horse



- ⌘ What else besides overall balance does the slope of the shoulder influence?
 - ⌘ Length of stride

- ⌘ Angle of shoulder and pasterns serve to absorb shock when the horse moves

- ⌘ Therefore, what will occur with a straight shouldered horse?

Parts of the Horse



- ⌘ What are ideal withers?
 - ⌘ Sharp, prominent, and slightly higher than the croup

- ⌘ Properly balanced horse will appear to be
 - ⌘ Sloping downhill from front to back

- ⌘ When withers are higher than the croup
 - ⌘ Hindquarters are positioned under the body more

Parts of the Horse

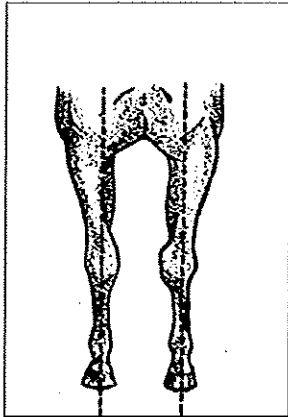


- œ Hindquarters should appear square when viewed from the side
- œ The croup should remain flat
- œ The hip should be long
- œ Stifles should be powerful

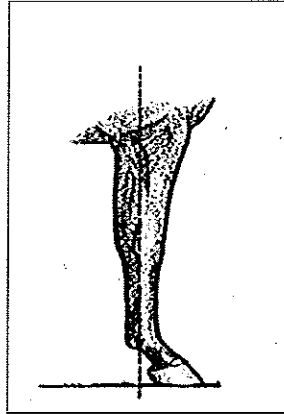
Parts of the Horse



- œ Feet and Legs:
 - œ Should be free of
 - œ Blemishes and unsoundnesses
 - œ Should be straight from profile as well as front and hind
 - œ Should be able to track freely and easily while maintaining a straight line

