



## Percheron Telersgenootskap van SA Percheron Breeders Society of SA

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# Guidelines *for* Inspecting Percherons in South Africa

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# Introduction

The purpose of inspection is to classify the horses in an objective and transparent way to the Orientation of the breed.

- **‘Objective’**  
= Repeatability of the results.
- **‘Transparent’**  
= I can explain and justify my classification.
- **‘Orientation of the breed’**  
= The classification is in line with breed standards and the evolution of the breed.

The general objective to achieve is defined by the Percheron Constitution of 2010.

The ultimate objective is to be able to use this inspection guide as a reliable tool for marketing and promoting the Percheron breed and to be able to promote all deserving breeders, both big and small.





# 1. The Importance of Inspection

Beyond a simple beauty contest, inspecting a horse in competition based on conformation and gaits must be viewed as an important event in the life of the animal and its breeder. And like all important events, care must be taken in preparing for it.

The horse must be properly prepared to show it in its best light – its condition must be correct, neither too thin nor too fat, hooves groomed or shod well before the show (not the day before), and the horse must have been trained (especially young animals).



*Promothee du Moulin, Champion de race 2005*

It must have been taught how to stop, correctly standing on its four feet, and be attentive to the breeder's demands. It must also have been taught to travel without getting out of hand and without dragging. It is best to train the horse to meet these stipulations before the show.

Always remember that the inspectors can only inspect what they see at the time of the inspection, so it is especially important that the horse is at its best!

It should always be remembered that competition based on conformation and gait must have an educational role, especially for beginner breeders.

## 2. The distinction between Draft (Trait) and Driving (Diligengier) Percheron

Two types of Percheron are now recognised and inspected separately during a Percheron breeders competition.

### *The Draft (Trait) Percheron*

A large draft horse capable of pulling large loads. It is tall and heavy; its hindquarters are particularly muscular and its croup is more sloped. The draft Percheron is destined for farm work, hauling logs and heavy pulling

### *The Driving (Diligencier) Percheron*

This type able to rapidly pull medium loads. Essentially it is tall, and higher in the middle and on its flanks. Its shoulders are more sloping and its croup less descended. Its trot is sprightly, with long strides. The driving Percheron is destined for sport and prestige driving, for rapid pulling and leisure uses.

#### Main characteristics of the Draft (Trait) Percheron

- Strength
- Roundness
- Boned
- Well-sloped neck



2-year-old filly

#### Main characteristics of the Driving (Diligencier) Percheron

- Lightness
- Speed
- Long, well-oriented neck
- Slender, cylindrical



2-year-old filly

# 3. Standard for the Percheron Breed

Percherons are preferred for their size, weight, attractiveness, quick and naturally solid speed, alertness, strength and docile behaviour patterns.

Percherons are the best-balanced breed of the larger breeds and can perform any kind of work on the farm due to their sturdiness, capability, strength and easy pace. In fact, it is their outstanding adaptability that makes them the most popular horse for farming purposes. If the Percheron is used correctly, it is easy to handle, a willing worker and is pleasing to the eye.

## SECTION A: GENERAL APPEARANCE

### 1. Height

The Percherons' ideal height should be 16 to 16.2 hands and must give the impression of weight and strength. It should be well balanced, with an adequately developed bone structure.

– Mares/geldings: 15 to 19 hands

– Stallions: 16 to 19 hands

### 2. Weight

500 kg to 1200 kg

### 3. Colour

Percherons are usually blue-grey or black with a possibility of brown, bay and chestnut within. Grey and black are more preferable. Spots of different shapes and sizes are found. White is often found on the knucklebone and knuckle joint, but too much white is not desirable.

### 4. Head

The head should be expressive, evoking its Arabian ancestry. This should be medium-sized, relatively long and be wide between the eyes. It should have fine lineaments, with intelligent and lively expressions. Eyes must be big and prominent; ears should be indented, animated, pointed towards the front and fairly long. The nose should be straight or blunt and the nostrils wide and very open. The mouth should be long, the lips firm and the cheeks relatively flat. The jaw bone must be clearly outlined.

### 5. Neck

This should be medium-long, fine cut, arched and nicely attached to shoulders. The throat latch should recede.

### 6. Shoulders

These should be long sloped and powerful and have decline angles of approximately 45 degrees, which enable the horse to carry its neck and head graciously.

## 7. Withers

These should be prominent.

## 8. Breast

This should be broad and deep with well-placed forelegs. The sternum should be fairly prominent.

## 9. Back

This should be short and straight, with ribs strong and broad, over the loins and deep flanks. The middle should be broad.

## 10. Hindquarters

The croup must be long, more or less straight and well-muscled. Seen from the back, the horse must be as wide over the flanks as over the hips. The thigh and gaskin must be heavily muscled.

## 11. Legs

**Front legs:** Forearms should be well muscled.

**Knee:** Must be broad and deep. The long bone (tubular bone) should be short, clean and well developed. The sinew should be strong and clearly observable.

**Knuckle-jaw:** Front to back must be wide and the knucklebone should be fairly long with an angle of 45 degrees to allow freedom of movement.

**Knucklebone:** Must be clean of ringbone and splints.

**Feet:** Should be large with openings at the hocks.

**Back legs:**

- From the back, the hocks must be fairly wide apart.
- Sideways, should be straight from the hock to the knuckle bone. The hocks must be big, but not rough. The long bone should be flat and wide to show good quality.

## SECTION B: MOVEMENT

The horse should move straight while walking or jogging. The walk is very important as it is the pace with which the horse moves as it executes its work. The pace must be long and the feet must be lifted briskly. The hocks are close to each other when walking or jogging.

It should move comfortably with its head lifted high and should be easy to handle. It should be lively and nimble in movement.

**Gaits:** Ample, active, long – both when walking and trotting, with strong engagement of the rump.



## A good Percheron Head

Of all the breeds of draft horses, the Percheron has the neatest and the most animated-looking head. This picture is not perfect, but it is one of the best available. It is the head of Treviso, Grand Champion at the 1921 Ohio state fair and one of the last living sons of the famous old stallion, Dragon.

This picture shows an abundance of neck, but not too much. An over-developed crest is objectionable because of its tendency to 'fall' or bend toward the off side thus detracting from the appearance of the horse. This head closely resembles the typical Percheron head because it is comparatively long and the features are clean-cut, but to be absolutely ideal, it could be a bit bolder. However, the upright position of the ear, the bright, open eye and the wide, open, distanced nostril, give the impression



that this horse has a kind disposition but at the same time is alert to all that is going on about him, a quality which is most characteristic of the breed. The neat throatlatch, the nicely-turned neck, and the comparatively smooth-made jaws of this horse make him particularly pleasing through that portion where his head joins his neck.

