



ARABIAN HORSE ASSOCIATION

Judges & Stewards

RANCH HORSE CLASSES

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RANCH RIDING - GENERAL

Ranch Riding classes will be held in accordance with the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) rules except as stated herein:

- The purpose of the Ranch Riding classes is to measure the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from performing one ranch task to another.
- The horse should reflect the versatility, attitude and movement of a working ranch horse being ridden outside the confines of an arena.
- Transitions should be performed where designated, with smoothness and responsiveness.
- The overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be free-flowing and ground covering

for all gaits, with the emphasis on forward movement.

- The horse can be ridden with light contact or on a relatively loose rein without requiring undue restraint, but not shown on a full drape of reins.
- The overall manners and responsiveness of the ranch horse to make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as the quality of the movement are of primary considerations.
- The ideal ranch horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait.

APPOINTMENTS

- For rules regarding correct Western appointments, refer to AR215.
- Appointments with silver should not count over good working tack. Silver on bridles and saddles and the use of weighted reins is discouraged.
- Touching or holding the saddle horn is permitted.
- Hoof polish is discouraged but will not be penalized.
- It is customary to not remove the hair from the insides of the ears, but horses with clean clipped ears will not be penalized.
- Trimming of the bridle path, fetlocks, and excessive (long) facial hair is permitted.

GAIT DEFINITIONS

- **Gait Definitions for Ranch classes.** In all gaits, movement of the ranch horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly, like that of a working ranch horse. The following terminology shall apply:
- **The walk** is a natural, flat footed, four-beat gait. The gait is rhythmic and ground-covering. As in all gaits, the horse should display a level, or slightly above level topline with a bright, attentive expression.
- **The extended walk** is an obvious lengthening of

- stride that will naturally increase the pace. The horse should move in a natural manner (not a running walk) as if it were moving across an open pasture.
- **The trot** is a natural two-beat gait demonstrating more forward motion than the western jog.
 - **The extended trot** is an obvious lengthening of the stride with a definite increase in pace. The horse should be moving in a manner as if it were covering a large area on a ranch with an above level topline. Posting at the extended trot is permitted.
 - **The lope** is a three-beat gait. The lope should be relaxed and smooth with a natural, forward moving stride.
 - **The extended lope** is not a run or a race but should be an obvious lengthening of the stride, demonstrating a forward, working speed. The horse should display an above level topline with a bright, attentive expression. expression.
 - ***The simple lead change is performed through the walk or jog within three strides.***

JUDGING OF GAITS

There will be an order of priority for evaluating gaits. This hierarchy of consideration must be adhered to by judges and will be a great aid to exhibitors for how their horses should be presented and are listed in order of importance.

- **Correctness**-the most important element judges must assess if the exhibitor has performed each gait correctly during all, or the majority of the class, in order to have a correct or positive evaluation. This includes a four-beat walk, two-beat jog/trot and three-beat lope/canter. The distinctness of the designated cadence for the gait being performed is essential.
- **Quality** is the second most important element and can only be considered positively if the gait performance has complied with the first element of correctness. When evaluating the pleasing characteristics of a gait, among many considerations, judges must consider overall gracefulness, relaxed expression, topline, softness of movement, consistency, and length of stride of the designated gait.
- **Degree of Difficulty**-is the least important and must only be considered if the requirement for

correctness has been met and combination of correctness and quality allow the performance to be considered for placement. Difficulty is greatly influenced by exhibiting a pleasure horse at a pace and speed that allows for correctness and best quality of a gait for that individual. A performance of a walk that is ground covering and free flowing has a high degree of difficulty. A jog/trot or lope/canter that is performed with a slow rhythm without sacrificing correctness or quality has a high degree of difficulty. Slowness that sacrifices correctness or negatively impacts quality must be considered incorrect and a poor performance at best.

RANCH HORSE SCORING

- See AR247 for Ranch Horse Scoring
- Each horse/exhibitor team is scored between 0-100 points and automatically begins the run with a score of 70 points.
- The horse/exhibitor team is scored on the quality of each maneuver (e.g. -1 1/2 extremely poor, -1 very poor, -1/2 poor, 0 correct, + 1/2 good, +1 very good and +1 1/2 excellent).
- Maneuver evaluations and penalty applications are to be determined independently.
- A judge should err on the side of the exhibitor when questionable circumstances arise.
- It is the judge's responsibility to record what happens, including penalties, and objectively evaluate how well each maneuver was performed.
- All runs begin upon entering the area of competition and any infractions are subject to penalty at that time.
- If there is any deviation of the Ranch scoring contained within the current Arabian rules, the references within AQHA, NRHA, or NRCHA rule books regarding scoring will prevail.
 - In all non-scored classes, a horse exhibiting an unnatural Arabian tail carriage must be penalized and positioned last in the class.
 - In all scored classes, a horse exhibiting an unnatural Arabian tail carriage must be assessed a 10-point penalty.