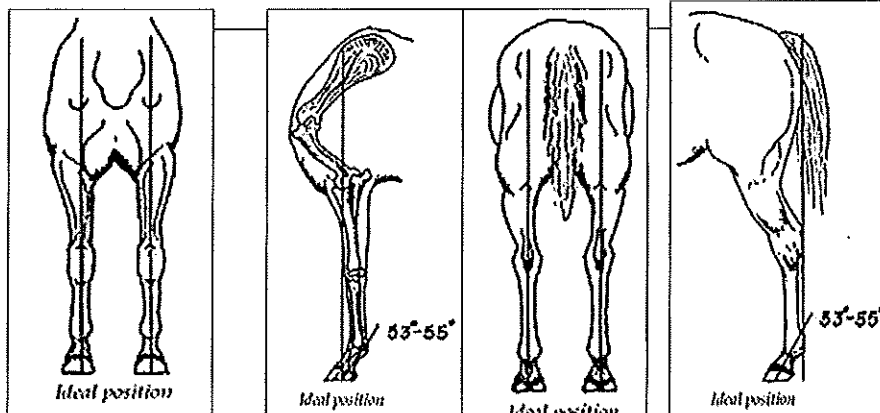


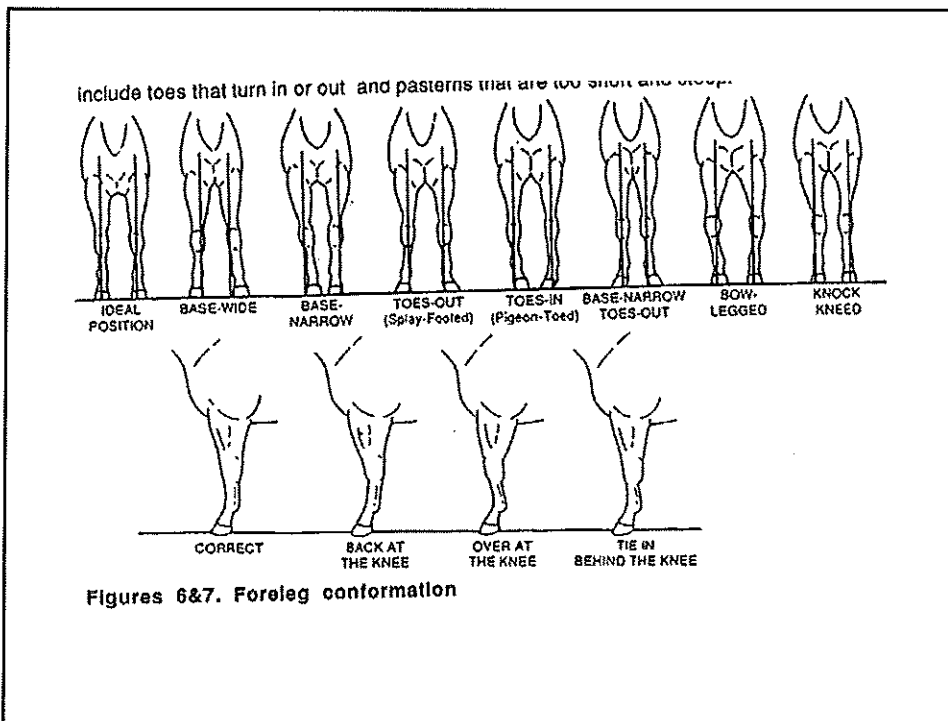
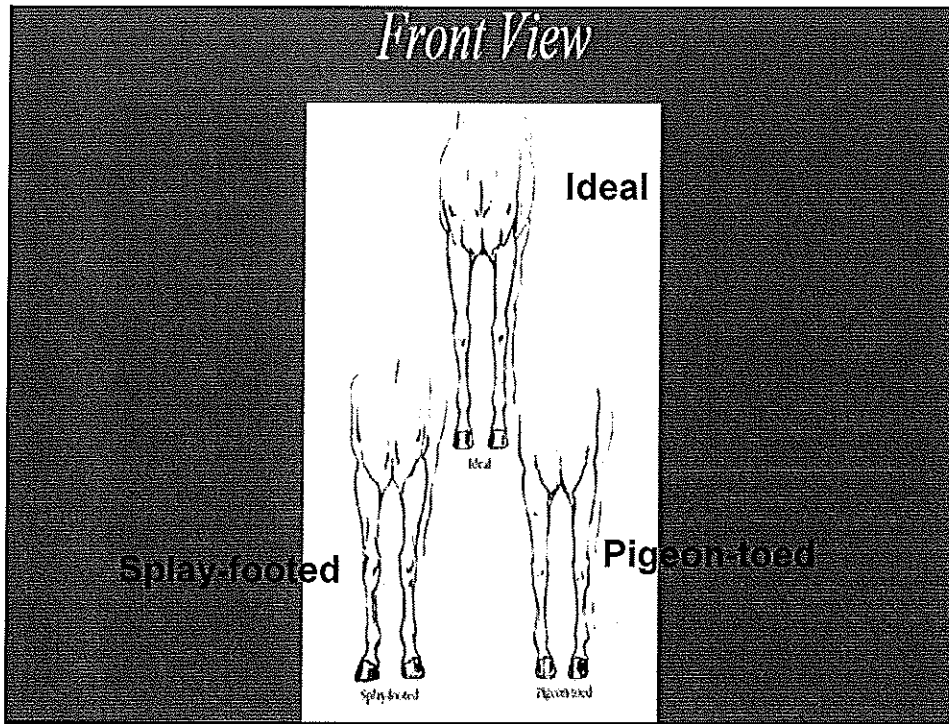
Forelegs, viewed from the front, should be centered under the points of the shoulders.

