

Ranch Horse Pleasure (class is worked on the rail)

The MVHSA Ranch Horse Pleasure class is a rail class created to exhibit the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working ranch horse. These guidelines and rules are a compilation of the rules of the American Ranch Horse Association and the American Quarter Horse Association designed to open the door for the open show exhibitor and their horse to participate in the ranch horse experience.

MOVEMENT OF A RANCH HORSE

Exhibitor should not be penalized for picking up reins or moving horses body if horse is soft, willing and free of resistance. Horse should be credited for softness through transitions, departures, stops, and back-ups. The horse should drive off his hind quarters, have a bright expression with ears alert and be shown on a reasonable loose rein, but with light contact and control, not on a full drape of reins. When asked to extend, he should move out with the same flowing motion. Quality of movement is the primary consideration.

EXHIBITORS ATTIRE:

In all Ranch classes it is required that exhibitors wear traditional western attire that reflects the true ranch lifestyle. Appropriate western attire includes a long sleeve shirt with collar and cuff that has buttons or snaps that must be fastened at the wrist, a western hat and boots with heels. Shirts that have any crystals, glitter and/or sequins will result in a disqualification, but this rule excludes belts, jeans, (retro) embroidery, pearl snaps, and western hats. Adding chinks, wild rags or western scarves really promote a true ranch horse look.

WESTERN EQUIPMENT:

- A) Hackamore (or bosal), conventional snaffle bits. No so called mechanical hackamore. Mecate reins may be used with a snaffle bit when ridden with two hands on a junior horse.
- B) A curb bit, only one hand may be used on the reins and the hand must not be changed, or romal.
- C) Bridles may be leather, rawhide or a combination thereof, and may have vaquero style silver, nickel, copper or brass buckles, any type of leather inlaid in cheeks of the bridle or “silver-colored” dots.
- D) Western saddle and other equipment should be suitable for ranch work – good working tack. It is suggested competitors use a breast collar and a rear cinch. No silver is to be on saddles beyond conchos, two (2) inch in width corner plates and/or cantle name plates, horn caps, and silver lacing. Saddles with excessive silver have the option to use duct tape or something similar to cover any excessive silver and will not be penalized. Any exhibitor’s saddle that has any silver other than what is stated above and that is visible will be disqualified. Saddles may have aluminum stirrups with engraving. All bits and spurs are excluded from any silver requirements. Keep the tack with the ranch horse tradition in mind.

EQUIPMENT/GROOMING:

- A) Hair dyes, hoof black, hoof polish and/or oil is not allowed.
- B) Clipping ears, bridle path, roached manes, muzzle, and legs is left to the discretion of the exhibitor and has no bearing on the horse’s conformation and/or performance.
- C) The horse should be clean and shown as naturally as possible.
- D) Banded or braided manes, braided tails, tie-in tails and/or extensions are not allowed.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

- A) Rope or riata must be coiled and attached to the saddle.
- B) Hobbles attached to saddle.
- C) Tapaderos are not allowed.
- D) Protective boots, leg wraps and bandages are allowed.
- E) Spurs

F) Neck rope with romals

CLASS PROCEDURE

A) No horse may cross-enter, a western pleasure and ranch pleasure class at the same show regardless of division such as (Youth Age Groups, Open, Adult, or Walk Trot Classes English & Western Combined).

B) Horses must work both ways of the ring at all three gaits plus the extended trot as well as stop(s) and back. At the option of the judge, horses may be asked to extend the walk and/or the lope, one or both ways of the ring. Horses are required to stand quietly.

C) Horses are to be reversed to the inside, but shall not be asked to reverse at the lope.

D) Rider shall not be required to dismount except in the event the judge wishes to check equipment.

PERFORMANCE GAITS. Movement of the ranch riding horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly, like that of a working ranch horse.

A) THE WALK & EXTENDED WALK: 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.

1. Poor Walk: Uneven pace, no cadence, no flow and/or may appear intimidated or appear to march.

1a. Poor Extended Walk: Never lengthens stride, lack of ground covering.

2. Average Walk: has a four-beat gait, level top line and is relaxed.

2a. Average Extended Walk: Moves up in pace/covers more ground.

3. Good Walk: has a flowing four-beat gait, level top line, relaxed and is bright and attentive.

3a. Good Extended Walk: covers reasonable amount of ground; obvious lengthening in stride while being effortless for the horse.