The long lean head and well-defined features make up what is termed a 'breedy-looking' head.

A Percheron head cannot be duplicated by any of the other draft breeds. Strong proponent breeding animals almost invariably give evidence in their heads of their excellence as breeders. These qualities are not easily defined on paper, but an experienced breeder knows how to rate them. They indicate the animation and life of the animal, as well as the disposition. Animals that are inclined to be thick and meaty about the head and unduly heavy in throat and jaw usually lack something of the expressiveness of a good breeding animal. Large, prominent eyes are also the most important indication. Animals with dull expressions and listless temperaments are not likely to be impressive breeders. The vital strength of an animal is reflected in its eye.

With further reference to eyes, it should be noted here that sometimes if a horse has a bad eye, the owner allows the foretop to grow heavy and then combs it to the side of the poor eye. Thus it is wise to look under big, heavy foretops for blind, small, or dull eyes, and to ascertain that both are sound.

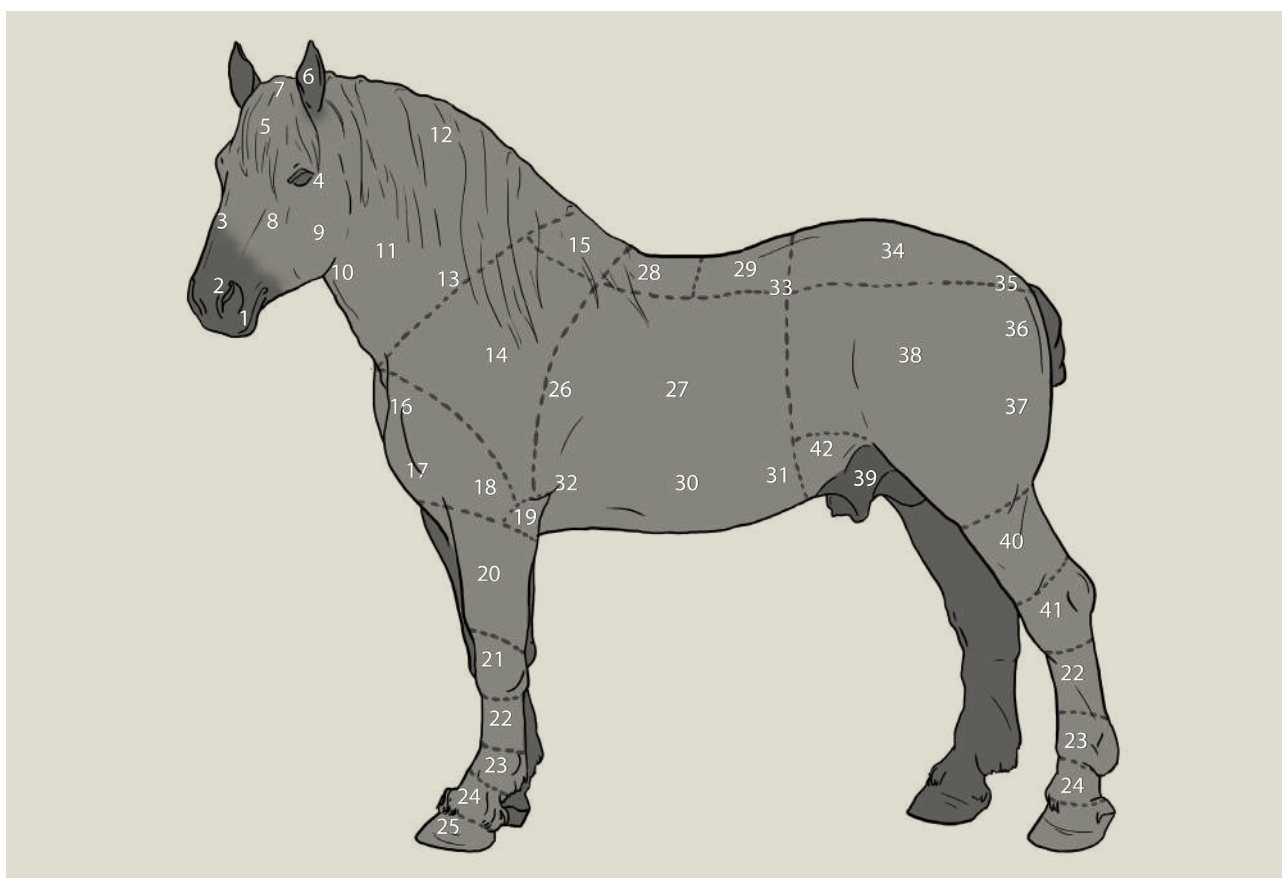
### Notice alertness

While still standing at the front of the animal, an inspector watches how it carries its head. As a breed, the Percheron is given credit for being high-headed. Most of them hold their heads up easily. Their disposition is such that they lift their heads to see all that is going on around them. The movement of head and ears when a stranger approaches usually indicate whether a Percheron has a good disposition. If the disposition is not satisfactory, one ordinarily learns this while still standing near the front of the animal. A quiet, gentle horse usually holds his head and ears in one position with very little movement.

## Slope of shoulder

It takes a shoulder that slopes at about a 45-degree angle to enable a horse to lift its head naturally. If the shoulder is too upright, the inspector can be sure that the horse normally carries his head low. Such a horse may be scared into keeping his head up while it is looking, but this high-headed position is only temporary. If the slope of the shoulder indicates a low-headed horse, several other features accompany this type. A horse of the low-headed type is not as intelligent or as smart-looking as the one that holds its head up without effort. A short, meaty neck and a thick throatlatch, neither of which are liked by inspectors, usually go with a low head and an upright shoulder. Such conformation is not typical of the best individuals of the breed. On the other hand, sometimes a horse with an extremely high head may have a distrustful disposition. A nicely-curved crest and a neat throatlatch go with a reasonably high head. Percherons have the enviable reputation of having a clean-cut throatlatch. It usually indicates freedom from throat troubles. It allows for easier breathing. A horse with a neat, clean throat line can stand a lot more heat than one that is coarse and rather fleshy between the head and shoulder.