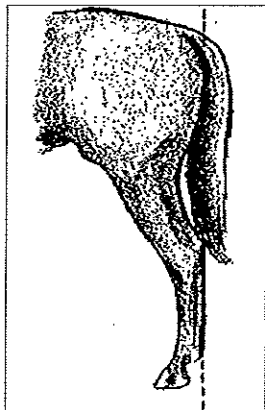
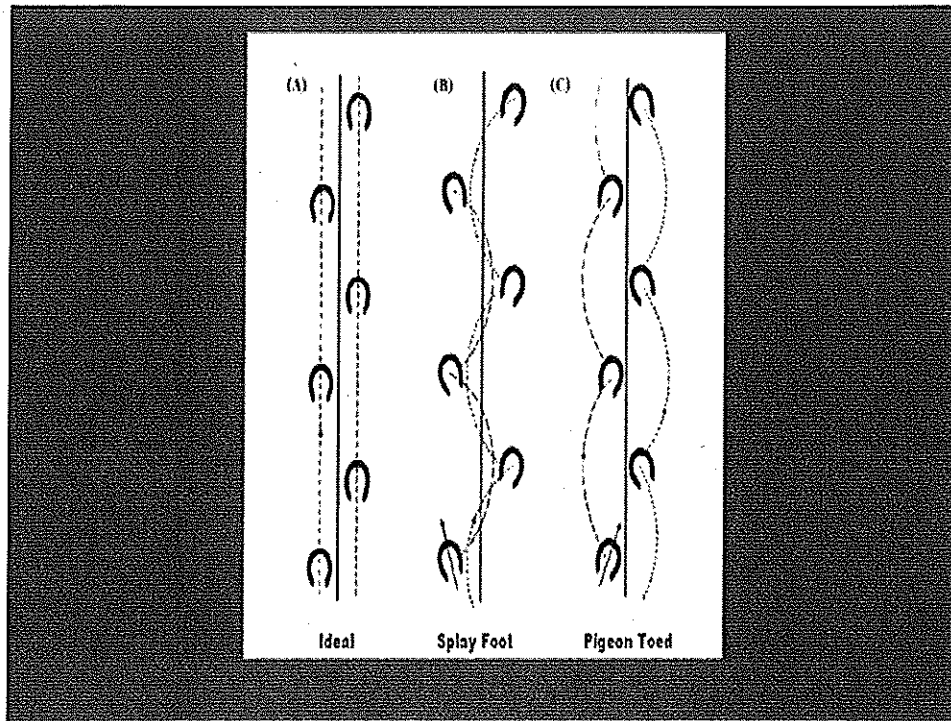


From the side, knees should be flat and pastern should slope at about 45 degrees.