B) THE TROT & EXTENDED TROT: 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.

1. Unacceptable Trot: cannot perform a two-beat gait and has no flow or balance in the motion.

2. Poor Trot: hesitant motion. Does not keep even and balanced motion or has negative characteristics such as walking behind, dragging rear toes or taking uneven length of stride with the front and rear legs.

2a. Poor Extended Trot: never lengthens stride and may appear to be rough to ride

3. Good Trot: is comfortable to ride while having a consistent two-beat gait. The horse guides well and appears to be relaxed.

3a. Average Extended Trot: moves up in its pace and appears to be smooth to ride.

4. Excellent Trot: effortless and very efficient motion. He has a bright and alert expression and exhibits more lift and self-carriage shows confidence, yet soft with its motion while being balanced and under control.

4a. Excellent Extended Trot: has obvious lengthening of stride with an increase in pace while exerting less effort and appears smooth to ride.

C) THE LOPE: The lope is a three-beat gait and should be relaxed and smooth with a natural, forward moving stride.

1. Poor Lope: does not have a three-beat gait. No flow, rhythm or balance. Uncomfortable to ride.

2. Average Lope: has a true three-beat gait with very little head and neck motion. He guides well and has a relaxed appearance.

3. Good Lope: has more lift and flow than average horse. Has a strong but smooth drive from behind. Steady top line, relaxed appearance and is responsive to rider's aids. Appears to be comfortable to ride.

4. Excellent Lope: has a round back with an effortless strong, deep stride with the rear legs and a flat swinging with the front legs. Horse has a great degree of lift and self-carriage and is relaxed yet alert and confident.

CREDITS:

- 1) Natural ground covering gaits
- 2) Consistency at all gaits
- 3) Smooth upward and downward transitions
- 4) Work on reasonably loose rein without excessive cueing to maintain moderate pace
- 5) Giving the appearance of being able to do a days work
- 6) Athletic Ability/Agile
- 7) Softness of horses' chin, poll, neck, shoulder, body, hip and being broke through the whole body.

Faults to be scored according to severity:

- 1) Excessive speed (any gait)
- 2) Being on the wrong lead or cross-cantering
- 3) Breaking gait (including not walking when called for)
- 4) Excessive slowness in any gait, loss of forward momentum (ie. animated or artificial gait at the lope)
- 5) Failure or delay to take the appropriate gait when called
- 6) Over flexing or straining neck in carriage so that the nose is behind the vertical
- 7) Excessive nosing out
- 8) Opening/gapping mouth excessively
- 9) Stumbling
- 10) Use of spur in front of the cinch
- 11) If horse appears sullen, dull, lethargic, emaciated, drawn or overly tired
- 12) Quick, choppy or pony-stride
- 13) Overly canted at the lope (horses which lope with haunches in towards the center of arena)
- 14) Excessive head bobbing
- 15) Excessive ringing of tail
- 16) Blatant disobedience

The following will result in a **disqualification**: (MAY NOT CROSS ENTER INTO ANY OTHER WESTERN PLEASURE CLASS AT THE SAME SHOW, INCLUDES TWO OR THREE GAITED)

- A) Abuse of an animal in the show arena and/or evidence that an act of abuse has occurred prior to or during the exhibition of a horse in competition;
- B) Use of illegal equipment, including hoof dressings, braided or banded manes, wire on bits, bosals, or curb chains, tack collars, tie downs, nosebands, cavassons, whips or bats ;
- C) Unsafe, broken, improper fitting equipment, equipment failures;
- D) Use of tail extension or any attachment that alters the movement of or circulation of the tail;
- E) Grabbing the saddle horn or any other part of the saddle;
- F) Disrespect or misconduct of exhibitor;
- G) Unsafe conditions or improper exhibition pertaining to both horse and/or rider, being out of control;
- H) Failure to display the correct exhibitor number;
- I) Illegal use of hands on reins;
- J) Performing gaits other than specified;
- K) Dropping a rein that contacts the ground while horse is in motion;
- L) Fall to the ground by horse or rider. A horse is deemed to have fallen when its shoulder and/or hip and/or underline touches the ground;
- M) Closed reins are not allowed except as standard romal reins, mecates on snaffle bits and bosals;
- N) The use of more than index finger or first finger between reins and use of two (2) hands (exception in snaffle bit and bosal);
- O) Obvious lameness;
- P) Inappropriate attire and/or prohibited or missing equipment as required by the rules.