

Shire Horse Society Australia

Breed Standard for Shire Horses

The overall horse should show the stamp of a Shire and create a picture, so the total impression of the horse is important. Of all the heavy horses the Shire is the largest – at least 16.2 hands high but can exceed 19 hands. Typically it is 18 hands. The Shire Horse weighs about 900kg (a ton), and is immensely strong and powerful, but these qualities are combined with gentleness, patience and docility.

The Shire's heritage is as a Cart Horse, and it should have presence, carriage, and movement, front and behind. Its action should be well-balanced, lively and pleasurable. Hocks should be high off the ground, and travel close together, which gives more power for pushing into the collar.

A scale of points for the breed has been carefully drawn up and amended as necessary to meet modern requirements. For instance, a notable characteristic of the Shire at one time was the wealth of hair, or feather, on the legs. Today they are to be cleaner legged, with straight fine, silky hair only down the backs of the canons and above the foot (ie not down the front of the cannon bones). Note: Shires do have colour restrictions. The following sections outline the standard of points:

Breed Standard of Points for Stallions

Colour:	Black, brown, bay, or grey. No good stallion should be splashed with large white patches over the body. He must not have so much flecking so as to look like what is commonly called 'roan'. He must not be chestnut or dilute.
Height	Average height about 18 hands but may be more.
Character	A good Stallion should have strong character and masculinity. He should possess a masculine head and a good crest with sloping, not upright, shoulders running well into the back, which should be short and well coupled with the loins.
Head	Lean but broad between the slightly prominent eyes. 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' (convex curved). Thin and wide nostrils. Lips together.
Ears	Long, cleanly modelled and alert.
Throat	Clean cut and lean.
Shoulder	Deep and oblique, wide enough to support the collar.
Neck	Fairly long, arched commandingly. Well set on to the shoulder to give this commanding appearance.
Girth	Up to eight feet.
Back	Compact, strong and muscular. Should not be dipped or arched.
Ribs	Round deep and well sprung.
Loins	Standing well up, and roundly muscled to deliver power (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. The tail should be well set up and not what is known as 'gooserumped'. Both head and tail should be carried erect.

Ribs Round, deep, and well sprung, not flat sided.

Forelegs Should be as straight as possible, down to pastern. Set within the shoulders for maximum tractive power.

Hindlegs Hocks should not be too far back and in line with the hind-quarters with simple width broadside and narrow in front. Hocks should be high off the ground. 'Puffy' and 'sickle' hocks should be avoided. The leg sinews should be clean cut and hard like fine cords to touch and well clear of cannon bone.

Bone Of flat bone 28 cm (11 inches) is ample, although occasionally 32 cm (12½ inches) measurement 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 & joints 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.

Feet Deep, solid, and wide, with thick open walls. Coronets should be hard and sinewy with substance and open where hoof joins limb.

Hair Always has 'feather', which is long, straight hair, on the backs of the lower limbs and around the pastern. Not too much, fine straight and silky.

Movement When in motion, he should go with force using both knees and hocks, the hocks should be kept close together. He should go straight and true before and behind.

Modification or Variation of Stallion Breed Standard Points for Mares

Colour Black, brown, bay, grey. White flecking is allowed. She must not be chestnut or dilute.

Height Upwards of 16 hands (163 cm).

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.

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 23 cm (9 inches) to 28 cm (11 inches) of flat bone, with clean cut sinews.

Character A mare should exhibit refinement and quality, long and deep with free action, of a feminine and matronly appearance, standing from 16 hands (163 cm) and upwards; she should have plenty of room to carry her foal.

Modification or Variation of Stallion Breed Standard Points for Geldings

Colour As for mares but other colours are allowed.

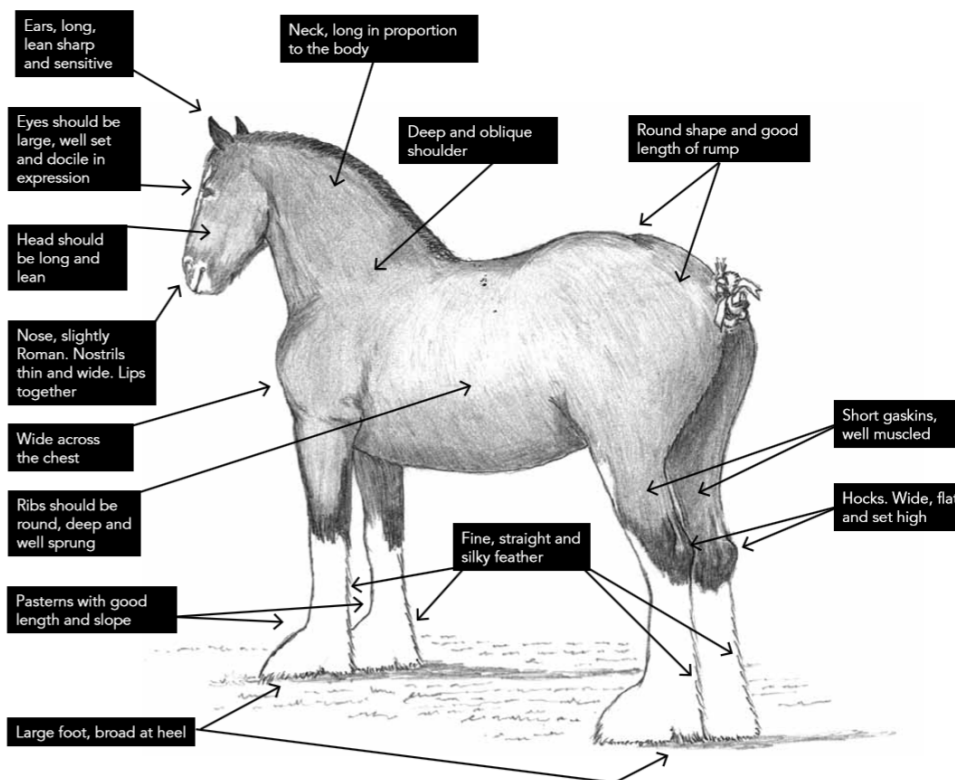
Height 16.2 (168 cm) hands and upwards.

Girth From 183 cm (6 ft) to 229 cm (7ft 6 inches).

Bone 23 cm (10 inches) to 26 cm (11 inches) under knee, slightly more under hock and broadside on, of flat hard quality.

Character A gelding should be upstanding, thick, well-balanced, very active, and a lively, pleasurable 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).

THE IDEAL SHIRE



CORRECT "SET"