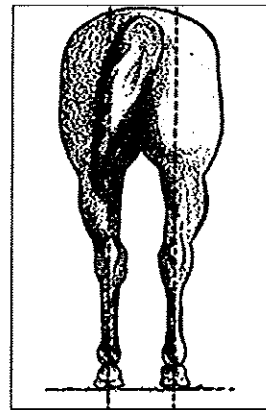
Ideal Leg Conformation



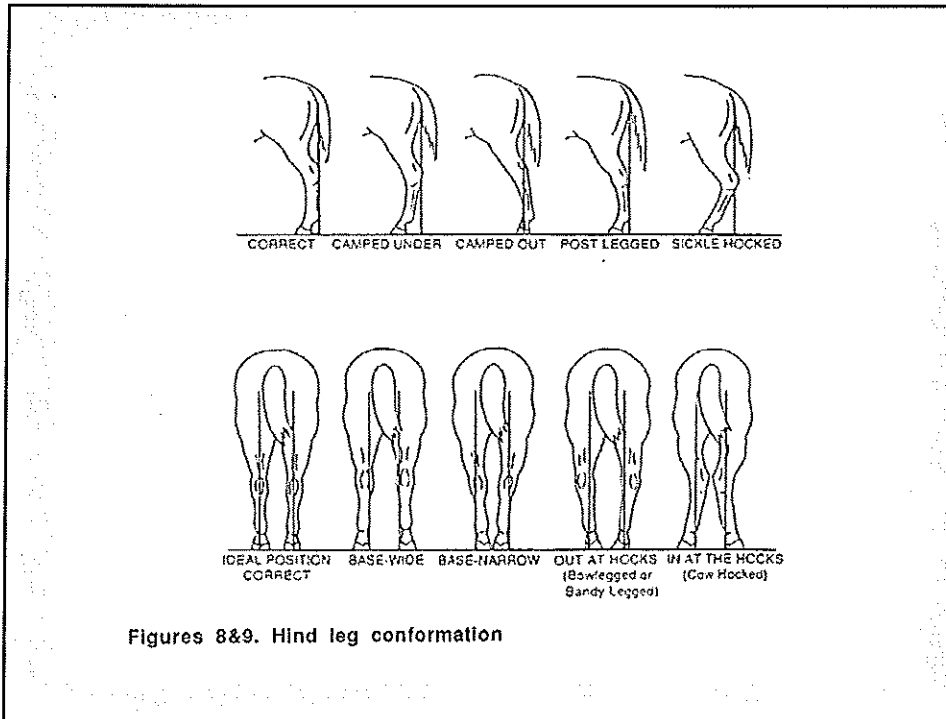




Hind legs, viewed from the rear, should be centered under the points of the buttocks;

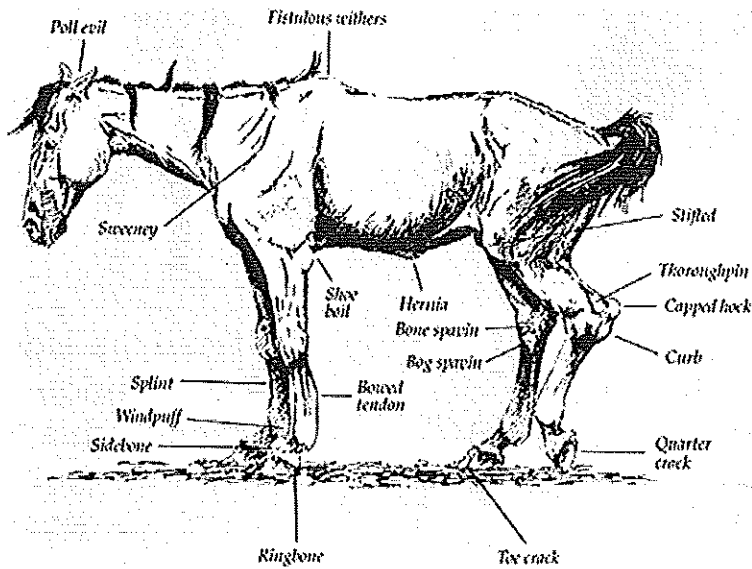


From the side, hock, cannon and fetlock should align with the back of the buttock.



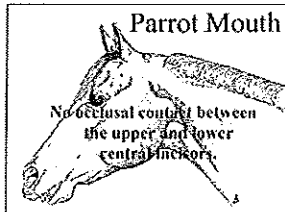
Figures 8&9. Hind leg conformation

Blemishes and Unsoundnesses

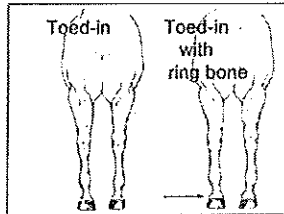
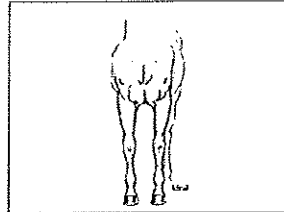
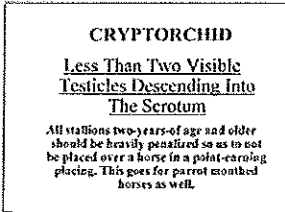


Blemishes

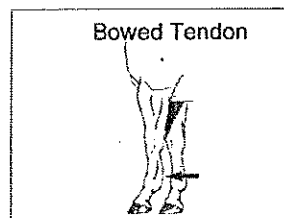
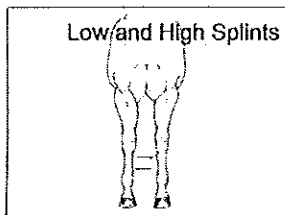
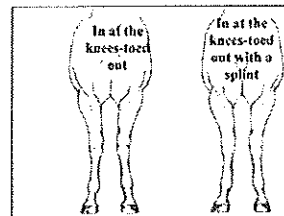
CRIPPLES DO BEHAVE UNUSUALLY