## Points of a horse



- |                |                 |                   |                       |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Muzzle      | 2. Nostrils     | 3. Face           | 4. Eye                |
| 5. Forehead    | 6. Ear          | 7. Poll           | 8. Cheek              |
| 9. Jaw         | 10. Throatlatch | 11. Neck          | 12. Crest             |
| 13. Collar bed | 14. Shoulder    | 15. Withers       | 16. Point of shoulder |
| 17. Breast     | 18. Arm         | 19. Elbow         | 20. Forearm           |
| 21. Knee       | 22. Cannon      | 23. Fetlock joint | 24. Pastern           |
| 25. Foot       | 26. Heart girth | 27. Ribs          | 28. Back              |
| 29. Loin       | 30. Underline   | 31. Rear flank    | 32. Fore flank        |
| 33. Coupling   | 34. Croup       | 35. Tail          | 36. Point of buttock  |
| 37. Quarters   | 38. Thigh       | 39. Sheath        | 40. Gaskin            |
| 41. Hock       | 42. Stifle      |                   |                       |

### **Look for unsoundness**

Before stepping back along the side of the animal, the inspector should glance back between the hind legs, first at the inside of one and then the inside of either hind leg. (They are easily seen from this position.) If a bony enlargement at the lower inside edge of the hock seems the same size on both legs, it may mean that the animal has a large, strongly-formed hock and that no unsoundness is present. If one enlargement looks bigger than the other, then the inspector can be sure that the larger one indicates a bone spavin on that leg, although it might also have two spavins. The extent to which the hocks are filled also shows up from this position of observation near the shoulder of the animal. Filled hocks may mean that the animal has been overfed or that it has a defective set of the hind leg. Crooked hocks are more common than a hock correctly set; puffs show up strongly on hocks that are too straight. Our best inspectors object very seriously to filled hocks. Competent draft horse inspectors rarely object to splints on the inside of the front cannon bone unless the splint is very close to the knee. To the inexperienced, it should be explained that splints are not a serious defect in a draft horse.

It would be good for every beginner or experienced horseman to go either to a thoroughly competent veterinarian or a skilled horseman and learn precisely what the unsoundness in Percherons are, and by an examination of live animals, learn how to detect them.

### **Watch for sidebones**

While still near the front of the horse, the inspector should run his/her hand along the outside of the leg so as to feel the inside as well as the outside lateral cartilages on the hoof heads where side bones sometimes occur. Inspectors who do a careful job of inspecting take the time to feel for unsoundness as well as look for it.

There is no subject in inspecting quite as controversial as that of sidebones. When some horses are penalised in the show ring under one inspector because of them, and others under another inspector are not, it makes it difficult for the average breeder to come to a decision regarding this issue. Therefore, inspectors should come to a mutual agreement that horses with sidebones should be penalised.

### **Feeling for sidebones**

Before attempting to handle a horse for sidebones, you should speak to it quietly and also pat it gently on the shoulder or breast. It is wise to bend over from the hips so as to be in a position to move rather quickly in case the horse should jump. The inspector who half squats to feel for side bones is using a dangerous technique – unless the horse is very gentle. Such a position prevents you from moving away from the animal quickly if it becomes frightened and jumps or strikes. With your face toward the rear of the horse, run your hand nearest the horse gently down its leg until your hand reaches the hoof head.

Then and there, feel for sidebones with your fingers extended horizontally and held closely together. If a horse suddenly jerks its foot up, it slides under your extended fingers and pushes them gently to one side. Many inspectors use their thumbs to feel for sidebones, but the method just suggested is one that has been used for years by experienced horsemen who declare they have seen many people hurt when hunting for sidebones with their thumbs.

It is a mistake to feel lightly over the pastern joint for a sidebone. There is only one spot for them: namely, on the hoof heads of the front feet, more often on the outside of the foot, but sometimes on the inside. It is possible to put your fingers right to the spot if you are on the near side of the horse, facing the rear of the animal. You should press the spot firmly. Sometimes sidebones take long to form. The thickened cartilage is flexible at first and can be moved about slightly. Sidebones are not so objectionable at this stage. It is when they harden and the bony formation appears that the animal may go lame.

Sometimes it is necessary to grasp the cartilage firmly between the thumb and forefinger and move it from side to side to determine whether the cartilage has started to ossify, and to accurately ascertain by the thickness of the cartilage at the hoof head, whether it will become ossified in the near future. Often the cartilage is soft on top but is becoming quite firm at the bottom. On the other hand, a large prominent cartilage, which at a distance appears to be a large sidebone, may be quite loose and will never develop into a sidebone. The proper detection in such cases is very important to a Percheron breeder.

### **Tendency transmitted**

Inspectors do not like sidebones because the tendency is so often transmitted to the offspring. Sidebones, however, are rarely found on animals less than three years of age, and inspector's merely waste their time feeling the hoof heads of foals and yearlings.

A sidebone associated with a short, upright pastern is much more objectionable than one associated with a fairly long, sloping one. The latter rarely develops sidebones except as a result of injuries. It should also be kept in mind that sidebones associated with narrow, pinched hoof heads are much more likely to cause lameness than those associated with a wide, open hoof head.

Since a stallion or mare with sidebones is so likely to produce colts that will have the same unsoundness when they mature, our best inspectors do not allow a Percheron with sidebones to rank highly at a prominent show. Such judges prefer to give the ribbons to animals that are absolutely sound, even though they may not be quite as good in other respects. One should look at the horse from a position in front of the animal to see if it stands squarely on its front legs. If it does not stand correctly, sidebones and ringbones are likely to come if they are not already there. Knees should be wide, deep, flat and well-defined.. A post-shaped front leg is not desirable.

### **Slope of pasterns**

From your position in front of the horse, move next to the side of the animal. Notice whether the pasterns are short and upright. A pastern that is fairly long and slopes at about a forty-five degree angle is one that usually remains sound longest because it adds more spring to the stride. It must also be remembered that a draft horse with sufficient slope to its pasterns usually has good control of its feet even though the pasterns may be lacking a little in length. The squarely-set legs relieve undue strain that is present in any other untrue position. It is true that many rough-pasterned Percherons actually have sidebones. The smoothness of the pastern is as important as its good length and slope.

