

What is Ranch

Ranch events are judged on the ability to work a horse at a forward moving pace, in a natural frame, whilst testing the skill and versatility of horse & rider. In Ranch Riding, Ranch Reining, Ranch Pleasure & Ranch Trail (collectively known as the pattern classes), a horse's abilities and manners are put to the test through a series of transitions and manoeuvres. A horse's gaits, movement and ability to ride confidently amongst other horses is showcased in Ranch on the Rail; and its ability to work cattle is tested in Ranch Cow Work, Ranch Cutting, Ranch Roping and Ranch Boxing. A horse's conformation and suitability for ranch work is also judged in Ranch Conformation, a halter class. A ranch horse should be attentive to its surroundings, display forward moving in working gaits and be ridden with a light contact.

Once you give ranch a try, it's very easy to become hooked!

Classes

RANCH RIDING

A superior ranch riding horse has a free-flowing stride, of reasonable length in keeping with his conformation, and covering a reasonable amount of ground as if he was going across the pasture to do a task on the ranch in a timely fashion. Horses should not be a runaway, but more like 'we have a lot to get done today!' The required manoeuvres are walk, jog, and lope (both directions) the extended trot and extended lope at least one direction as well as stop, back and one change of direction. The optional manoeuvres are sidepass, one or more 360 degree turns, change of lead (simple or flying) walk, jog or lope over poles. Scoring is on a 0-100-point scale, with 70 denoting an average performance.

RANCH ON THE RAIL

The purpose of working the western rail, is to reward a horse that displays; natural self-carriage; a ground-covering forward moving stride without excessive speed; rewarding balance; cadence; and ease of use. This class will be judged as a rail class, but individuals working off the rail, will receive equal reward. Passing is permissible, as long as the horse maintains proper cadence and rhythm. The overall manners and responsiveness of the horse in a smooth and correct way will be rewarded. Horses are asked to show at a walk, trot and lope in both directions on the rail. Extended walk, extended trot and extended lope are required in at least one direction. Horses will also be required to back.

RANCH TRAIL

This class will be judged on the performance of the horse over obstacles, with emphasis on manners, response to the rider and quality of movement. Credit will be given to horses negotiating the obstacles with style and some degree of speed, providing correctness is not sacrificed. Horses should receive credit for showing attentiveness to the obstacles and the capability of picking their own way through the course when obstacles allow. As well as willingly responding to the rider's cues on more difficult obstacles.

RANCH REINING

Ranch Reining measures the ability of the ranch horse to perform basic handling manoeuvres with a natural head carriage, in a forward-looking manner. Competitors should not be penalised for reining their horse through the pattern in a reasonable manner. Stops should be hard and deep as if needed to stop and go in the other direction. Spins should be square and done without resistance. Turn arounds should be those of a working horse, correct and job efficient. The best reined horse should be wilfully guided or controlled, with little or no apparent resistance, and dictated to completely. Smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of performing will make the horse/rider team more exciting and pleasing to watch. Classes require, large fast & small slow circles, run down, stop and roll back, spins left and right, the number of spins varies depending on the pattern, and a backup. Horses are penalised for long sliding stops and spinning with their head low. The horse should at all times work like a horse managing stock in yards.

RANCH PLEASURE

Ranch Pleasure is an AQHA "Versatility Ranch" approved class. Please refer to "Ranch Riding", however, the ranch pleasure pattern has far less manoeuvres (approximately 7-8) compared to a ranch riding pattern (approximately 11-13)

RANCH CONFORMATION

Conformation is based on the structural correctness, balance and functional ability of the horse to perform ranch related work. The horses 'form' meaning it's structural correctness and balance, combined with function, meaning it's performance in the cutting, riding working cow and trail classes, establishes the ranch conformation score. Horses will walk to the judge, one at a time. As you pass the judge, you will then trot off to a cone, turn left and continue trotting around the corner of a second cone and stop facing the direction of the arena you entered in. You will then set up. (Stand your horse square) The judge will look at your horse from all angles. Bear in mind, setting up and presenting your horse properly can add a great deal of appeal.

RANCH PROSPECT LUNGE LINE

Yearlings and two & three (2&3) year old only. The purpose of this class is to reward quality of movement, manners, expression, attitude and conformation suitable to future performance and the horse is to be judged with its suitability as a future performer under saddle in mind.

RANCH PROSPECT TRAIL

Yearlings and two & three (2&3) year old only. Horses are to receive credit for showing attentiveness to the obstacles and the capability of picking their own way through the course when obstacles warrant it, and willingly responding to the handlers cues on more difficult obstacles.