



A Guide to Showing
American Quarter Horses

AMERICAN
QUARTER
HORSE
ASSOCIATION

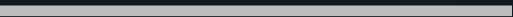


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The Experience of a Lifetime

When you show an American Quarter Horse, you know you've saddled yourself a winner – and the American Quarter Horse Association wants you to be a winner as well. That's why we produced this guide. We want to help you get the most out of showing your American Quarter Horse. Whether it's your profession or your pastime, showing can be a rewarding experience. There are lucrative prizes you can win, the thrill of competition you'll experience and the glory you'll receive. But it's much more. The best rewards you'll carry in your heart for a lifetime. You'll make lifelong friends who share your passion. You'll feel the satisfaction of a job well done. And you'll do it all with the most loyal, responsive, hard-working and willing teammate you'll ever have – the American Quarter Horse.



Divisions

No matter what your level of experience, if you have a desire to compete, you're a member of the right organization. The American Quarter Horse Association has structured shows and divisions to ensure everyone has an even chance to compete and succeed no matter your age, experience or area of expertise.

OPEN

If you have a current AQHA or AQHYA membership, you are eligible to show your American Quarter Horse in open competition. Open competition is usually for the most experienced exhibitors, trainers and professional horsemen, but many amateur and youth members can be tough competitors as well.

AMATEUR

American Quarter Horse owners, 19 years old as of January 1, who do not join the professional ranks may enjoy a full spectrum of competition in the amateur division. An amateur may begin competing in the Select amateur classes on the day that they turn 50 years of age. Select amateur classes are designed to provide an avenue of competition for our more mature amateur exhibitors.

YOUTH

The youth division is open to American Quarter Horse enthusiasts 18 years of age or younger as of January 1 of the current year. American Quarter Horse Youth Association shows are normally scheduled in conjunction with AQHA-approved shows. And virtually all types of classes are offered to youth exhibitors.



Levels

From the brand-new competitor to the seasoned road warrior, everyone has a place at AQHA shows.

At AQHA shows, you'll find that classes are offered in multiple divisions (open, amateur and youth). From there, class divisions are further broken down into levels. The levels group horses and riders with their peers of similar experience and achievements earned. This means Rookies are showing against other beginning competitors, while Level 3 riders are competing against those with the same high skill level.

To determine which levels you are eligible for, AQHA looks at exhibitor or horse records, depending on the type of class it is. Both points and awards earned affect level eligibility.

Some classes are leveled by exhibitor record:

- Youth
- Amateur
- Select amateur
- All halter classes
- All cattle classes

While others are leveled by horse record:

- Open division classes (excluding halter and cattle events)

The level names are Rookie, Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3, with Rookie being the level designed for beginning competitors or those with few accomplishments, and Level 3 being the most highly accomplished competitor.

AQHA shows are not required to offer all of the levels, so show management is left to decide which levels would be in demand at their events. If you'd like to see a new class or level added to your local AQHA shows, be sure to contact the show manager. It never hurts to ask!

The great thing about AQHA levels is they give exhibitors the chance to compete

not just at the local level but at championship events, too. The AQHA Level 1 Championships also offer Rookie championship classes. The AQHA World Championship Show gives Level 3 open and amateur competitors the chance to win world championships, and the Level 2 Championships are also hosted there. Level 3 riders compete for world titles at the AQHYA and AQHA Select world shows, and the top Level 2 riders are recognized at those shows. (At this time, Level 2 Championships are not offered for youth or Select.)

If you'd like to learn more about AQHA levels, check out aqha.com/leveling. There, you can access the online level verification system to determine level eligibility for both you and your horse.