### **Amount of bone**

From the same side view, a inspector forms an opinion as to how much bone the horse has. The importance of bone cannot be emphasised too strongly; Percherons should have plenty of it. This is a point of cardinal importance in stallions. There has never yet been a successful record made in breeding Percherons from light-boned stallions. Percherons rarely lack in quality, but sometimes they lack in quantity of bone below the knee joint. The cannon bone should be comparatively short in length, but should appear broad as a result of the knee and fetlock joints being wide from front to rear and the tendons well set back. When the cannon bone section is long and narrow, it follows that the animal is ordinarily too tall and usually has a long back and a slim body. A leg does not break because of being light-boned, but inspectors and discriminate breeders object to a too-small cannon bone section in a Percheron. This is because the defects that usually go with it are overly long legs, an overly long back, and shortness of back rib. A inspector can form some idea of a Percheron by observing the size of bone below the front knee. Lack of it is rather a serious defect in a Percheron.

The Percheron is a quality horse in general, and type should always be emphasised, but an inspector does sometimes find, especially at local shows, coarse, meaty-legged animals. Inspectors and good breeders will insist, however, on quality in underpinning along with plenty of bone.

### **Estimate height**

“The Percherons’ ideal height should be 16 to 16.2 hands.”

Before an inspector steps away two to three metres to get a side view of the horse, he/she should estimate its height. To do that, he/she should know the height of a horse which would come up to their chin, and the height of a horse which would come up to his nose. If the animal is eighteen hands, he is too tall. Mares between sixteen and seventeen hands are preferred by most inspectors. Higher than that is too tall. One well-known inspector believes that even seventeen hands is too tall for a mare. Surely she should not be any taller than that. Stallions should be 16 to 17 hands. Inspectors can also determine the height of a horse as they step back from the animal. Inspectors prefer the low-set kind, but not to an extreme.

### **Short back important**

“The ideal Percheron has a short and straight back, with ribs strong and broad, over the loins and deep flanks. The middle should be broad.”

From a viewpoint of two to three metres back at right angles to the near side (left) of the horse, one determines whether the animal has a short back or a long one. The short back is much preferred and should be straight as well. However, it is very much better to have it sag a little than to have it too long. The long back is often found in a horse that is long-legged and not deep enough in his back rib, but of course, that is not always the case. A long-backed, short-ribbed horse is a hard keeper and is much more expensive to fatten for sale than a short-backed, deep-middle, low-set Percheron.

On the other hand, it is hard to get the desirable combination of a short, straight back and long neck. One very good inspector says that he does not object to a little extra length in the back of a broodmare provided that her back is straight, broad, and strong.

### **Sideview check-up**

From the same side view position on the left, the inspector determines whether the animal is deep enough in its back rib to be a good Percheron. He/she also sizes up how heavy the bone is in front, how attractive the animal is from the withers forward, how close it is to the ground, how short and straight the back, and how deep the body. A Percheron should be as deep from the top of its withers to the base of its chest line as he is from this point to the ground. There is great criticism if the leg is much longer than the depth of the crest. If the inspector has a favourable opinion on all these points, he/she has begun to think well of the horse.

### **Fairly straight croup**

From the position of two to three metres from the side of the horse, the inspector then takes a step along the side of the animal toward the rear. From here, he/she studies the croup and hind quarters. The croup should be long and fairly level. Percherons are often too short in the croup with a drop that is too abrupt. This gives them a chopped-off appearance. A long, comparatively straight top line to the croup enables an animal to have a large, well-muscled hip that always looks good, even in a thin horse. A horse with an intensely-sloping croup looks bad when thin but often improves in appearance when fattened.



This does not mean, however, that there should be absolutely no slope to the croup. It seems to be a Percheron trait that some of them have an extra cushion of muscle across the hips which makes the croup appear less level than it is, a condition well illustrated in the picture of Calypso. This muscling provides more pulling power than is found in a horse without it. Thus a horse with a gently sloping croup may often have good action, can start a load quickly and hold it back well because the slope comes from the heavy muscling over the hips. On the other hand, it is also sometimes true that an extremely level croup goes with light thighs, but all in all, the more level croup gives a more attractive top line, and a large, well-shaped hip means a stronger muscled hind quarter.

### **Notice set of hocks**

The inspector next glances at the set of the horse's hocks. From the standpoint of both power and action, it is important that the points of the hocks be turned in a little and that a horse stands with his hocks fairly close together. Hocks too wide apart indicate both a lack of pulling power and faulty action. Breeders of at least one other draft breed have over-stressed this matter, however. In breeding horses for close hock action, they have in some instances almost bred away their thighs. The hocks should be placed in such away that if a plumb line is dropped from the point of the buttock, it would touch the point of the hock, fall parallel to the cannon bone all the way down and touch the point of the fetlock. It is still a well set hindquarters even if the plumb line is one-half inch behind the cannon bone at the point where the line passes the rear protuberance of the fetlock, although the plumb line should fall quite close to the cannon bone all the way down. If the set of the foot and the hock is such that this plumb line does not fall reasonably close and parallel all the way down the back of the cannon bone, then the inspector knows the hock is too crooked, too straight, or of curb-like formation.

A crooked hock means that the weight it carries will likely cause unsoundness (a curb) to form on the rear and lower part of the hock joint where the greatest strain comes. When a horse pulls in harness, the hock joint gets more strain than any other joint. A crooked hock in a stallion is likely to become unsound because of the extra weight thrown on it during the serving of mares.

### **Transmitted to colts**

Since crooked hocks are transmitted to the offspring, our best breeders and inspectors feel there is no one thing that is deserving of more attention than emphasis on the importance of the right set of the hock for a Percheron. A crooked hock is not only unsightly, but it is also weak. It is likely to go unsound at the least provocation. Percherons with crooked hocks do not sell readily. Skilled breeders will not buy them because colts from such animals are likely to have the same defect. Breeders who have animals with crooked hocks should sell them for work horses for whatever they can get, instead of allowing them to be used in producing registered Percherons. In fact, there is no fault in a draft horse being too tall, too long backed, or too slim-middle. All of these defects are objectionable to our best breeders and inspectors. Certainly crooked hocks are the first on the list of undesirable points in the build of a heavy draft horse.

When a hock is too straight – that is, when the gaskin is set back from stifle to hock in too nearly a straight line instead of extending at a proper angle – it is likely to cause trouble because it does not have the necessary spring and give. There should be a little angle to the hock in order to give spring to the hindquarter as the animal walks or trots. Puffs show up very strongly on hocks that are too straight. Horses with very straight hind legs are also subject to stifle trouble and should be watched for that fault. It is seldom, however, that you find a Percheron with hocks that are too straight so that more attention should be paid to breeding hocks that taper nicely into the bone. The most desirable hock is one which tapers into wide, flat cannon. In some cases Percherons are too rough at the base of the hocks and on the outside.

