

Breed Standard and Guidelines (New Zealand)

Type and Character

The Irish Draught Horse is an active short-shinned powerful horse with substance and quality. Standing over a lot of ground, he is proud and bearing, deep of girth, strong of back, loin and quarters. He has an exceptionally strong and sound constitution, and is known for his intelligent and gentle nature and good sense. Height at 3 years old: stallion 16.0hh and over; mares from 15.2hh, with 9" or more of clean flat bone.

Head

Good bold eyes set well apart, wide forehead and long, well-set ears. Head should be generous and pleasant, not coarse or hatchet headed. The jawbones should have enough room to take the gullet and allow ease of breathing.

Shoulders, Neck and Front

Shoulders should be clean-cut and not loaded. Withers well defined, not coarse. The neck set in high and carried proudly, showing a good length of rein. The chest should not be too broad and beefy. The forearms large and generous, set near the ground. The cannon bone or shin, short and straight, with plenty of clean flat bone. Being back of knee (calf kneed) is forbidden in stallions and most undesirable in mares ie should not slope forward from the knee to fetlock. The bone should never be round or coarse, the legs should be clean and hard with a little silky hair at the back of the fetlock as a protection. In winter the legs may become "woolly" but never should the hair be stiff and coarse and at no time grown down the front of the hoof. The pasterns strong and in proportion, not short and upright, nor long and weak. Hooves should be hard and sound, not large and flat like a carthorse, nor boxy or contracted, and there should be plenty of room at the heel.

Back, Hindquarters, Body and Hind Legs

The back strong and girth deep with strong loins and quarters, not forgetting the mares must have enough room to carry a foal. The croup to buttocks to be long and gently sloping, not short and rounds or flat-topped. Hips not wide and plain, the upper thighs very strong and powerful and at least as wide from the back view as the hips. The second thighs long and broad like the forearm, and well-developed. The hocks sound and generous and like the knees set into a good short shin. Hocks should not be too wide apart or close together. They must not be bent or weak in any way, but should be in a line with the buttocks to the heel. The cannon bone short and strong like the front leg or shin, and not sloping forward or weak.

Action

Smooth and free, but without exaggeration, and not heavy and ponderous. Walk and trot straight and true with good flexion of the hocks and freedom of the shoulders.

Colour

Any strong, whole colour including grey. Obvious Clydesdale markings not permitted ie bay with white legs above the hocks or knees.