DEFINITION OF EXPERIENCE	LEVEL
Most highly accomplished (exhibitor)	Level 3
Most highly accomplished (horse)	Level 3
Moderately accomplished (exhibitor)	Level 2
Moderately accomplished (horse)	Level 2
Minimally accomplished (exhibitor)	Level 1
Minimally accomplished (horse)	Level 1
Beginner to few accomplishments (exhibitor)	Rookie

Classes

Those who love the American Quarter Horse know that “excellence that shows” is not an empty phrase – it’s a fact. Perhaps nowhere else is the breed’s versatility, heritage and work ethic more apparent than in the show arena. Nor is it more apparent why the American Quarter Horse is favored worldwide. AQHA-approved shows offer something for everyone.

Show events or classes are divided into three basic categories: western, English and halter. Western and English classes feature a wide variety of athletic contests ranging from jumping to western pleasure and pleasure driving to team roping. Halter classes provide competition for horses based on conformation, which reward excellence in balance, structural correctness, breed and sex characteristics and degree of muscling.

WESTERN

BARREL RACING

Exhibitors race against the clock, following a course consisting of three barrels in a triangular “cloverleaf” pattern. Contestants must choose either the right or left barrel, circle it, and go on to the next barrel, completing the course after circling the third barrel and running home. Barrels are permitted to be touched, but if one is knocked down during the course of the run, a five-second penalty per downed barrel is added to the exhibitor’s time.

BOXING

Boxing is an AQHA-approved event for amateur and youth exhibitors who have never been a finalist in working cow horse at any AQHA world championship show or down the fence at a National Reined Cow Horse Association major event, and if they have

earned less than 10 points in working cow horse. The class consists of a reining pattern and single cow work (boxing) on the end of the arena. Each contestant, upon receiving a cow in the arena, shall hold that cow on the prescribed end of the arena for 50 seconds, demonstrating the ability of the horse and rider to control the cow. Time shall begin when the gate closes behind the cow after being let into the arena. The announcer or judge will signal the completion of the 50 seconds with a whistle or horn.

BREAKAWAY ROPING

An event for amateur and youth contestants, breakaway roping is a timed competition, similar to tie-down roping. In breakaway roping, the rope is not tied to the saddle horn as in regular tie-down roping but is attached with a heavy string so that it breaks when a catch is made.



CUTTING

Cutting is a battle of wills between a horse and a cow. Horse and rider must move quietly into a herd of cattle, cut one animal from the herd, drive it to the center of the arena and hold it away from the herd. The cutting horse must match moves with the cow, anticipating its every maneuver. Judges score the horses on their ability to keep the cow from returning to the herd, cow sense, attentiveness and courage. Contestants can cut two or more head of cattle in the 2.5-minute time limit.

HORSEMANSHIP

Horsemanship is a class open to amateur and youth riders and is judged on the horsemanship abilities of the rider using western tack. This class is divided into two sections. Individually, riders must first follow a prescribed pattern. Riders could be asked to walk, jog or lope their horses in a straight line, curve or any combination, plus perform other maneuvers. Finalists from the first portion of the class are then asked back into the arena as a group to show their horses around the perimeter of the arena, or "on the rail." Judges pay close attention to the riders' body positions, how they sit a saddle and their ability to control the horse.

POLE BENDING

Just as a skier would compete in a slalom course, pole bending puts a horse through a similarly designed course. The course consists of a series of six poles spaced 21 feet apart, which horses and riders weave through at a high rate of speed. Horses run to the far end of the series of poles, turn and weave in and out as they work their way back to the front. Horses then complete a turn around the front pole and maneuver through the series again. At the last pole, they complete that turn and race toward the finish line at full speed. A five-second penalty is added for each pole knocked down.

RANCH SORTING

A team of two riders has the objective of sorting 10 head of cattle from one pen into another in a designated sequence. The team that sorts the greatest number of cattle in the correct order with the fastest time wins.

RANCH RIDING

The ranch riding horse should simulate a horse riding outside the confines of an arena and reflect the versatility, attitude and movement of a working horse. The class is judged on the horse's ability to work at a forward, working speed while performing the required and optional maneuvers. The required maneuvers are the walk, trot and lope (both directions), the extended trot and extended lope at least one direction as well as stops, back and one change of direction. The optional maneuvers are side pass; turns of 360 degrees or more; change of lead (simple or flying); walk, jog or lope over poles or other reasonable maneuvers a ranch horse could perform. Scoring is on a 0-100 point scale with 70 denoting an average performance. Ranch pleasure is offered in open and amateur divisions.

