



SHIRE HORSE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

BREED STANDARD FOR SHIRE HORSES

A scale of points for the breed has been carefully drawn up and amended as necessary to meet modern requirements. For instance, a great characteristic of the Shire years ago was the wealth of hair, or feathers, on the legs. Today the demand is for a cleaner legged horse, with straight fine, silky hair.

The following sections outline the standard of points as laid down by the **Shire Horse Society Council (UK)**.

Breed Standard Points for Stallions

Colour	Black, brown, or grey. No good stallion should be splashed with large white patches over the body. He must not be roan or chestnut.
Height	17 hands (173 cm) high at maturity. Average about 17.2 hands (176 cm).
Head	Long and lean, neither too small nor too large, with long neck in proportion to the body. Large jaw bone should be avoided.
Eyes	Large, well-set and docile in expression. Wall eyes not acceptable.
Nose	Slightly roman nostrils, thin and wide. Lips together.
Ears	Long, lean, sharp, and sensitive.
Throat	Clean cut and lean.
Shoulder	Deep and oblique, wide enough to support the collar.
Neck	Long, slightly arched, well set on to give the horse a commanding appearance.
Girth	The girth varies from 183 cm (6 ft) to 244 cm (8 ft) in stallions from 16.2 (168 cm) to 18 hands (183 cm).
Back	Short, strong and muscular. Should not be dipped or arched.
Loins	Standing well up, denoting good constitution (must not be flat).
Fore-end	Wide across the chest, with legs well under the body and well enveloped in muscle, or action is impeded.
Hind-quarters	Long and sweeping, wide and full of muscle, well let down towards the thighs.
Ribs	Round, deep, and well sprung, not flat.
Forelegs	Should be as straight as possible, down to pastern.
Hindlegs	Hocks should not be too far back and in line with the hind-quarters with simple width broadside and narrow in front. 'Puffy' and 'sickle' hocks should be avoided. The leg sinews should be clean cut and hard like fine cords to touch and clear of short cannon bone.
Bone Measurement	Of flat bone 28 cm (11 inches) is ample, although occasionally 32 cm (12½ inches) is recorded – flat bone is heavier and stronger than spongy bone. Hocks must be broad, deep, and flat and set at the correct angle for leverage.
Feet	Deep, solid, and wide, with thick open walls. Coronets should be hard and sinewy with substance.
Hair	Not too much, fine straight and silky.

A good Shire Stallion should stand from 17.0 hands (173cms) upwards, and weigh from 900kg (18 cwt) to 1,100kg (22 cwt) when matured, without being overdone in condition. He should possess a masculine head and a good crest with eloping, not upright, shoulders running well into the back., which should be short and well coupled with the loins. The tail should be well set up and not what is known as 'gooserumped'. Both head and tail should be carried erect. The ribs should be well sprung, not flat sided, with good middle which generally denotes good constitution. A Stallion should have good feet and joints; the feet should be wide and big around the top of the coronets with sufficient length in the pasterns. When in motion, he should go with force using both knees and hocks, the latter should be kept close together. He should go straight and true before and behind.

A good Stallion should have strong character.



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Modification or Variation of Stallion Breed Standard Points for Mares

Colour	Black, brown, bay, grey, roan.
Height	16 hands (163 cm) upwards.
Head	Long and lean, neither too large nor too small, long neck in proportion to the body, of feminine appearance.
Eyes	Large, well set, and docile in expression. Wall eyes are acceptable except for animals Grade A and B register.
Neck	Long and slightly arched and not of masculine appearance.
Girth	152 cm (5 ft) to 214 cm (7 ft) (matured) according to size and age of animal.
Back	Strong and in some instances longer than a male.
Legs	Short, with short cannons.
Bone Measurement	23 cm (9 inches) to 28 cm (11 inches) of flat bone, with clean cut sinews.

A Mare should be on the quality side, long and deep with free action, of a feminine and matronly appearance, standing from 16 hands (163 cm) and upwards on short legs; she should have plenty of room to carry here foal.

Modification of Variation of Stallion Breed Standard Points for Geldings

Colour	As for Mares.
Height	16.2 (168 cm) hands and upwards.
Girth	From 183 cm (6 ft) to 229 cm (7ft 6 inches).
Bone Measurement	23 cm (10 inches) to 26 cm (11 inches) under knee, slightly more underhock and broadside on, of flat hard quality.

A Gelding should be upstanding, thick, well-balanced, very active, and a gay mover; he should be full of courage and should like and be able to do a full day's work. Geldings weigh from 850 kg (17 cwt) to 1,000 kg (22 cwt).

This Breed Standard is sourced from the Shire Horse Society (UK).