NOTE. AR247.2b5 and AR262.2b6 are revised to read: Walking or trotting more than three strides when making a simple lead change.

PATTERNS

Ranch Riding patterns must be chosen from the current AQHA Patterns which may be found in the AQHA Rulebook (SHW 417) or on the AHA website. AHA prescribed score sheets and patterns can be downloaded from the AHA website.

<https://www.arabianhorses.org/judges-stewards/patterns/>

- Ask the USEF/EC Steward to review patterns before they are posted.
- There is no time limit required for a Ranch Riding pattern.
- The posted pattern must be followed unless a change becomes necessary due to safety considerations.
- If a pattern or course is posted and publicly announced and there is a discrepancy between the posted and the announced pattern, the posted pattern must be followed.
- There is no time limit required for a Ranch Riding pattern.
- The horse and rider will be scored on movement, which is cadence and rhythm of gaits, smoothness and consistency in performance, along with how they perform the optional maneuvers. Then the score sheets will be posted for the exhibitors' benefit.
- **Pattern Placement** – The pattern should be run as close to the drawn/written description as possible. Deviations from such are deemed to be a fault and a deduction for each maneuver not properly placed should be made. Rider should make good utilization of the arena space without “riding the rail.”
- **Transitions** – Not only should maneuvers and transitions be properly placed according to the pattern, but smooth and responsive transitions between maneuvers and from gait to gait should be rewarded. Conversely rough and awkward transitions should result in maneuver score deductions.
- **Way Of Going** – The overall cadence and

performance of gaits should be free-flowing and ground covering, emphasis on forward movement. The overall frame and quality of gait or execution of the maneuver should be taken into account in conjunction with the individual conformation of the horse when considering the overall frame or way of going, as well as any “resistance” or “assistance” in maintaining such frame.

- Horses should NOT perform or be rewarded for performing gaits as they do in Western Pleasure. The horses are to be presented in a more forward-moving style than the typical Western Pleasure Horse

RANCH RAIL PLEASURE

- The ranch horse rail pleasure class measures the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from one ranch task to another and should reflect the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working horse. The horse should be well-broke, relaxed, quiet, soft, and cadenced at all gaits.
- The ideal ranch rail pleasure horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait. In all gaits, movement of the ranch rail pleasure horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly, like that of a working ranch horse.
- The horse should be ridden on a relatively loose rein with light contact and without requiring undue restraint.
- This class should show the horse's ability to work at a forward, working speed while under control by the exhibitor.
- Horses may cross-enter with any other pleasure class at the same show.
- See AR215 for Ranch Rail Appointments and Conduct
- See AR250 for Ranch Rail Class Specifications
- See AR251 for Ranch Rail Scoring

VERSATILITY RANCH HORSE DIVISION (VRH)

- The Versatility Ranch classes will be held in accordance with AQHA rules for class conduct, judging, specific scoring, and patterns as modified by the following Arabian Rules. Where the Arabian Rules are silent, AQHA rules prevail.

- The Versatility Ranch Horse division demonstrates the performance, versatility, and conformation of the Arabian and Half Arabian Horse as a working ranch horse. The intent is to reward an exhibitor and/or horse based on their level of expertise. Classes within the Versatility Ranch Horse Division may be held individually at approved competitions or held collectively as a Versatility Ranch Horse Competition.
- VRH Ranch Riding and VRH Ranch Trail may be combined and held at the same time or held independently. If combined, each class will be scored individually and placed individually.
- VRH Ranch Reining and VRH Ranch Cow Work may be combined and held at the same time.
- No horses less than 3 years of age may be exhibited.
- See AR256-AR284 for VRH rules.
- See AR249 for VRH Appointments and Conduct
 - Get-down rope definition and use. See photo to the right.
 - Two-rein equipment



- Hoof polish is prohibited
- No braided or banded manes/tails or tail extensions, except in any VRH class where roping is involved, the horse's mane may be braided for a distance of 12"- 16" in front of the saddle pad. No ribbons or other kind of ornamentation will be allowed
- In the case of a fall by a horse or exhibitor, the run must end when the exhibitor or horse fall to the ground. A horse is considered to have fallen when all four feet are extended in the same direction. An exhibitor is considered to have fallen when the exhibitor is no longer astride.