## Examining hocks

It is sometimes necessary to feel the hocks to determine how much they are filled and whether there is a bone spavin on the inside. It is very necessary to know how to feel the hocks of a horse so as to avoid injury. One should stand fairly close to the side of the animal and face in the same direction as the horse. The left hock may be examined with the right hand. On the other side, one should take the same position and examine the right hock with the left hand. If the horse tries to kick, he must draw his leg forward, and in this position the inspector pushes himself away as the horse's leg comes forward. To feel the back of the hock, it is quite convenient to face in the opposite direction from the way the horse faces. At times the hair gets a bit long and rough over the spot on the rear lower part of the hock joint where a curb appears. This makes it necessary for one to run your hand down over the spot in order to be sure there is no swelling or bony enlargement present to indicate possible lameness. An animal with a curb or bone spavin should be placed at the foot of the class, because if he is not already lame, it will probably develop lameness.

## Rear pasterns

If a horse has upright rear pasterns, lameness is much more likely to develop than in a fairly long, sloping pastern. The long, sloping pastern not only makes for soundness, but it also indicates better action. The inspector should be careful to note this. When short and straight, the hind pastern is more likely to become unsound than one with more length and with a forty-five degree angle slope. Some inspectors feel that pasterns which are used for breeding purposes are especially apt to develop lameness because of too upright hind pasterns that are too upright. A horse in such a condition is described as '2-up-2' in his hind pasterns, and he often 'knuckles'.

'Cocked ankles' is another term used in describing a condition in which the pasterns are too short and too straight. Young horses that are being fitted do not become cock-ankled nearly as quickly when they have the proper length and slope to their pasterns.

## Set of legs

As the inspector steps around to inspect the horse directly from the rear, he/she notes the placing of the hind legs, which should be set directly beneath the horse. If they are not, there is good reason to believe that a horse will not stay sound as long, nor be as useful as one with legs set correctly under it. Legs should not be wide apart under each corner. The point of the hocks should come reasonably close together both at the walk and at the trot, as well as when standing so as to allow free motion of the stifle joints. A horse that moves wide behind hits its belly with its stifle joints, especially when it trots, and that interference between leg and abdomen does not help its breathing. If an animal has this poor rear action, it interferes with its walking. Thus an inspector likes to see a horse keep its hocks together at both the walk and the trot. Hocks carried wide apart place more strain on hock joints.

It is also good to note, while in this position, the slope of the hoof wall and the spacing of the heels, both on the front and the hind feet.

## Importance of feet

The old adage 'No foot, no horse,' is a statement that Percheron inspectors should keep in mind constantly. As a breed, the Percheron has the best foot of any of the draft horses. The Percheron hoof has the long-wearing texture of the mule's foot, a quality not found in any other breed of heavy horse.

It takes a large, round foot to please the most critical Percheron inspectors. A narrow heel in a Percheron is considered most objectionable. A stallion with this deficiency may sire many narrow-heeled colts. A mare may also transmit this narrow-heeled defect to her progeny.

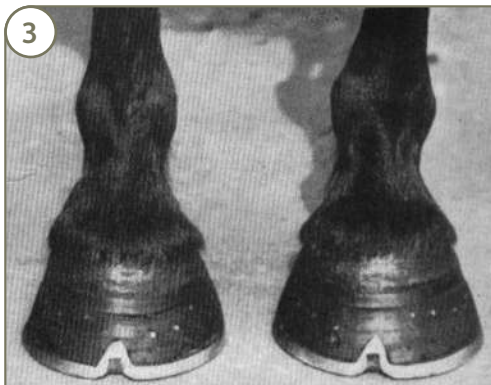
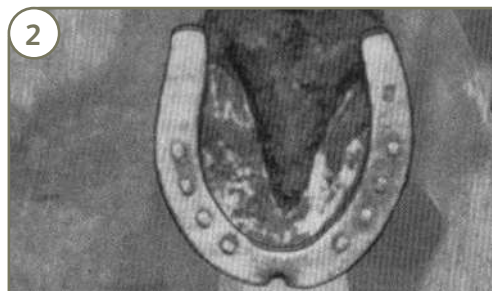
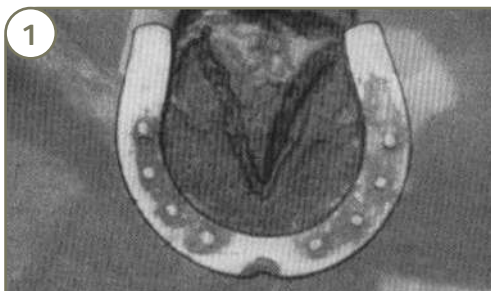
A small foot seems to go with lameness, side bones, and ringbones. The hoof head should be big and round.

The foot should be moderately deep at the heel with a good frog to serve as a cushion. A shallow frog usually goes with a narrow heel. When the frog dries up, the heel seems to contract as a result. In inspecting Percherons, it is a good plan to pick up each front foot to see the condition of the frog. If thrush is present, the inspector knows that the animal needs attention. Such a horse is not equipped with the best possible foot; thrush may result in serious damage.

Inspectors object to a foot with too little vertical depth – a flat foot. Such a foot does not seem to be built strong inwardly. It usually has a shallow frog, it cracks and breaks easily; it will not stand the wear like a deeper foot, nor will it hold a shoe as well.

If a Percheron has feet which turn out or in, such an animal will not stay sound as long as a horse that carries all four feet in a true line directly underneath its body without any swinging out of line, too far to the outside or inside. Horses that have toes that point outward (toed-out or splay-footed) and horses that are pigeon-toed frequently develop sidebones on the outside corners. If it has to wear sharp calked shoes at work, it often steps on itself, resulting in serious harm. There is unnecessary strain thrown on the crooked foot or one that stands out of line. Unsoundness is sure to come sooner or later. Hence, an inspector should penalise an animal that does not stand squarely on its legs, whether it is a show horse or a work horse. This defect in a Percheron is a serious one. The front as well as the hind feet should be sufficiently far apart to keep the right from striking against the left, or vice versa, either at the walk or at the trot.

### Good feet



These illustrations of feet were taken on September 2, 1936, at the Ohio State Fair at Columbus. They show the shapely and well-balanced feet of the mare Kambriole 213294 (199389), grand champion at the Ohio State Fair in 1935. The shoeing was done by one of the most skilful farriers in this country. The best wearing foot usually shows a tough, dense, dark, glistening effect in the outer surface of the hoof wall. This is illustrated in picture 3.

