

Breed Characteristics and Judging Standard of the Fjord Horse

TYPE: The Fjord is a versatile 'all purpose' horse renowned for its temperament, willingness to work, stamina and vigour. Fjord horses are well suited for work on farms and in horticulture. They are used in all manner of harness work, including competitions. They give a good ride and in Australia, have been used for trail and pleasure riding by adults and children.

COLOUR: The breed characteristic is so obvious that the Fjord Horse is immediately recognisable. Its special features are its dun colouration, the stiff trimmed bi-coloured mane, and the dorsal or eel stripe which runs from the fetlock to the tip of its tail.

There are five colour variations. The majority of Fjord Horses are brown dun, while a small percentage are either grey, red dun, or white dun. The rarest colour, yellow dun, is seldom seen, even in Norway.

- Brown Dun: coat colour is pale yellow-brown, and can vary from creamy yellow to nearly brown. The dorsal stripe (forelock through tail) is black or dark brown.
- Grey: coat colour from light silver grey to dark slate grey; stripe in mane, dorsal stripe and tail stripe are dark grey to black; muzzle is generally a darker shade of grey than body colour.
- Red Dun: pale red-yellow in lighter or darker shades; the dorsal stripe is red or red-brown, always darker than the coat colour but never black. On the lighter shades of red duns, the forelock, mane and tail can be completely white.
- White Dun: coat colour is white or yellow-white; dorsal stripe is black or grey.
- Yellow Dun: coat colour is yellow-white, dorsal stripe a darker shade of yellow, but may be indistinct. Forelock, mane and tail may be completely white.

In addition to the dorsal stripe, other markings include horizontal (zebra) stripes on legs, dark legs below the knee and sometimes dark stripes across the wither. There are often small brown marks over the eyes and on the cheeks and thighs. Hairs around the muzzle may be white, or varying shades of dun. White markings are permitted on the forehead, but are not encouraged.

HEIGHT: 13 hands to 14.2 hands high.

WITHERS: Moderately defined and long, extending into the back.

HEAD: The head may be large, but never common, with a broad flat forehead and a straight or slightly concave profile. The eyes are large and dark with a gentle expression. The ears are of small to medium size and set well apart.

NECK: The neck tends to be shorter than in other breeds but is well muscled with sufficient suppleness and blends into a deep chest and a sloping shoulder.

BODY: The Fjord has a compact body with a deep girth and well sprung ribs. The back is medium in length with a strong coupling. The loin is broad and strong. The croup is well muscled and well rounded to the tail.

LEGS: The legs should be straight, conformationally correct, and possess substantial bone. The bones are flat and clean, never course. The size of bone is important to body type (ie: a heavier canon bone on a larger heavier Fjord) and the joints are proportionally large and well defined. Pasterns are sloping and of moderate length. Fore-arm and gaskin are well muscled, inside and out. Hooves are ample in size, dark and strong with a wide heel. Fjords have especially hard hooves and may be shown unshod.

MOVEMENT: The way of going for the Fjord Horse is straight and true with good forward movement. The gaits are well balanced, with a regular cadence and a length of stride where the hind hoof print oversteps the front hoof print at the walk and trot.

PREFERRED GROOMING PRESENTATION: Generally Fjords should not be clipped unless for the horses's well being due to climate or activity (eg: Combined Driving, eventing, dressage etc) Feathers should not be clipped, but 'goat' hairs under the chin and jowl may be trimmed to define head. Ear hairs should not be clipped out, but also may be neatened. Tail should be full and long.

The upright mane is clipped in a crescent so as to emphasize the curve of the neck. The silver hairs each side of the dorsal stripe are often cut about 20mm shorter than the black to emphasize the stripe.

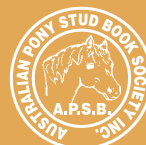
PRESENTATION: The Fjord is presented square.

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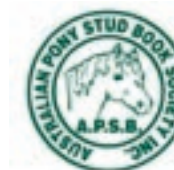
For Particulars of registration and membership contact the Registrar:

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The Australian Pony Stud Book Society Inc.



Established: 1931

The Fjord Horse



The Fjord Horse

One of the nine breeds registered under the umbrella of the Australian Pony Stud Book Society.

There is a separate section for the Fjord Horse within the Australian Pony Stud Book. They are allotted the suffix 'F' following their registered number. The height is 13-14.2hh.

History of the Norwegian Fjord Horse

The Norwegian Fjord is considered one of the world's few pure breeds and one of its oldest. Herds of wild Fjord horses existed in Norway after the last Ice Age, and archaeological excavations at Vikings burial sites reveal that it has been intentionally bred for at least 2,000 years. The Vikings domesticated their Fjords and used them for agricultural work and on their warring expeditions. Sometimes it was the horses who were pitted against each other in the cruel sport of 'horse fighting' That surely aided the natural selection process whereby only the genes of the strongest and bravest stallions were passed onto successive generations.

Visitors to Norway and inhabitants of other countries continue to be enchanted by the Fjording's many talents. Since their entry into recorded history, they worked tirelessly as draft, driving and riding animals. It is as if the Fjord's gifts have been sculpted by time. Because it has been a pure breed for so many centuries, it is solid both in mind and body, and in a world of horses bred for speed on the track or performance in the show ring, the Norwegian Fjord has staying power and dependability.

The Fjording' writes Tom Ryder in an article from the 'Carraige Journal' is bred neither for exceptional speed nor brilliant performance.

"The breed remains what it has long been - an honest, hard working companion to mankind."



The Fjord in Australia

Fjord Horses were running wild on a property near Longreach, in central western Queensland in the 1920's. They were reputedly imported by the property owner and over time were allowed to run wild and breed indiscriminately among themselves.

They were rounded up, the stallions gelded and used as handy mounts around the station. Their incredibly tough constitution made them ideal for the purpose. Some of the horses were as old as nine years of age and had never had a hand on them. They came to hand with minimum of fuss and astounded the old stockmen with their wonderful temperament and good sense.

In 1986, eight pure bred Fjord horses were imported to Australia from Holland. This was done via the Dutch Stud Book Secretary who was able to ensure that the two stallions and six brood mares, were not related to each other going back at least four generations. These horses endured the long period of quarantine in England before coming out by container ship to Australia. They settled in well and over the next decade produced a number of foals to add to their number.

In 1995, the APSB Society was approached to include a section for the Fjord Horse within the pure bred sections of the Stud Book. This included the stallion LEXON and eighteen mares in the numbered section and two stallions FERDINAND and NAUSTDAL and the mares CERNA, DAGMAR, DANIELLE, DOLLY, FRISKA and YRMGARD recorded as Reference Horses.

These horses are listed in Volume 18 of the Society's Stud Book and subsequent Stud Book volumes carry further registrations.

In Australia, the Fjords have been used for harness in show, agricultural, CDEs, trail riding, Riding for The Disabled, Endurance and pleasure and for teaching novices. However, as with all young horses of any breed, although they are quieter than most, they require just as much skilled training to channel their intelligence and strength and cope with their assertive personalities.

They have adapted well to the Australian climate. A number of the breed live in Townsville, North Queensland, and also Victoria. When used for trail rides, they continually amaze the 'Aussie blokes' on their stock horses, by the way they keep up with their longer-legged friends.