



Saskatchewan  
Horse Federation



Heritage Circuit

Ranch Division



# All About Ranch Horse Division

---

## **What is a Ranch Horse?**

The ranch horse or working horse is by definition an extremely versatile horse with very willing personality and capable of performing all the maneuvers of the different disciplines of western riding.

## **What is everyday Ranch Work?**

Any work that relates to operating a ranch where an equine partner is beneficial and useful in completing tasks and particularly with the care of livestock. Ranch horses need to be highly athletic being ridden for many hours and asked to perform tasks that can be physically challenging.

## **What is natural Ranch Horse appearance?**

Natural ranch horse appearance is a horse that carries himself in a relaxed manner in all gaits, the horse should display a level, or slightly above level topline with a bright, attentive expression. The horse should be clean (having balanced conformation, hardy feet, and sizable bone) and in good body condition. He should be soft in the bridle and have a good way of moving.

## **What is movement of a Ranch/Working Horse?**

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.



# Ranch Division - General

---

- The Heritage Ranch Division Classes are:
  - Working Western Rail
  - Ranch Riding
  - Ranch Trail
- Classes may be offered as Open, Senior or Junior
- Horse must be three years of age or older to compete in Ranch Division Classes
- Heritage Ranch classes will follow current AQHA Rules.
- With the exception of:

Junior riders competing in Heritage Ranch Classes must wear a properly fitted and fastened approved headgear/helmet at all times while riding at the event location.



## Ranch Division – Judge Requirements

Officials shall be SHF General Performance (senior or primary), or Guest Carded Breed Officials qualified in the Ranch Division.



# Ranch Division - General

---



## Apparel & Equipment Rules

- No hoof polish or hoof black.
- No braided or banded manes/tails or tail extensions.
- Protective boots, leg wraps and bandages are prohibited.
- Trimming inside ears is discouraged.
- Trimming bridle path is allowed, also trimming of fetlocks or excessive (long) facial hair.
- Equipment with silver should not count over a good working outfit. Excessive silver on bridles and saddles is discouraged.
- It is suggested competitors use a breast collar and a rear cinch.
- When exhibiting a junior horse in a snaffle bit or in a hackamore, an exhibitor may switch between two hands and one hand on the reins at any time.
- Show clothing should be well-fitted and workman-like.
- Chaps or chinks are optional.



# Ranch Trail

- This class should test the horse's ability to cope with situations encountered while being ridden through a pattern of obstacles generally found during the course of everyday ranch work.
- The horse/rider team is judged on the correctness, efficiency, and pattern accuracy with which the obstacles are negotiated, and the attitude and mannerisms exhibited by the horse.
- Judging emphasis is on identifying the well broke, responsive, and well-mannered horse which can correctly navigate and negotiate the course.
- The ideal ranch trail horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.



## Ranch Trail vs. Trail - Comparison

### Ranch Trail

No less than 6 and no more than 9 obstacles  
(6 mandatory obstacles/\*5 mandatory  
obstacles for Youth Classes and up to 3/\*4  
optional obstacles)

### Trail

At least 6 obstacles will be  
used (3 mandatory obstacles  
and min. 3 optional  
obstacles)

#### Course Details

# Ranch Trail vs. Trail - Continued

## Ranch Trail

## Trail

### Mandatory Obstacles

Ride over obstacles on the ground. Walk and trot max. 4 logs. Lope over (must be lead specific) max 3 logs and max 2 logs in succession. See AQHA rules for specific spacing distances and height restrictions (Natural logs Required)  
Side-pass Obstacle (max 12" in height)

Gate: Must be hinged swinging gate (No Rope Gate)

Wooden Bridge (Suggested min. width 36" X 6' long)

Backing Obstacle (Same)

Drag an Object. Exhibitor must have rope dallyed on saddle horn (half or full dally) for duration of the drag (\*Not included in youth classes)

Ride over at least 4 logs or poles (Poles may be used). If elevated pole must be secured so they cannot roll See SHF rules for specific spacing distances and height restrictions.