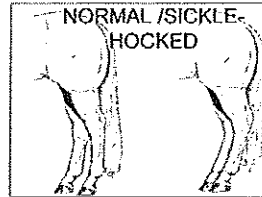
DON'T PUT A PAIR CRIPPLES TOGETHER



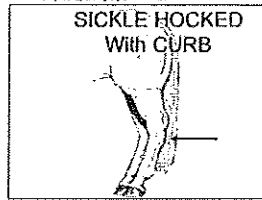
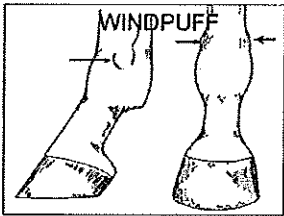
Blemishes



Blemishes

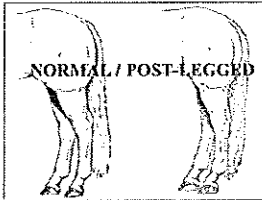
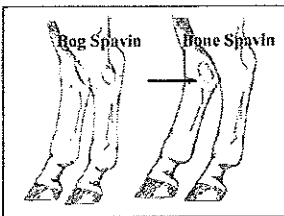


- If the hind hock angles inward - will affect balance
- Long the length of leg bones - doesn't affect speed

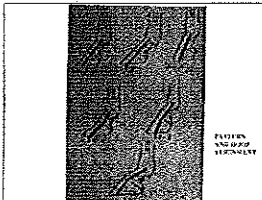
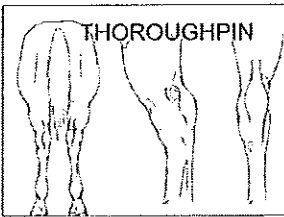


- This hock is a sign of a bad hock
- If the hock angles inward, it's probably these will be very balanced but with stress put on hocks

Blemishes



- Hocks will tend to be more inward set to the body
- More and more



Characteristics of a Successful Judge



- ☞ Clear mental picture of the ideal or type
 - ☞ Ability to recognize undesirable traits
- ☞ Ability to employ deductive reasoning
 - ☞ Incorporate practical decisions in a positive manner
- ☞ Mental and physical stamina necessary to
 - ☞ Make logical decisions under pressure
- ☞ Ability to effectively defend the placing of a class



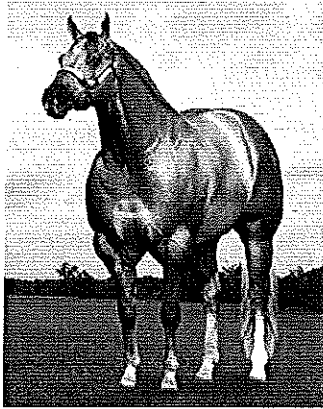
**POSITIVE
EVALUATION**

VS.