SCORE SHEETS

Here are the top portions of the various Ranch score sheets. Please refer to

<https://www.arabianhorses.org/judges-stewards/patterns/> for the most updated version of all patterns.



SHOW _____

CLASS _____

Ranch Riding Score Sheet Pattern 14

DATE: _____

JUDGE: _____

One (1) Point Penalties

Too Slow (per gait)
Over bridled (per maneuver)
Out of frame (per maneuver)
Break of gait at walk or trot for 2 strides or less
Wrong Lead or out of lead for 2 strides or less

Three (3) Point Penalties

Break of gait at walk or trot for more than 2 strides
Break of gait at lope, except when correcting an incorrect lead, wrong lead, or out of lead
Wrong Lead or out of lead for more than 2 strides
Cross cantering more than 2 strides when changing lead
Draped reins (per maneuver)
Walking or Trotting more than 3 strides when making simple lead change
Severe disturbance of any obstacle
Trotting more than 3 strides in lope departures or when exiting rollback

Five (5) Point Penalties

Blatant disobedience - kick, bite, buck, rear, etc. for each refusal

Ten (10) Point Penalties

Off Pattern
Eliminates or adds maneuver
Failure to complete the pattern as written
Unnatural Arabian tail carriage AR105.2b *(assess 1 time only)*

Zero (0) Score

Major disobedience or schooling
Prohibited use of fingers or hands on reins
Incomplete/prohibited attire (AR215.4b1)
No score (DQ)
Lameness
Abuse
Prohibited equipment
Fresh blood in the mouth, nose, chin, shoulder, barrel and or hip area AR105.6
Disrespect or misconduct
Leaving working area before pattern is complete
Fall of horse/exhibitor

No specific penalties will be incurred for nicks/hits of logs/poles or for over/under spins but deductions may be made in maneuver score
Begins with a score of 70 -1 1/2 extremely poor, -1 Very Poor, -1/2 Poor, 0 correct, +1/2 Good, +1 Very Good, +1 1/2 Excellent
AR 105.2 10 Pt Penalty must be assessed for unnatural Arabian Tail Carriage

As of 4/24/2025

	T	Ex T	LL	Ex T	W	RL	T	Ex L (LL)	Collect CL, Ex L (RL)	T	LH Push Gate	WO's	RH Push Gate	W	S. 360 X 2 B	AR105.2	SCORE
Maneuver	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	<i>Tail 10 pt</i>	Penalty Total



VRH Ranch Horse Reining Score Sheet

SHOW _____

DATE: _____

CLASS NO: _____

CLASS TITLE: _____

1/2 Point Penalties:

- Starting a circle or exiting a rollback at a trot for up to two strides
- Delayed change of lead by one stride where the lead change is required by the pattern description
- Failure to remain a minimum of twenty feet from the wall or fence when approaching a stop and/or rollback
- Over-spin or under-spin up to 1/8 turn

1 Point Penalties:

- Over-brided (permaneuver)
- Out of frame (per maneuver)
- Out of lead in the circles
- figure eights, or around the end of the arena. (This penalty is cumulative and will be deducted for each quarter of a circle the horse is out of lead)
- Over or under spinning 1/8 to 1/4 turn
- Slipping rein

2 Point Penalties:

- Break of gait
- Freeze up in spins or rollbacks
- Failure to stop or walk before executing a lopede departure on trot-in patterns
- Failure to be in a lopede prior to the first marker on run-in patterns
- Failure to completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position
- Trotting beyond 2 strides, but less than 1/2 circle or 1/2 length of arena

5 Point Penalties:

- Spurring in front of cinch
- Blatant disobedience
- Use of either hand to instill fear/praise

10 Point Penalty:

- Unnatural Arabian Tail carriage AR105.2b
- Off Pattern:
 - Breaking pattern
 - Eliminates or adds maneuver
 - incomplete maneuver (i.e., over or under spinning, backing more than two strides)
- Repeated blatant disobedience
- Use of two hands (except in Jr and level 1 horses shown snaffle bit/hackamore)
- More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein)
- Trotting in excess of 1/2 circle or 1/2 length of the arena

Zero Score

- Major disobedience or schooling
- Prohibited use of fingers of hands on reins

No Score (DQ):

- Lameness
- Abuse
- Prohibited (illegal) equipment
- Disrespect or misconduct
- Leaving arena before pattern is complete
- Improper western attire
- Fall of horse/rider
- Fresh blood in the mouth, nose, chin, shoulder, barrel, and/or hip area. SEE USEF AR105.6