The grey, scaly hoof surface of coarse texture does not usually indicate good wearing qualities.

Illustration 1 at the upper left on page 16 shows the bottom of the forefoot. It should be noted that this front foot is large and round. A small hoof, narrow at the heel, is likely to develop lameness with little provocation, and it probably means that the inner parts of the hoof do not have sufficient room to perform their normal functions properly. Hoofs contract from disease such as founder, or dryness caused by animals standing on plank floors with little or no opportunity of contact with moist earth. Narrow-heeled horses must be kept shod if worked all the time. Notice the large, V-shaped, well-developed frog which indicates a healthy foot and freedom from lameness. It will keep this mare going at hard work particularly on rough footing.

The ideal foot is comparatively big and round, deep and wide at the heel with a well-developed frog with some spring in it which acts as a cushion at the walk and trot. The frog is the cushion on which the weight of the horse should rest. Frogs should be thick with a spongy texture, not shrivelled with a horny texture. A dried-up frog is usually associated with a narrow heel. Illustration 2 on page 16 shows the bottom of the hind front feet of a Percheron shown from the side. Notice the excellent set of pasterns with good slope and good length. The short, straight up-and-close pastern is usually found on an animal that develops lameness easily. Pasterns with the length and slope shown give a certain amount of spring to every step. They seldom develop lameness. Notice the depth of the foot at the heel.

### **Extra heavy muscling**

While standing behind the horse, the inspector forms an opinion as to whether the animal carries enough width and thickness through its hindquarters. An inspector also the animal's muscling in its lower thighs. Percherons are noted for extra heavy muscling below the hips. Because some Percherons are deficient in this respect, inspectors should always be on the alert for horses that are cat-hammed. No one likes scant muscling through the animal's thighs. It is an indication of a lack of ruggedness and power.

### **Speak to the animal**

As the inspector walks around to the off side, he should look for the same things as he noted on the near side. He may want to approach the animal and feel the covering of the ribs to estimate the amount of fat on the horse. The inspector may also wish to measure length of back and distance from last rib to point of hip, and depth of back rib. A inspector or anyone else should speak to a horse gently when approaching from the off side and should watch the animal's ears to see if he welcomes the approach. If a horse is thoroughly gentle, such precaution is unnecessary. However, this is a good habit to form as a protection when approaching an animal which is not well broken, is nervous, or is easily frightened from lack of experience away from home.

Showmen sometimes comb the mane backward in order to cover up a low back. Therefore, it is always a good practice when coming up to the animal on the off side to lift up the back part of the mane to confirm if the animal has a low back or not.

## **Depth of chest**

One should step forward, around in front of the animal again, to note the horse's thickness and depth through the chest. Conformation is necessary both in mares and in stallions. One should have made mental memoranda of these qualities when one first inspected the animal in front, but there is no harm in repeating this observation. An inspector should also look for uneven shoulders, Sweeny, or scars resulting from fistula or sore shoulders. A narrow chest in a Percheron is as serious a defect as a hollow chest in a human being. Inspectors should show a decided preference for wide, deep-chested Percherons. They have greater lung and heart capacity, they are usually less susceptible to disease and their recovery from illness is usually more certain. Hollowness at the back of the forelegs, as seen in some horses, indicates a lack of chest capacity.

On the other hand, inspectors should not prefer either stallions or mares with shoulders standing out prominently from their bodies, for this conformation is usually transmitted to the offspring. Delivery of prominently-shouldered colts at the parturition period is difficult, and the death loss for both dam and colt is much greater because of these overly prominent shoulders in foals. Stallions as well as mares should be wide chested, but the shoulders should be wide built in smoothly with the rest of the body and should not stand out or forward at the corners.

Conformation of the shoulder which makes for a strong, smooth collar bed is important. In show ring inspecting, not enough attention is given to this feature. Inspectors should discourage the exhibiting of too fat breeding stock. Breeders should be shown how certain failure accompanies the policy of having breeding stock too highly fitted for extended periods.

Regardless of how many horses a inspector has to look at, he should always go over each one in the same manner as has been described: namely, begin at the head, work back along the near side, around the rear of the animal, and come up on the off side toward the head, finally giving the front quarters a second careful check-up. There is always a lot to be learned by studying a horse's front.

## **Watch the horse in action**

"The ideal Percheron should move straight while walking or jogging. The walk is very important as it is the pace with which the horse moves as it executes its work. The pace must be long and feet must be lifted up briskly. The hocks are close to each other when walking or jogging.

Percherons are preferred for their size, weight, attractiveness, quick, naturally solid speed, alertness, strength and docile behaviour patterns. The Percheron is the best balanced breed of the larger breeds and can do any kind of work on the farm due to its adaptability, sturdiness, capability, strength and easy pace. The Percheron's adaptability is outstanding and it is a most popular horse for farming purposes."

After the inspector has walked slowly around the horse and studies it in detail, he/she is ready to see it in action. Action is probably more essential in a Percheron than in any other draft breed, yet the prudent inspector will guard against over-emphasis in this respect. The walk is the important gait. The animal should walk straight away from the inspector, one hundred to one hundred fifty feet, and then return in a straight line. Some inspectors say that half that distance is far enough. One thus determines how straight the animal walks and whether its legs have the undesirable motions at the walk such as swinging the feet outwardly, or inwardly, or crosswise, or with a rope-walking effect as the animal steps away from or returns toward the inspector. Inspectors should watch the movement of the animal's head and hips to see whether there is any trace of lameness as the animal goes away or come toward them, both at the walk and the trot. If lame, the animal should be sent to the barn. It is usually best to speak quietly to the owner or leader and have them agree to this.



In order to have satisfactory action either at the walk or trot, it is most necessary for a horse to have their legs moving perfectly true in a straight line. The same procedure is followed in trotting the animal. Some Percherons walk with excellent precision, but are not as satisfactory at the trot, and vice versa. Some are faulty in action, both at the walk and trot. Action in others is so beautiful that the inspector is delighted with every step the animal takes. Extremely high action is not necessary in a draft horse. The animal should carry its legs under it without movement of any kind that is out of line with true action, either going forward or coming back. Many exhibitors overdo the matter of using a whip in an attempt to improve action. They make their horses trot faster or step higher because of excitement. Inspectors should insist that exhibitors keep their whips still. It would then be possible to determine the true action of the horse at the walk and the trot because undue excitement causes it to move unnaturally. The inspector should notice the horse's action from the side as well.

