

## **SHOW RING PROCEDURES AND ETIQUETTE**

This section addresses the way a halter class is conducted at a typical AMHR show. Our Club shows will likely be very similar but, in all cases, it is up to the exhibitor to follow the instructions of the judge(s).

There is no set order of go in a class. All exhibitors wait on deck for their class to be called into the ring and will enter one at a time. Generally, you will receive a nod or some other indication from the judge when it is your turn. Enter the ring at a walk, and line your horse up with the judge. In the event that there are two or more judges, either walk towards one of them, or in between them, but it is very important that you and your horse walk a straight line. Keep your head up, with one eye on the horse and the other on the judge. Walk confidently, and quickly enough that your horse is exhibiting a “working walk”, and not just strolling along. If the horse trots, simply bring him back to the walk and carry on. When you reach the judge, trot on past in a straight line for a few metres, then make a clean L-shaped turn to the left, trot on for a metres, and make another L turn into the line up. The judge will be watching your horse trot away and in profile. Your horse should trot freely without a very firm hold on the lead shank or without being dragged, and at a speed fast enough to show off his best movement. As before, if he breaks into a canter, simply bring him back to the trot and carry on.

The horses are lined up head to tail. Ensure that you have enough room between yourself and the exhibitors in front of and behind you for safety and to allow you to show your horse to its best advantage. As soon as you enter the line up, set your horse up and show it. The judge may still be watching other horses enter the ring, but could also be glancing over at yours at any time. Your horse should always be standing quietly but alertly, and as correctly as possible, for the duration of the class. When all the horses have lined up, the judge will then look at each one individually. When he or she is looking at your horse, this is the time to really *show!* This is your moment to shine and to show your horse the very best you can. As the judge moves on to the next horse, you can relax slightly, but still keep in mind that he or she may be looking at your horse at any time and perhaps comparing it with another. Unless the class is told by the judge to relax when he or she is finished judging, continue to remain sharp and alert. Avoid chatting with other exhibitors at any time during the class, and focus totally on your horse and the judge. When the placings are called, quickly move forward to pick up your ribbon. It's not up to the judge or the ring steward to come to you.

In classes that are qualifiers for a championship class, i.e. Aged whatever Gender, or Two Year Old, Yearling, or Foal of Current Year, the top two placings will return for the pinning of the championship. In the Aged class, the first two placings are automatically Senior and Reserve Champion. In the junior classes, the first two placings will come back into the ring, and two horses will be selected for Junior and Reserve Champion. Then, those four horses will compete for Grand and Reserve Champion. If the show offers a Supreme Halter Horse, or Champion of Champions class, then only the three Grand Champions will enter the ring for the judge to select the best horse in the show.

In a halter class (not including Showmanship), the judge is rating only the horses, not the handlers. However, you and your horse should be a team that is eye catching and as well turned out as possible. As the handler, your clothes should fit well, be neat and clean, and of a colour that will either contrast or complement that of your horse. Long sleeves are not mandatory, but do look the most professional. The western look is quite outdated now (but still perfectly acceptable), and most ladies wear something like black pants with a blouse and vest, or tank top and blazer, or a pant suit. Gentlemen will wear either a shirt and tie with a vest, or shirt and tie with a sport coat generally. Hats and gloves are optional but they can certainly add the finishing touch to a nice outfit.

Your horse should be alert and focusing on you only. Of course, this can be difficult sometimes with a stallion or a young horse, but this is where your hours and hours of training at home will come into play. Your horse should always step right out when asked to move forward, without getting ahead of you or lagging behind. He should set up in as little time as possible and keep his attention on you at all times. It is permissible to bait your horse in the ring, and people will use things such as sweet feed, small bits of carrots or other tasty food treats, some crinkly paper or a small container of things to rattle (such as Tic-Tacs). Your horse should stand square, or slightly stretched, with ears up, eyes on you, and the neck stretched up and out, with the lower jawline nearly level. He shouldn't look like he's just grabbing for treats, and certainly shouldn't be flapping his lips. It's sometimes difficult to work with treats as some horses will become quite nippy or greedy so, of course, that's where you look for something else that will grab and hold your horse's attention. If you actually give your a horse a treat in the ring, avoid doing it right when the judge is looking at your horse! Whatever method you find works best for your horse, ensure that it's not something that will disturb or distract the other horses around you.

Your own body language is more important than you might realize. Your horse will certainly pick up on your feelings and will respond accordingly. If you're very tense and nervous, he may feel that there's something to be afraid of, and will become nervous and jittery himself. If you project the feelings and the image that you *know* your horse is the best one out there, not only will that be reflected in your horse, but it will also catch the attention of the judge. A gorgeous horse, impeccably groomed and turned out, with a handler that exudes confidence and professionalism, is sure to be a winning combination!

## **HORSE SHOW CHECK LIST**

### **Grooming Supplies**

- ✓ Brushes, combs
- ✓ Show Sheen, or Pepi, or Cowboy Magic, etc.
- ✓ Baby oil or gel, or Vaseline
- ✓ Hair spray and/or gel
- ✓ Baby Wipes
- ✓ Towels
- ✓ Corn starch, or chalk, or baby powder
- ✓ Wet wipes
- ✓ Sanding block
- ✓ Hoof polish, black and/or clear
- ✓ Hoof polish enhancer
- ✓ Wet Ones
- ✓ Vicks

### **Show Ring Supplies**

- ✓ Show Clothes! Make sure you have pockets for treats
- ✓ Boots
- ✓ Hat and gloves if showing in Showmanship
- ✓ Number Clips
- ✓ Treats to bait with in the ring
- ✓ Spare show halter, lead, chain and keeper
- ✓ Wet Ones
- ✓ Safety Pins

### **Miscellaneous Stuff**

- ✓ Black electrical tape
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Hole punch
- ✓ Feed and water, and buckets to put them in
- ✓ Wet Wipes (you can never have too many!)
- ✓ Class List (order of go) with your classes highlighted
- ✓ Pen and paper to keep track of your placings

Always be well stocked in everything. Replenish supplies as required after each show.