REINING

The easiest way to understand reining is to compare it to figure skating. While all reining patterns include stops, spins, rollbacks and lead changes, each horse is evaluated on movement, mastery of the pattern and attitude. There are 13 reining patterns that challenge riders to guide and control every movement of the horse.

STAKE RACE

The stake race is a timed competition for amateur and youth exhibitors to complete a figure-eight pattern around a set of markers. Contestants are allowed a running start and must cross the center line between the upright markers, head to the first pole, circle it with a 180-degree turn and head toward the second pole, turn around, and then race toward the center line to stop the

clock.

TEAM PENNING

A team of three riders must sort three specifically identified head of cattle from a herd and then pen them at the other end of the arena. Time continues until all unpenned cattle are completely on the cattle side of the starting line, within a specified time limit.

TEAM ROPING - HEADING AND HEELING

Working together as a team, cowboys on the range often pair up to catch cattle that are too big to handle with one rope. Dally team roping is an event where two riders

and their horses are judged on the horses' ability to position their riders to catch a steer. One rider must catch the horns of the steer (heading) and the other rider must catch the hind legs (heeling). Only one horse is judged in a class.

Horses are judged on their calmness in the box; how quickly they break from the box and run to the steer; their ability to rate the speed of the steer and position; and their ability to stop deep and square. Both the header and heeler are permitted to throw two loops within a one-minute time limit after the steer is released.



Heading

The header must catch the steer either by the horns, a half-head, or around the neck, and then dally (wrap the rope around the saddle horn). Once the steer is caught, the heading horse must set and turn the steer at a 90-degree angle and pull the steer across the pen, allowing the heeler to catch the hind legs. Once the heeler catches, the heading horse must turn and face the steer, keeping the rope taut.

Heeling

In the heeling portion of dally team roping, the heeler must catch either both hind legs or one hind leg, and dally.

TIE-DOWN ROPING

Tie-down roping is a skill used today on ranches all over the world. In the open-range era, the calf's legs were tied together so it could be doctored without kicking the cowboy or injuring itself.

During competition, the horse and rider must stay behind a barrier while a calf is let out of a chute, giving the calf a head start. Once the calf is released, the horse must rate to the speed of the calf and position the rider where he can throw a loop to catch the calf. Once the calf is caught, the horse must stop quickly. While the rider dismounts and throws the calf to tie its legs together, the horse must remain still and keep the rope taut.

Tie-down roping is judged on how quiet the horse is in the box; how well the horse runs to the calf, rates its speed and positions the rider; how well the horse stops; and how well the horse works the end of the rope, keeping slack out of the rope without dragging the calf.

TRAIL

Just as a decathlete must train in several events, trail horses must also be accomplished in passing through gates, crossing

bridges and managing other obstacles. Trail judges focus on the skill of the horse to handle certain situations that might occur on an outdoor trail ride. Scoring is based on the horse's willingness, ease and grace in negotiating the course.

WESTERN PLEASURE

Western pleasure is one of the most popular classes. Top western pleasure horses should be as the name implies – a pleasure to ride. Contestants compete simultaneously, traveling around the perimeter of the arena. Horses are judged on quality of movement and consistency of gaits.

WESTERN RIDING

Following a pattern laid out by colored cones, western riding horses are evaluated on precise lead changes using both hind and front legs. Horses must also change gaits – from a walk to a jog to a lope. There are eight different western riding patterns.

