

SA MINIATURE HORSE –

BREED STANDARD.

A Breed Standard is the Standard of perfection we strive for in an ideal Miniature horse.

BREED OBJECTIVE; To produce the smallest possible perfect miniaturised horse with no specific breed or type of horse to be the emphasis.

GENERAL IMPRESSION; The South African Miniature Horse is a striking, small, well balanced horse that if all reference to size were eliminated, would have the same conformational proportions of other full sized light breeds. The mares demonstrate refinement and feminine qualities. The mature stallions show boldness and masculinity. The general impression is to be a balanced individual regardless of size with symmetry, strength, agility and alertness. Movement is strong, natural and athletic. In motion the horse will exude athleticism as demonstrated by suppleness of the shoulders extending into forearm and knees, while engaging the hindquarters, with fluid articulation of hocks. In judging, all things being equal, preference must be given to the smaller horse, but never compromising correct breed type, overall construction and soundness for size alone.

TEMPERAMENT; Temperament is reflected in its personality and behaviour. The South African Miniature Horse is intelligent, curious, gentle, sensible, willing to cooperate and easy to train.

SIZE; Measured at the highest point of the wither, a mature horse (5 years or older) must not exceed 95 cm be it a mare or a stallion. Horses younger than 2 years old and Geldings are to comply with the height requirements as set out in the show rules.

COLOUR; Any coat colour, markings, pattern, eye colour are equally acceptable in SA Miniature horses.

HEAD; The head is eye catching, triangular in shape and comparatively small in proportion to the length of neck and body. The overall image of the head should be refined with distinct features and quality, yet reflecting its gender. The forehead is broad with large, expressive, prominent eyes. The eyes are set well apart and are placed approximately 1/3 the distance from the poll to muzzle. The distance between the muzzle and eyes is comparatively short. A profile may be straight or slightly dished below the eyes, blending into large nostrils on a small, refined muzzle.

BITE; when viewed from the side, the meeting point of the centre incisor teeth should be equal and even. A slight deviation, no more than the width of one tooth's surface is permissible without fault in mares and half a tooth in stallions. The accuracy of the bite may vary according to age. As the premolars and molars move into location, the alignment of the jaw could vary during this process. Bundling of teeth, if not severe, is permitted provided it does not alter the bite.

EARS; The ears are set well apart on top of the head and carried alertly. They are medium in size and length, well-shaped with pointed tips curving slightly inward, in proportion to head size with attentive mobility.

NECK; The neck is set on the top of a well-angulated shoulder, departing well above the point of the shoulder and blending into the withers, giving the impression of the neck sitting on top of the withers rather than in front of them. The slender neck is slightly arched forming a gentle *convex* curve from behind the poll into the withers. Its length is in proportion to body with the top line of the neck being considerably longer than the bottom line of the neck. Length of the neck should be in proportion to size of the horse. Throat latch area should be clean and fine with sufficient space for the windpipe & gullet (never coarse), allowing flexion at the poll and normal respiration.

SHOULDERS; The shoulders are clearly defined as it has a long, sloping, well angulated (45-50 degrees), allowing for a free swinging stride and alert, up- headed/neck carriage.

THE FOREQUARTERS; Limbs should be fine boned with well-muscled forearms. Forelegs should be placed under the shoulders (plum line front/perpendicular). The pasterns & hooves should ideally slope to about 45°.

BODY; The top line of the body starting at the withers has a short back, close coupling, broad loins, which flows into a deep flank and well sprung ribs. The top line flows from the back and coupling into a long, slightly rounded, well-muscled croup and is smoothly rounding at the hip. The tail is well set. The underline of the body should be long but not tucked up at the flank. At maturity, the top of the hip must not be higher than the withers. The chest is medium width, with defined muscular development, and sufficient depth. The length of the foreleg should be at least longer than the depth of the body. The length of the body should be equal to each of the forequarter and hind quarter, each making up approximately a third of the horses' length.

THE HINDQUARTERS; Well coupled with strong loins, and well-rounded quarters, and well-muscled thighs & gaskins. Fine boned cannon bones & pasterns. Hocks and rear cannons should be parallel when seen from behind. (NO COW HOCKS, BOWED HOCKS). The tail is placed high, well carried and gay.

LEGS; The legs appear longer than the body is deep, yet proportional in the mature horse. The legs possess an appearance of over-all substance with refinement. Legs are structurally correct and parallel when viewed from the front and back with hooves pointing directly ahead. The pasterns have sufficient length and angulations to provide a light, springy ~~step~~ stride. The front legs possess a well-muscled forearm, relatively long in proportion to a short cannon. Front pasterns slope 45 to 48 degrees and blend smoothly with no change of angle from the pastern to the ground. The rear leg structure must demonstrate ~~good~~ correct angulations and proper flexion of the hocks for athletic movement; have the stifle placed well forward and low in the flank area with thighs and gaskins well-muscled. The gaskin is relatively long in relation to the cannon. The rear cannons are perpendicular to the ground when points of hocks and buttocks are in the same vertical lines. Rear-pasterns slope 40 to

50 degrees and blend smoothly with no change of angle from the hooves to the ground. The hooves are trimmed to a practical length and have sufficient toe length and angle with spread of the heels for the size and proportions of the animal. Hooves should not be boxy and front hooves are more rounded than the rear hooves which are narrower and more pointed.

BALANCE; There should be balance and proportionality between the hindquarter, body and forequarter and between the length of leg and depth of body. The length of neck and size of head should match the rest of the horses' proportions creating an overall impression of balance, functionality and matched proportions.