This gives an inspector the chance to study length and height of stride, and also the set of the hind legs. There are some grooms who can stand a horse with crooked hind legs so that it looks fairly well. So, for this reason, inspectors should insist more than they do upon seeing horses stand on the level.

When horses are moved and when they are turned the first time, one should be particular to look for stringhalt and any signs of crampiness. If a horse is backed a few steps, 'stringy' and 'stifled' horses are easily discovered. It is also a good idea to notice the bottom of the feet while the horse is at the walk, noting the size and growth of the frog. At this same time, the width of the heels can be noted easily.

### **Lame horses**

In inspecting a large show, an inspector can save time by moving each horse before looking the individual over carefully and thus can send the lame animals to the barn without wasting any time on them.

### **Wind important**

Attention should be paid to unsoundness of the wind. Grunters and roarers may be caught if they are bad enough. Some horses that are not good in the wind manage to get by in the show ring by in the show ring. It is just as important for a show horse to have good wind as it is for a work horse. There is no more serious defect in a draft horse than unsoundness of wind. Some stallions have a tendency to sire colts that are windy. If a inspector is suspicious that an animal is off in its wind, the horse should be moved again at a good fast trot, turned quickly, and brought back to the inspector at a lively pace.

### **Stallions should show both testicles**













A inspector should always look carefully to check that a stallion shows both testicles, and that they are normal in size.

# 4. Points

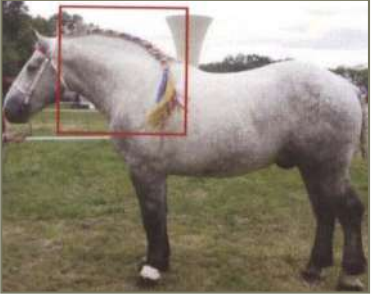
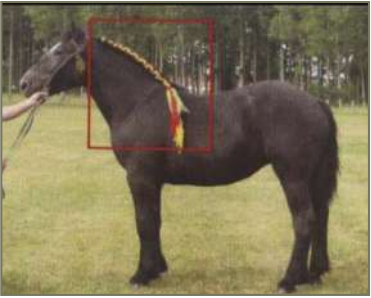

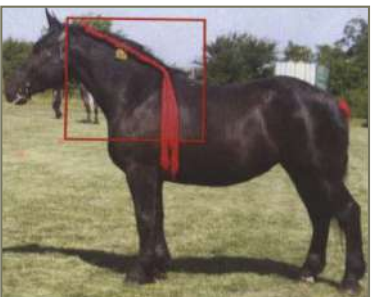
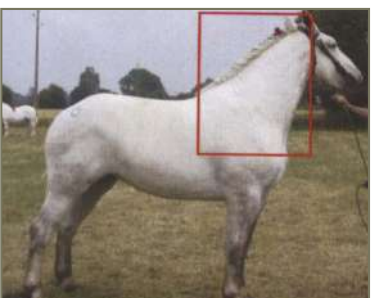
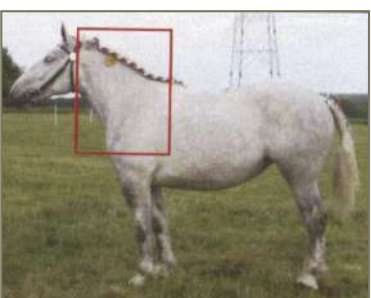
## Point 1:

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	<input type="checkbox"/> Length <input type="checkbox"/> Well-oriented <input type="checkbox"/> Good arch <input type="checkbox"/> Typed <input type="checkbox"/> Good rise <input type="checkbox"/> Upright <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Good tying from neck into shoulder <input type="checkbox"/> Long, thin ears <input type="checkbox"/> Expressive eyes <input type="checkbox"/> Wide, open nostrils <input type="checkbox"/> Handsome head	<input type="checkbox"/> Inverter Neck <input type="checkbox"/> Short Neck <input type="checkbox"/> Spindly neck <input type="checkbox"/> Straight neck <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks type <input type="checkbox"/> Poor tying from neck into shoulder <input type="checkbox"/> Long head <input type="checkbox"/> Wide/heavy/common head <input type="checkbox"/> Hooked head <input type="checkbox"/> Long-eared <input type="checkbox"/> Dull-eyes <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy cheeks <input type="checkbox"/> Small, pony-type head
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## Point 1: Head

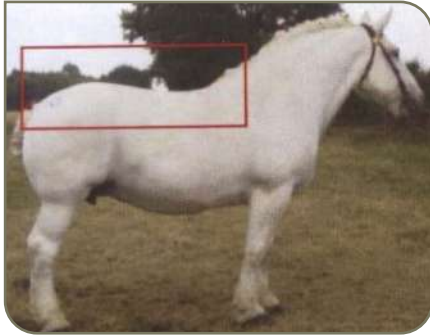
Horse	Comment and score	Horse	Comment and score
	Head slightly Arabian, expressive, well-set ears, expressive eyes, open, square nostrils  Score: 9		Straight nose, long ears, a little common  Score: 5
	Typed, head a little long, receding tip of nose, eyes slightly dull  Score: 6		Big ears, undistinguished, bumpy nose  Score: 4
	Heavy in the nose, small eyes, small ears  Score: 5		Common head, dull eyes, long nose  Score: 4
	Hooked head, long-eared, common  Score: 4		Triangular, narrow head, lack of type, poor typing from neck to shoulder  Score: 4
	Hooked, short, fat head, too heavy in the jaw  Score: 4		Common, rectangular, heavy head, small eyes  Score: 4
	Head slightly concave, rectangular, common  Score: 4		Pony-like head, concave, lack of expression  Score: 2

Point 2: Neck

Horse	Comments	Score
	<p>Arched neck, rather long, well-oriented, good tying from neck into the shoulder</p>	<p>Score:9</p>
	<p>Well-oriented neck, good tying from neck into shoulder, maybe a little too straight</p>	<p>Score:8</p>
	<p>Well-oriented neck, could be more rounded, good tying from the neck into the shoulder</p>	<p>Score:7</p>
	<p>Flat neck, straight on the back (but beware of the braiding), well-oriented</p>	<p>Score:6</p>
	<p>Vertical neck, straight on the top (beware of the shower)</p>	<p>Score:5</p>
	<p>Flat, short neck, straight on the top, high in the sternum, well-oriented</p>	<p>Score:3</p>