WORKING COW HORSE

Combining reining ability and cow sense, the working cow horse class tests a horse's skills that are applicable to ranch work. The competition consists of two parts: reined work, consisting of a reining pattern, and actual cow work, or "fence work." In the reining portion of the event, the horse follows one of 12 patterns where changes of gait, spins and sliding stops are required. In the cow work portion, a lone cow is turned into the arena where the horse must hold the cow at the end of the arena. The horse must also drive the cow down the arena fence, turning it both directions. Finally, the horse must move the cow into the center of the arena, circling it both directions. Judging is based on the horse's ability to control the cow, good manners, smoothness and ease of reining.

VERSATILITY RANCH HORSE

Versatility Ranch Horse classes promote the athletic ability and versatility of the horse and is demonstrated in six classes. There are divisions for open, amateur, cowboy and youth. For complete rules and regulations, refer to the AQHA Handbook.

VRH RANCH RIDING

Horses show individually, and the class can be conducted inside or outside an arena. Judges are looking for relaxed, responsive horses with soft and cadenced gaits. The horse should make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, plus the horse should be soft in the bridle and yield to contact.

VRH RANCH TRAIL

Obstacles found in a ranch trail pattern are approximate to those found during the course of everyday work. Judges are looking for a well-broke, responsive and well-mannered horse that can correctly navigate and negotiate the course, and do so in a correct and efficient manner.

VRH RANCH REINING

Ranch reining measures the ability of the stock horse to perform basic handling maneuvers. This class can be held with or separate from the ranch cow work class; if the two are held together, they are still scored and placed as individual classes. What the judges are looking for is: "To rein a horse is not only to guide him but also to control his every movement. The best reined horse should be willingly guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance and dictated to completely."

VRH RANCH CUTTING

Similar to other cutting classes, ranch

cutting is judged on the ability of the horse to work a cow by separating it from the herd and holding it. The objective is to cut one or two cows, based on the division. For open, cowboy and amateur division competition, there is a two-minute limit where each exhibitor must work two head, but has the option of working the full two minutes. In youth competition, on the other hand, there is a one-and-a-half-minute time limit where the exhibitor must work one cow but has the option of working the full minute and a half.

VRH RANCH COW WORK

When it comes to the ranch cow work class, riders have the choice between ranch cow work or limited ranch cow work for youth and amateur exhibitors, where riders are allotted one minute and forty-five seconds to complete the work.

There are three parts to the limited ranch cow work: boxing the cow; setting up the cow and driving it down the fence to the opposite end of the arena; and boxing it at the opposite end of the arena.

For ranch cow work, there are three parts to the class: boxing, fence work and roping or circling. The horse and rider must accomplish all three parts in three minutes.

VRH RANCH CONFORMATION

To be eligible to compete in this class, the horse must be shown in at least one other class the day of the show. Judges are looking for balanced, structurally correct horses with adequate muscling. You'll need to show your horse in a good working halter – rope, braided, nylon or plain leather – exhibit your horse at a walk and trot, then line up for inspection by the judge.



ENGLISH

EQUITATION OVER FENCES

Equitation over fences, designed for amateur and youth competitors, tests the rider's seat, hands and ability to control and show a horse jumping over fences. The course is similar to the working hunter class in that riders can be judged on their ability to establish an even hunting pace. Judges evaluate the methods used by the rider and the effectiveness of the rider in properly influencing the horse.

HUNTER HACK

Hunter hack is the transitional English class between hunter under saddle and working hunter. It requires a horse to move freely and easily while jumping small fences. Horses are required to jump two fences ranging in height from 2 feet 3 inches to 3 feet. After completing the jumps, the horses are then shown at a walk, trot and canter along the rail in both directions. Horses are judged on manners and way of going, both on the flat and over fences with a minimum of 70 percent of the emphasis on the fence work.

HUNTER UNDER SADDLE

Hunter under saddle is the preliminary class for English riding disciplines, and judges evaluate the way of going of a hunter-type horse on the flat, at a walk, trot and canter. Horses circle the perimeter of the arena, performing each gait called at the judge's discretion.

