



The Irish Draught Horse Society New Zealand

Guide to Breed Standard

This standard applies to RID (Registered Irish Draught) and Category 1 horses in New Zealand, plus horses of lower categories being put forward for licensing as part-breds.



The name Irish Draught may be misleading in that many people are surprised to find that the breed is a lighter, free moving animal than the traditional image of the heavy horse.

Nevertheless, the ancestry of the breed goes back to the small Irish farm where the farm horse doubled as a hunter as well as taking the trap or dogcart into the town, however today the Irish Draught is more sought after for its breeding qualities and purebreds are very often used to cross with Thoroughbreds and Warmbloods to produce Irish Sport Horses

The Irish Draught is a slow growing breed and are not considered mature until reaching 7-8 years of age.

Outlook: Quality, presence and pride.

Height: Ideally Irish Draughts should stand between 158cm (15.2hh) and a maximum of 177.5cm (17.2hh) at maturity.

Mares 158cm (15.2hh) and above, Males 162.5cm (16.0hh) and above.

Bone: Bone needs to be in proportion with the size of the horse. The bone is measured directly below the knee.

Mares should have a minimum of 20.3cm (8") clean flat bone.

Stallions should have a minimum of 23cms (9") of strong, clean flat bone.

Head: The head should be generous and pleasant and in proportion to the horse's size. The head should not be coarse, though a slight roman nose is permitted. It should show plenty of room between the jawbones, have a wide forehead and kind eyes set well apart.

The ears should be neither too small or too large and in keeping with the size of the head. The muzzle should be soft, with generous open nostrils. The shape of the jowl should be such that it allows freedom of the airways when the horse is collected.

Neck: The top line of the neck should be longer than the underside and should be set high on the withers, be well muscled with a nice smooth line from poll to withers. It should show a good length of rein. The neck should be of a length to look in balance with the remainder of the horse.

Withers: When mature the withers should be clearly defined. They are the highest part of the horse at maturity and should be higher than or level with the croup at maturity.

Shoulders: A sloping shoulder, which should not be upright, neither loaded, too heavy, nor too short. They should be flat and slope back into the wither. The shoulders should be even when viewed from above and behind.

Chest: The chest should be wide enough to allow generous room for the heart and lungs to function well, and to allow movement to be straight and free.

Tail: The tail should be set on in such a way that it follows the top line of the vertebrae. It should not be too high or low set. It should be carried away from the body curving down in keeping with the graceful shape of the top line.

Front Legs: Forearms long and muscular. Not back at the knee or ties in below the knee. Not pigeon toed or toes turned out. The forearms should continue with short cannon bones and with clean, flat bone. The slope of the front pasterns and the slope of the hooves should be congruent and at an angle of 45-50 degrees.

Knees: Large and flat with no puffiness or bumps.

Fetlocks: The fetlocks should give the impression of flatness, not roundness (apple joint), free from puffiness and lumps. The ligaments and tendons attached to the fetlocks should be

clearly defined so that a finger can be run down the grooves. Excessive feathering is not desirable.

Hind legs: Strong gaskins, well-shaped clean hocks that are free of lumps and which appear wide above and below the joint and set into short cannon bones. Should not be cow hocked or wide apart at the hocks when viewed from the side or behind. The back pastern angle should be 50-55 degrees.

Body: Deep girth, with ribs that are flat, smooth and well sprung. Should appear to be capable of carrying weight for long distances over varied country.

Back: Strong and short in males but may be slightly longer in mares. The neck, shoulder, back and hips should all be approximately the same length. Overall, the topline should be shorter than the underline. The curve of the back and withers should look as if a saddle would fit comfortably as if it was made for that purpose.

Hind quarters: If viewed from behind the quarters should almost be apple shaped widening very slightly to the second thigh giving the impression of squareness and power with a well developed second thigh and above strong clean hocks. The croup should be level with or lower than the withers in a mature horse. The hips should be proportionately broad and hidden from view and must be level when viewed from behind.

Hooves: Should all be equal size and shape. Hard and sound, open at the heel and proportionate to the size and weight of the horse. Not boxy, nor contracted.

Action: Should be straight and free but without exaggeration, but not heavy or ponderous. Movement should be active and strong with sufficient athleticism to give good flexion of the joints and demonstrate freedom of the shoulder. There should be good engagement of the hindquarters and may show some lift of the knee.

Walk: The walk is a pure four beat gait that is active and has suppleness and impulsion. The hooves over track appropriately.

Trot: The trot is a pure two beat gait which is active and has suppleness, elasticity, impulsion and balance.

Canter: The canter is a pure three beat gait that is active and powerful, has suppleness, elastic impulsion and balance. The horse should display self-carriage.

Colour: Any strong colour including Bay, Grey, Chestnut, Black, Brown and Dun.

Markings: Excessive white markings of the face and legs are not desirable.

**Requirement to meet the Irish Draught Horse Society of New Zealand
Breed Standard, the horse should have:**

Many Good Points Few Indifferent Points No Bad Points