Gate (Rope gate allowed)

Backing obstacle (Same)

### Optional Obstacles

A jump obstacle whose center height is not less than 14 inches high or max. 25 inches high (Holding the saddle horn is permissible for this obstacle)

Live or stuffed animals which would normally be encountered in an outdoor setting may be used but not to be used in an attempt to spook a horse.

Remove and replace materials from a mailbox (Same)

Trot through cones (Serpentine) spaced a min. of 6' apart.

Swing rope or throw rope at a dummy steer head.

Step in and out of obstacle.

Put on slicker or coat.

Walk through water obstacle.

Walk through brush.

Stand to mount with mounting block.

Open gate on foot.

Pick up feet.

Ground tie (Hobbles are allowed)

Lead at a trot.

Combo of two or more of any obstacle is acceptable

Animal dummies or silhouettes (No live, dead or pieces of animals allowed)

Carry object from one part of arena to another (same)

Remove and replace materials from a mailbox (Same)

Water hazard (ditch or small pond)

Serpentine obstacles at walk or jog—spacing a min. of 6 ft for jog.

Rubber stall or trailer mats.

Slicker – put on and remove.

Ride over wooden bridge min. of 36 in width and 6 ft length (Must be sturdy and safe)

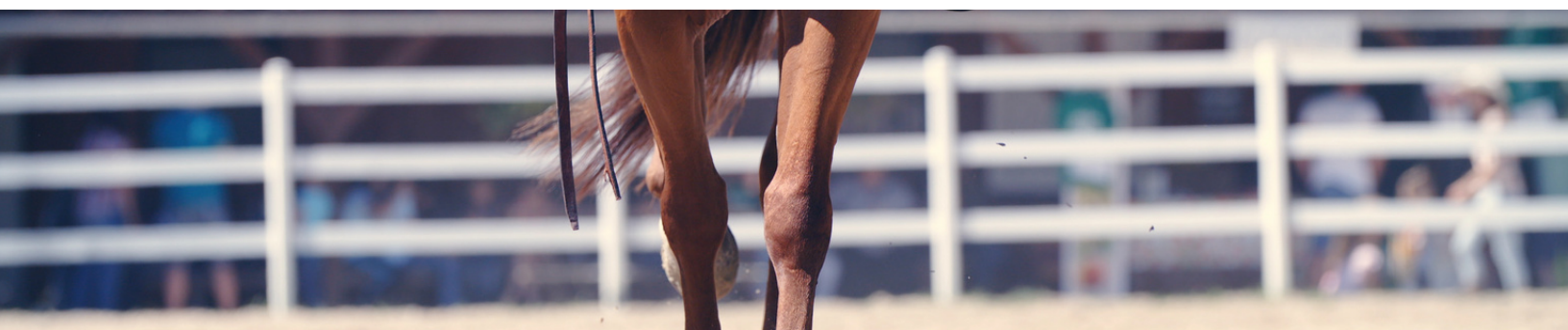
Side pass (Poles may not be elevated)

Square obstacle: Four logs or rails, 5–7 ft long, laid in a square.

A combination of two or more of any obstacles is acceptable.



# Ranch Trail vs. Trail - Continued



## Ranch Trail

## Trail

### Prohibited Obstacles

Tarps  
 Water obstacle with slick bottom  
 PVC pipe used as part of jump or walk-over.  
 Tires (Same)  
 Rocking or moving bridge (same)  
 Painted logs or poles  
 Logs elevated in a manner that permits log to roll in a dangerous manner

Plastic or tarps  
 Tires (same)  
 Animals (live, dead or pieces of such as hides)  
 PVC Pipe  
 Dismounting  
 Jumps  
 Rocking or moving bridge (same)  
 Water box with floating or moving parts  
 Flames, dry ice, fire extinguishers, etc.  
 Logs or poles elevated in a manner that permits log to roll in a dangerous manner

### Posting Pattern

At show management option the competition trail course may be made available to exhibitors or posted prior to the day of competition.  
 The pattern must be posted at least one hour prior to competition.  
 Printed handouts for exhibitors are helpful and encouraged.