ELIMINATION

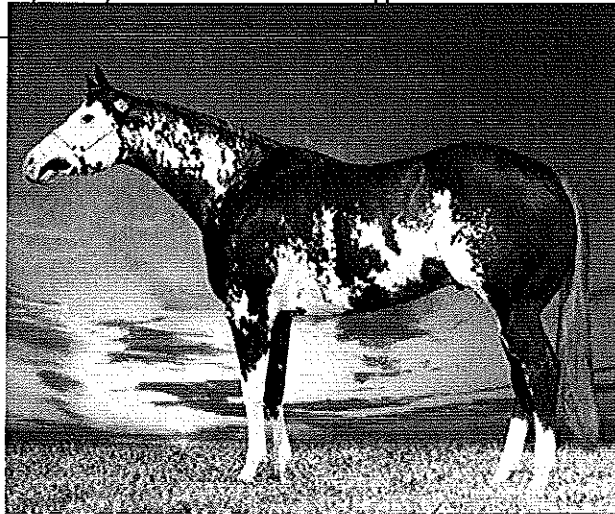
Mr Yella Fella

2005, 2006, 2007, 2008
Leading AQHA Halter Sire



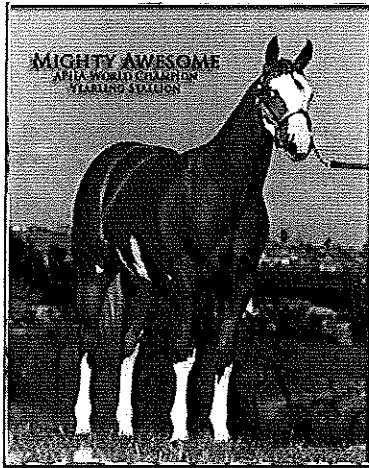
Sock Broker

1997, 1998, 1999 APHA Leading Sire of Halter Horses

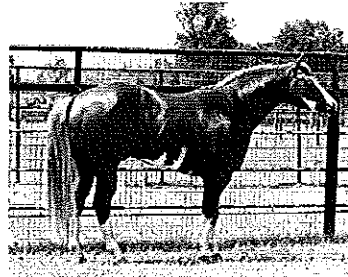


Mighty Awesome

All Time Leading APHA Halter Sire



B



Intoxicate

2003 Sorrel Stallion



NO "IMPRESSIVE" BLOODLINES

SKIPS CONTENTION

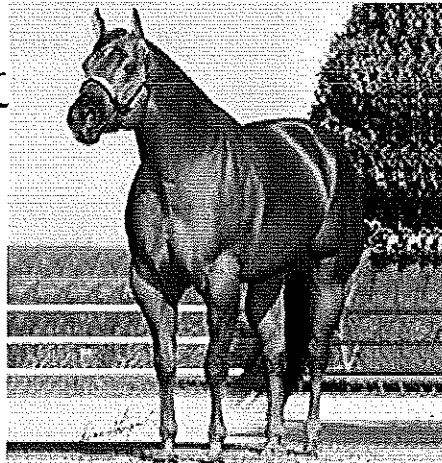
1996 AQHA APHA Stallion • 15.2 TOPI • 16 HANDS
 Sire: CLASSICAL SKIPPER (Skipper Jack & Skipper)
 Dam: AIR OF JOY (Skipper Jack & Skipper's Kid)

APHA BORN HEALER IN 2 SHOWS
 First under all Judges with 5 Grand & 1 Reserve
 2001 APHA HONOR ROLL

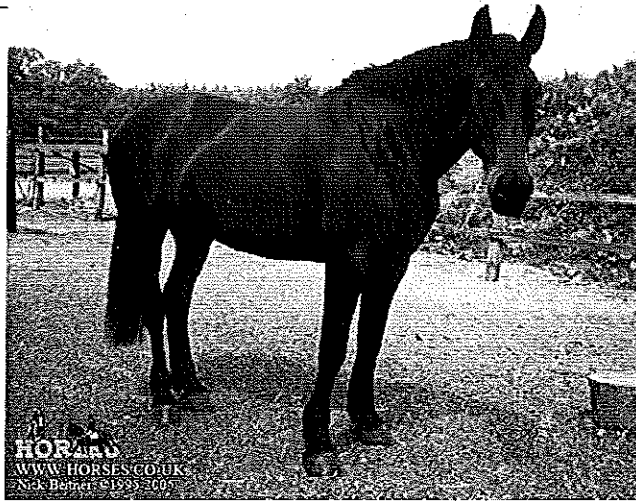
Sire of
 Superior & RDM Earners
 Grand Prix, National
 Champion, and AQHA
 World Show Top 10, and
 Many Priority Winners

Perpetualism

1993 Stallion
 16 Hands, 1450 lbs.
 Three Time World
 Champion



Lucky





Smart Chic Olena

\$8,000,000.00 Sire (NCHA, NRHA, NRCHA)