4/1/24

Go order	Back #		OBSTACLE SCORES										10 POINT PENALTY	PENALTY TOTAL	Score		
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
Tie-Breaker																	
Maneuver Description																	
		PENALTY															
		SCORE															
		SUB TOTAL															



VRH Ranch Horse Trail Score Sheet

SHOW _____

DATE: _____

CLASS: _____

JUDGE: _____

1 Point Penalties:

- Over-brided (per maneuver)
- Out of frame (per maneuver)
- Each hit, bite, or stepping on a log, cone, plant or any component of the obstacle.
- Incorrect or break of gait at walk or trot for two strides or less.
- Both front or hind feet in a single-stride space at a walk or trot
- Skipping over or failing to step into required space.
- Split log in lopede
- Incorrect number of strides, if specified
- One or two steps on mount/dismount on/ or ground tie (except shifting to balance)
-

3 Point Penalties:

- Wrong lead or out of lead
- Draped reins (per maneuver)
- Break of gait at lopede, except when correcting an incorrect lead
- Break of gait at walk or trot for more than two (2) strides
- Three to four steps on mount/dismount on ground tie
- Trotting for more than 3 strides in lopede departures or exiting rollback
- Knocking over or severely disturbing an obstacle
- Stepping out or falling off an obstacle with 1 foot
- Missing or evading a part of log/obstacle with 1 foot

5 Point Penalties:

- Spurring in front of cinch
- Blatant disobedience
- Use of either hand to instill fear/praise
- Knocking over, stepping out of, or falling off of an obstacle with more than 1 foot
- Dropping an object required to be carried
- 1st or 2nd cumulative refusal
- Letting go of gate
- 5 or more steps on mount/dismount or ground tie
- Missing or evading a part of log/obstacle with more than 1 foot
- 3rd refusal
- repeated blatant disobedience,
- Failure to tally and remain tallied during the drag
- Use of two hands (except Jr horses in snaffle bit/hackamore)
- More than 1 finger between split reins or any between romal (except in 2-reined)
- Failure to Open and shut gate or failure to complete gate

Zero Score

- Major disobedience or schooling
- Prohibited use of fingers or hands on reins

No Score (DQ):

- Wilful Abuse
- Lameness
- Disrespect or misconduct
- Illegal equipment
- Fall of horse/rider
- Improper western attire
- Leaving arena before pattern is complete.
- Improper western attire
- Fall or horse/rider
- Fresh blood in the mouth, nose, chin, shoulder, barrel, and/or hip area. SEE USEF AR105.6

AR 105.2 10 Pt Penalty must be assessed for unnatural Arabian Tail Carriage

4/1/24

Begins with a score of 70 - 1 1/2 Extremely Poor, -1 Very Poor, -1/2 Poor, 0 Correct, +1/2 Good, +1 Very Good, +1 1/2 Excellent

Maneuver Description			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	AR105.2 Tail 10 pt	Penalty Total	SCORE
Draw	Back #	Penalty													
		Score													
		Sub T													



VRH Ranch Cutting Score Sheet

Show: _____ Date _____
Class # _____ Class Title _____

1 POINT PENALTIES:	5 POINT PENALTIES:	ZERO SCORE (0)
Over Bridled (per maneuver)	Horse quylling cow	Turning tail
Out of Frame (per maneuver)	Losing cow	Failure to cut two cows
Losing working advantage	Changing cattle after a specific commitment	Major disobedience or schooling
Toe, foot or stirrup on the shoulder	Failure to separate a single animal after leaving herd	Use of two hands (except Jr. horse shown in a snaffle bit hackamore)
Working out of position	Blatant disobedience	More than one finger between split reins or any finger between romal reins (except in two-rein)
3 POINT PENALTIES:	10 POINT PENALTIES:	NO SCORE (DQ)
Cattle picked up or scattered	Unnatural Arabian Tail carriage AR105.2b	Fresh blood in the mouth, nose, chin, shoulder, barrel, and/or hip area. SEE USEF AR105.6
Spurring on shoulder	Off Pattern (OP)	Lameness
Pawing or biting cattle	Eliminates or adds maneuver	Abuse
Back fence	Incomplete maneuver	Prohibited equipment
Hot quit	Failure to complete pattern as written	Excessive disturbance of herd to the point that exhibitor is asked to leave arena

Begins with a score of 70 -1 1/2 Extremely Poor. -1 Very Poor. -1/2 Poor. 0 Correct. +1/2 Good. +1 Very Good. +1 1/2 Excellent

Prepared by the

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