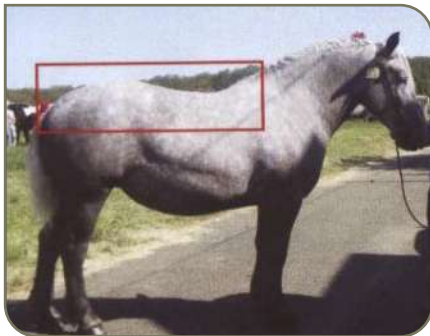
Point 2: Top line



- Prominent withers
- Taut back
- Well-oriented croup
- Short, straight loin
- Long thigh
- Tied high into the tail
- Other
- Low, flat withers
- Sloping thigh
- Slack back
- High loin
- Long back
- Short croup
- Plunging croup
- Sloping croup

- Prominent withers
- Taut back
- Well-oriented croup
- Short, straight loin
- Long thigh
- Tied high into the tail
- Other

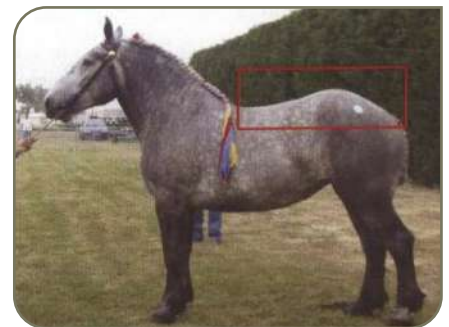
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- Sloping croup



**Point 2: Top line**

Lack of tautness in the back

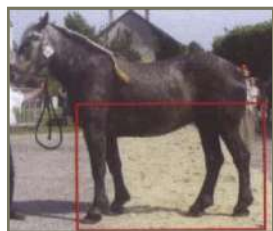
Score:3-4



**Point 2: Croup and hindquarters**

Horse	Comments	Score
	<p>Rounded but bumpy croup, well-structured buttocks, thighs and hocks</p>	<p><b>Score: 7</b></p>
	<p>Croup a little turned in, heavy hindquarters, indented rump</p>	<p><b>Score: 5</b></p>
	<p>Very Sloping croup, a little wide between the hocks</p>	<p><b>Score: 3</b></p>

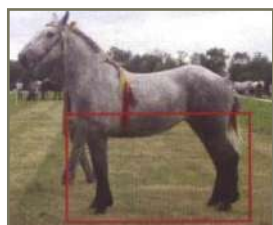
### Point 3: Stance from the side



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|---|---|--|--|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Deep             | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-aligned       | <input type="checkbox"/> Knees too inset   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pinched below the knees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prominent knees  | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscled rump       | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-shaped knees | <input type="checkbox"/> Front/back too massive  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long thighs      | <input type="checkbox"/> Wide, strong hocks | <input type="checkbox"/> Straight shoulder | <input type="checkbox"/> Blurred shoulders       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough bone  | <input type="checkbox"/> Prominent joints   | <input type="checkbox"/> Short thighs      | <input type="checkbox"/> Wide between the hocks  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Angled hocks      | <input type="checkbox"/> Straight hocks          |



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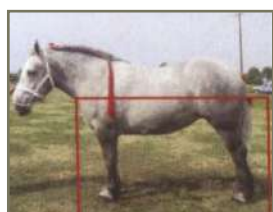
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|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oblique shoulder | <input type="checkbox"/> Long shoulders     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of girth     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cylindrical             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deep             | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-aligned       | <input type="checkbox"/> Knees too inset   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pinched below the knees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prominent knees  | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscled rump       | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-shaped knees | <input type="checkbox"/> Front/back too massive  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long thighs      | <input type="checkbox"/> Wide, strong hocks | <input type="checkbox"/> Straight shoulder | <input type="checkbox"/> Blurred shoulders       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough bone  | <input type="checkbox"/> Prominent joints   | <input type="checkbox"/> Short thighs      | <input type="checkbox"/> Wide between the hocks  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Angled hocks      | <input type="checkbox"/> Straight hocks          |

Point 4: Gaits, feet and legs



Bandy legged



Pronounced crooked front right legs



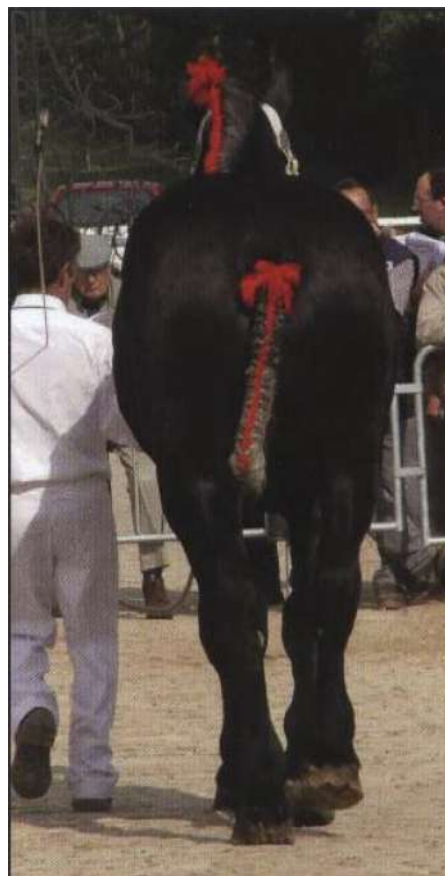
Pronounced crooked front left legs



Knock-kneed, pronounced on front right



Wide track between back legs



4 legs too close



Well-aligned



#### Point 4: At a walk



Note the **amplitude** (ability to assess the terrain far ahead) and the **engagement** (front legs aligned below the mass and “push” the horse).



#### Point 4: At a trot



Note the **suppleness** (ability to rebound upward) and the **engagement**.



Point 5: Overall



- Good coat
- Good skin
- Well-structured
- Healthy joints
- Good feet joints
- Other
- Ordinary horse
- Lack of grooming
- Poor skin (dermatitis, fatty, too much hair around feet)
- Coat doesn't conform
- Short stature/tall stature
- Signs of wounds/injury
- Other



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To avoid



Coat



Coat and skin condition



Coat and socks



Socks with a black coat

Some champions



2002, Maitre d'Atout



2002, Ideal



2003, Moussaillon



2003, Houquette



2004, Niort 3



2005, Lostrie du Moulin