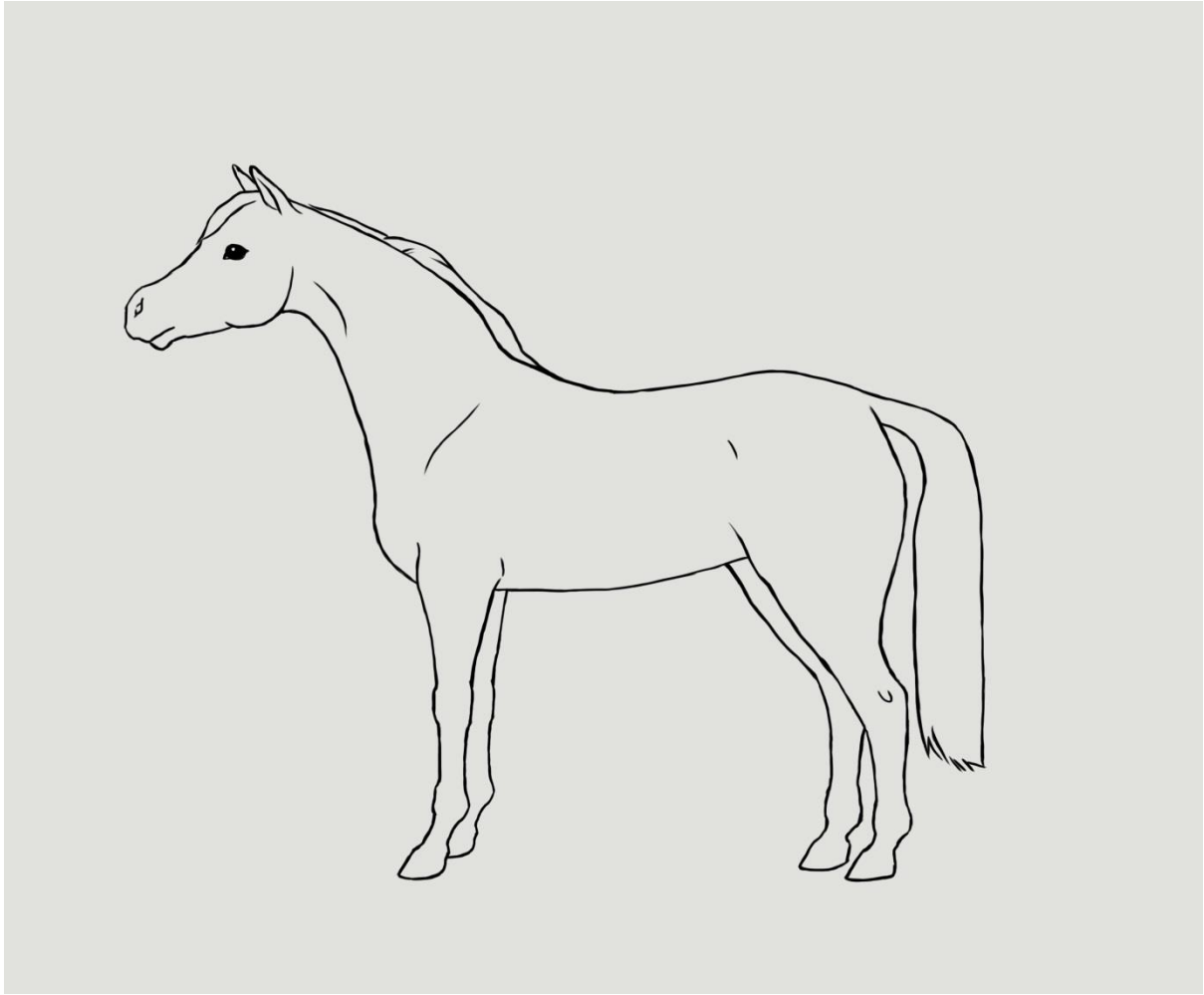
MOVEMENT; Free flowing light & true (straight) movement with good reach rhythm and impulsion. The walk is a natural free flowing, four beat gait with length of stride proportional to the height and length of leg. The trot is a natural forward, free flowing two beat diagonal gait where the knee and hock are synchronized in their elevated, flexed and extension movement. When viewed at a walk and trot from the front, the horse will replicate the structural correctness of its stance. Knees and hocks well flexed but not hackneyed. The Miniature horse is agile & active but must not move close or wide behind. The horse's conformation allows them to trot willingly and freely at liberty or when pulling a pleasure cart.

COAT:- Well-groomed and presented, with ample mane & tail and with fine hair quality. Clipping the horse is optional; however, the concept of a horse show is to present the horse in its best possible impression. Therefore, trimming is acceptable. Applying artificial coloring is to be discouraged.

TYPE. SA Miniature horses are found primarily in two Types with both types resembling light horse Breeds. A Pleasure horse type that has more refinement and a lighter conformation and a working horse type that has stronger muscling and heavier bone. Skeletal structure dictates size, type, balance, and function. Neither of these types takes preference over the other provided they are equally compliant with the breed standard and have sound conformation. Horses with strong Pony characteristics and features are not compliant with the modern Breed Standard.

JUVENILE CONSIDERATIONS; The body of the junior (below 4 years of age) horse demonstrates stretch and frame to be filled in with muscling appropriate for its age. A mature adult look is not desirable.

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:- Mono cryptorchidism & cryptorchidism (one or no testicles) at 4 years or older. Over or under bite that exceeds one width of the surface of an incisor. Dwarfism and dwarf characteristics and traits are a disqualifying physical condition. A horse carrying of dwarf genes, while undesirable, is not a disqualifying fault.



NB. Please note that judges are to read this Breed Standard in Conjunction with the judges MEMO and the BREED POINTS.