

## 2.2 Identification of Horses

This section discusses the physical description of horses as official identification tags are not used. Clear, uniform, and accurate descriptions of their physical attributes are required.

### Horse Identification

#### ***Electronic Chip Implants***

1. While implants are frequently used in many species of animals, the usefulness of this means of identification is limited to those applications where the animal is accessible for a reading to be conducted and a chip reading device is available. For those reasons more traditional means of animal identification are currently in use at ports of entry into Canada. Electronic ID does have usefulness in domestic applications, particularly when combined with some other form of identification in horses.

#### ***Drawings***

2. Documents identifying a horse for test or for export certification require an accurate drawing of the horse, and an accurate description. In addition to brands or tattoos that the horse may bear, look for and identify unique distinguishing marks such as hair patterns or scars. A copy of descriptive nomenclature for colouring and markings has been produced by the International Equestrian Federation, and is included on the following pages. Additional numbered ID may be required under certain circumstances. Drawings on test and export certificates should match, and the written descriptions should agree with drawings. See [5.6 Export to the U.S.—Horses](#) and [6.2 Export to Mexico—Horses](#) for more detail.

#### ***Height***

3. The height of a horse is normally recorded in "hands," measured at the top of the withers. One hand equals four inches.

#### ***Colour***

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|--------|--|
| Black: | When black pigment is general throughout the coat, limbs, mane and tail, with no pattern factor present other than white markings. |
| Brown: | When there is a mixture of black and brown pigment in the coat, with black limbs, mane and tail.                                   |

- Bay-brown:** When the predominate colour is brown, with muzzle bay, black limbs, mane and tail.
- Bay:** Bay varies considerably in shade from dull red approaching brown, to a yellowish colour approaching chestnut, but it can be distinguished from the chestnut by the fact that the bay has a black mane and tail and almost invariably has black on the limbs and tips of the ears.
- Chestnut:** This colour consists of yellow-coloured hair in different degrees of intensity, which may be noted if thought desirable. A "true" chestnut has a chestnut mane and tail which may be lighter or darker than the body colour. Lighter coloured chestnut may have flaxen mane and tail. The **sorrel colour** must be reported under that name.
- Grey:** When the body coat is a varying mosaic of black and white hair, with black skin. With advancing age, the coat grows lighter in colour. The flea-bitten grey may contain three colours or the two basic colours and should be so described. A pure white is exceptional.
- Mouse:** This description is sometimes used for a grey horse with black mane and tail.
- Blue Roan:** When the body colour is black or black-brown, with a mixture of white hair, which gives a blue tinge to the coat. On the limbs from the knees and hocks down, the black hair usually predominates.
- Bay Roan:** When the body colour is bay or bay-brown, with an admixture of white hair, which gives a reddish tinge to the coat. On the limbs from the knees and hocks down the black hairs usually predominate.
- Strawberry/  
Chestnut Roan** When the body colour is chestnut with an admixture of white hairs.
- Blue Dun:** The body colour is a dilute black evenly distributed. The mane and tail are black. There may or may not be a dorsal band (list) and/or withers stripe. The skin is black.
- Yellow Dun:** There is a diffuse yellow pigment in the hair. The mane and tail are black. There may or may not be a dorsal band (list) and/or withers stripe and bars on the legs. The striping is usually associated with black pigment on the head and limbs. The skin

is black.

- Piebald:** The body coat consists of large irregular patches of black and white. The line of demarcation between the two colours is generally well defined.
- Skewbald:** The body consists of large irregular patches of white and of any definite colour except black. The line of demarcation between the colours is generally well-defined.
- Odd Coloured:** The body coat consists of large irregular patches of more than two colours, which may merge into each other at the edges of the patches.
- Isabella:** The body coat is of a cream colour, with black mane and tail.
- Cream:** The body coat is of a cream colour, with nonpigmented skin. The iris is deficient in pigment and is often devoid of it, giving the eye a pinkish or bluish appearance.
- Palomino:** The body coat is a newly-minted gold coin colour (lighter or darker shades are permissible) with a white mane and tail.
- Appaloosa:** Body colour is grey, covered with a mosaic of black or brown spots.

### ***Unique Markings***

- Withers Stripe:** Zebra band across the withers.
- List:** A dorsal band of black hair which extends from the withers backwards to the base of the tail.

### ***White Marks***

The characteristics of all white marks must be described:

A white mark can be regular or irregular. It can be mixed with the hair of the coat, completely or in part, or at the edge. It can be bordered, a band of black skin shows under the white hair at the edge of the mark (the area appears bluish).

### ***Head***

The description should begin at the forehead, followed by the nasal bone, the muzzle, lips and chin.

**Star:** Any white mark on the forehead. Size, shape, intensity, position and coloured markings (if any) on the white to be specified. Should the markings in the region of the centre of the forehead consist of a few white hairs only, it should be so described and not referred to as a star.

**Stripe:** The narrow white marking down the face not wider than the flat anterior surface of the nasal bones. In many cases, the star and stripe are continuous and should be described as star and stripe connected. When the stripe is separate and distinct from the star it should be described as interrupted stripe. When no star is present the point of origin of the stripe should be indicated. The termination of the stripe and any variation in breadth, direction and any markings on the white should be so stated, e.g. broad stripe, narrow stripe, inclined to left, etc. Any markings on the white should be stated.

**Blaze:** A white marking covering almost the whole of the forehead between the eyes and extending beyond the width of the nasal bones and usually to the muzzle. Any variations in direction, termination and any markings on the white should be stated.

**White Face:** When the white covers the forehead and front of the face, extending laterally towards the mouth. The extension may be unilateral or bilateral, in which case it should be described accordingly.

**Snip:** An isolated white marking, independent of those already named, and situated between or in the region of the nostrils. Its size, position and intensity should be specified. When a snip is connected with a stripe it should be recorded as such, e.g. star, stripe connected snip.

**Flesh Mark:** Lack of pigmentation. A flesh mark is described as such and not as a white mark. Black spots within the flesh mark are to be indicated. All lip markings, whether flesh marks or white marks, should be accurately described.

**White Muzzle:** When the white embraces both lips and extends to the region of the nostrils.

### **Limbs**

All white markings on the limbs must be accurately defined and the upper limit precisely stated with reference to points of the anatomy, e.g. white to mid-pastern, white to upper third of cannon. The use of such terms as "sock" or "stocking" are not acceptable. The exact location must be specified, examples are listed below:

Examples:

- White coronet; white pastern; white fetlock; white to knee; white to hock; white to hind quarter
- White patch on coronet (anterior, lateral, medial, posterior)
- White ring around limb: does not extend down to the coronet.

The presence of coloured spots in white marks should be recorded. Black spots in a white coronet are referred to as ermine marks.

**Whorls—Cowlicks**

Whorls or cowlicks are changes in the hair pattern, and may take various forms simple, tufted, feathered or sinuous. Their position must be clearly specified.

**Illustrations of Markings**