The course to be used must be posted at least one hour before scheduled time of the class.

### Safety

Judges must walk the course and have the right and duty to alter the course if it is not in keeping with the intent of the class. Judges may remove or change any obstacles they deem unsafe, non-negotiable or unnecessarily difficult. Any time a trail obstacle becomes unsafe during a class, it shall be repaired or removed from the course. If the course cannot be repaired and some horses have completed the course, the score for that obstacle shall be deducted from all previous draws in that class.

The judge must walk the course and has the right and duty to alter the course in any manner. The judge may remove or change any obstacle he deems unsafe or non-negotiable.



# Ranch Trail vs. Trail - Continued



Ranch Trail

Trail

## Scoring

See current AQHA Rules  
<https://www.aqha.com/aqha-rulebook>  
(as per section SHW423)

See current SHF Handbook  
<https://saskhorse.ca/rulebooks>  
(Pages 73-75)





# Ranch Riding

---

The purpose of the ranch riding class 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 riding outside the confines of an arena.
- The horse should be well-trained, relaxed, quiet, soft and cadenced at all gaits.
- The overall manners and responsiveness of the ranch riding horse to make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as the quality of the movement are of primary considerations.
- Horses are shown individually completing pattern work and are judged on the precision of the pattern maneuvers and the horse's movements. There is no time limit to perform the pattern.
- One of the 15 approved patterns found in AQHA Rulebook (pgs. 135-149) must be used.







- Scoring is on a 0-100 point scale with 70 denoting an average performance.
- The ideal ranch riding horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.
- The ideal ranch horse will travel with forward movement and demonstrate an obvious lengthening of stride at extended gaits.
- 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.
- Touching or holding the saddle horn is acceptable.
- The class is judged on the horse's ability to work at a forward, working speed while performing the required and optional maneuvers.
  - The required maneuvers are the walk, jog and lope (both directions), the extended trot and extended lope at least one direction as well as stops, back and one change of direction.
  - The optional maneuvers are sidepass; turns of 360 degrees or more; change of lead (simple or flying); walk, jog or lope over natural logs or other reasonable maneuvers a ranch horse could perform.



# Working Western Rail

---

- The working western rail class measures the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride 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 movement of the working western rail horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly.
- The overall manners and responsiveness of the horse and the horse's quality of movement are the primary considerations.
- Maximum credit should be given to the horse that has a natural flowing stride and consistent, ground covering gaits.
- Transitions should be performed when requested, with smoothness and responsiveness.
- The ideal working western rail horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait.
- The horse should be ridden on a relatively loose rein with light contact and without requiring undue restraint while being responsive to the rider and making timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner.
- The horse should be soft in the bridle, yield to contact and shall not be shown on a full drape of rein.
- Riders are encouraged to use adequate space given the extension of gaits required.
- This class should show the horse's ability to work at a forward, working pace while under control by the rider.
- The horse shall be balanced and appear willing and a pleasure to ride in a group situation.





## Class Requirements

- All exhibitors will work as a group. Individuals working off the rail will not be penalized and passing is permissible.
- Horses must work both ways of the ring at the walk, trot and lope. Horses must work at least one way of the ring at the extended trot and extended lope. At the option of the judge, horses may be asked to extend their stride at the walk.
- The overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be as those described in AQHA Rules (SHW334 GAITS) with an emphasis on forward, free-flowing, and ground-covering movement.
- At the extended trot and lope, the exhibitor may post or stand in the stirrups.
- Touching or holding the saddle horn during any extended gait is acceptable.
- Horses are to be reversed to the inside (away from the rail). They may be required to reverse at the walk or trot at the discretion of the judge but shall not be asked to reverse at the lope.
- Horses are required to back easily and stand quietly. Horses may be brought to the center or backed on the rail.
- The rider shall not be required to dismount except in the event the judge wishes to check equipment.