

# New Forest Pony



There have been NF ponies in the Forest since the end of the last Ice Age. The Forest and the ponies are inter-dependent. Without the ponies, the forest would be very different, more overgrown with less birds and flowers. Early records include the bones of a 13hh pony at the Roman Villa at Rockbourne and the profits of the Royal Stud at Lyndhurst going to the building of Beaulieu Abbey.

In 1507, mounts from the New Forest were shipped to the French wars. NF pony mares were very probably bred to a Spanish Horse standing at the Royal Stud at Lyndhurst rather than the myth of the Spanish Horse swimming ashore from the Armada!!

The first stallion of real merit was Marske, the sire of Eclipse, sold to a Ringwood farmer when his owner the Duke of Cumberland died and used on 'country mares' until Eclipse started winning.

William Gilpin in 1791 wrote "The New Forest Horse is often supposed to be of Spanish origin, some would not disgrace so noble an origin. As the ornament of a Forest Scene, he is always picturesque."

## **Confirmation**

The New Forest Pony has an ideal temperament and is very easy to train. It should be of riding type with substance. The larger ponies, while narrow enough for children, are quite capable of carrying adults. The smaller ponies, though not up to so much weight, often show more quality.

- Height: the upper height limit is 148 cm. There is no lower limit. All ponies should be judged equally regardless of height. They are normally shown in 2 height sections 138 cm and under (competition type A) and over 138 cm (competition height B)
- Colour: New Forest ponies may be any colour except piebald, skewbald, spotted or blue eyed cream. Palomino or very light chestnut and cream ponies with dark eyes are not eligible as licensed stallions. Blue eyes are not permitted. White markings other than on the head and lower limbs: loss of, or absence of, pigment in hair or skin that is not known to have been associated solely with skin trauma is not acceptable. So, for the purposes of entry into the approved section of the Stud Book a pony shall not have any white markings behind the head, above a horizontal line level with the bony protuberance of the accessory carpal bone at the back of the knee in the forelimb, and the point of the hock in the hind limb, unless proven to be due to trauma/injury.
- Type: New Forest ponies should be of working type with substance. They should have sloping shoulders, strong quarters, plenty of flat bone, good depth of body, straight limbs and good hard round feet. The ponies are quite capable of carrying adults, while narrow enough for small children. The smaller ponies, though not up to so much weight, often show more quality
- Movement: this should be free, active and straight, but not exaggerated

## **How to do well in a New Forest Show Class**

### **Turnout**

- Traditionally, all tack should be brown in a show ring
- Bridles should be plain with a plain browband
- Snaffle for Novice classes
- Double bridle or Pelham for Open classes
- Saddles should be used without any numnah, or a fitted one in the colour of the saddle
- Show or working hunter saddles are preferred as they show the horse's shoulder and movement
- No boots or bandages
- New Forest Ponies should be shown as natural as possible
- No plaiting, and the mane should look as natural as possible

- The tail should not be pulled
- Ears can be trimmed on the outside but not inside
- Don't trim the whiskers!
- Don't trim the long feathers on the legs
- No make-up or false hair
- New Forest Ponies may be shown clipped as long as it is in the interest of welfare (legs should not be clipped)

## **Way of going**

- Judges expect a smooth, polished show with a really good gallop from a New Forest Pony
- All transitions should be relaxed and smooth without resistance
- The overall way of going should be uphill and light, with the hind legs coming right underneath the body so that the pony is working through from behind
- Riders should use the ring. If you find yourself too close to the pony in front of you take a circle and find a gap to slot into
- Don't overbent your pony - this not only spoils the impression, but also stilts the natural pace of the pony shortening the stride, spoiling the movement and makes even the longest front look short
- Teach your pony to stand still in a line up
- It's important that they show manners but some personality is a must
- Judges hate overweight and unfit ponies. Excess weight is a way to hide a multitude of conformational faults and it often causes the pony to have puffy, lumpy joints as well as causing noisy, laboured breathing. It also affects the way the pony moves

If you need help, get some help from one of our show judges at EquiMind:

<http://www.equimind.co.uk/product/s20-the-perfect-turnout/>

<http://www.equimind.co.uk/product/s23-feedback-for-my-showing-test-copy/>