HUNT SEAT EQUITATION

Hunt seat equitation is an English class open only to amateur and youth contestants. Hunt seat equitation evaluates the rider, not the performance of the horse. Individually, contestants must work a predetermined pattern that may consist of maneuvers such as changing gaits (walk, trot, canter), traveling in a figure-eight pattern and backing up. Top riders return to the arena as a group and are



judged on the rail, performing gait changes at the judge's discretion. Emphasis is placed on the rider's ability to sit in the saddle correctly, hold the correct riding posture and control the horse.

JUMPING

Jumping consists of at least four obstacles, and horses are required to make a minimum of eight jumps. The maximum height of the obstacles in the first go-round is 4 feet for open and 3 feet 6 inches for amateur. Scores are based on time and penalty faults. Some examples of faults are when a horse refuses to jump, knocks down an obstacle or causes an obstacle to be knocked down by bumping or touching it. Failure to complete the course, whether by the rider falling off or the horse falling, results in an automatic disqualification.



PLEASURE DRIVING

As if out for a Sunday drive, exhibitors in pleasure driving revert to older times, with women wearing formal dresses and bonnets, and men wearing suits and top hats. This class exhibits the horse's diversity while harnessed to a two-wheeled cart and exhibited at the walk, park gait and road gait in both directions of the ring. Judges look for horses that are a pleasure to drive, with maximum credit given to the horse that moves straight, with free movement, manners and a bright expression. Pleasure driving horses should carry themselves in a natural, balanced position with a relaxed head and neck.

PROGRESSIVE WORKING HUNTER

Available only in the open division, progressive working hunter is designed for horses that are still new to showing over

fences. Rules governing this class are the same as working hunter, with horses required to jump a series of obstacles. Horses are eligible for this class if they have no previous AQHA points in working hunter, equitation over fences or jumping. Horses are judged for their manners, way of going and style over fences.

WORKING HUNTER

The gracefulness of an American Quarter Horse over fences is demonstrated in this English event. The course consists of a minimum of four obstacles that simulate obstacles found in a hunting field: fences, brush and walls. Depending on the division, the obstacles range in height from 3 feet to 3 feet 9 inches. The horse is required to make at least eight jumps. Judges consider manners, way of going and style of jumping when marking a score.

HALTER

HALTER

The purpose of this class is to preserve American Quarter Horse type by selecting well-mannered individuals in the order of their resemblance to the breed ideal that are the most positive combination of balance, structural correctness and movement with appropriate breed and sex characteristics and adequate muscling. Classes are divided by the horse's age and sex.

PERFORMANCE HALTER

Performance halter is a class offered to judge

conformation and resemblance to the breed ideal. To be eligible to compete in performance halter, a horse must have earned a performance or racing Register of Merit in performance. Separate classes are held for mares, stallions and geldings.

SHOWMANSHIP

A class open only to amateur and youth exhibitors, showmanship focuses on the exhibitor's ability to fit and show a horse at halter. Judges evaluate the grooming and fitting of the horse and the expertise of the exhibitor in presenting the horse to the best of his or her ability.





WALK-TROT

If you're just getting started in AQHA competition, walk-trot classes just might be the right place for you.

Show managers have the option to offer walk-trot classes for Level 1 youth and Level 1 amateur exhibitors in the following classes: western pleasure, horsemanship, trail, hunter under saddle and hunt seat equitation.

A few things to note about walk-trot classes: There is no year-end high-point for walk-trot, and there is not a world show class. Also, AQHA Incentive Fund money is not awarded for walk-trot points, and these points do not count for performance halter qualification.

Lifetime Achievement Awards

These awards are based on lifetime achievements; all points must be accumulated in either the open, amateur or youth classes.

AWARDS	POINTS/ACHIEVEMENTS
Register of Merit (Performance)	10 total performance pts.
Register of Merit (Halter)	10 total halter pts.
Versatility Award	65 total performance pts.
	10 pts.
	5 pts.
Champion	35 total pts.
	15 halter pts.*
	15 performance pts.
Supreme Champion (Open)	Racing: 2 official speed index ratings of 90 or higher (AAA)
	40 total pts.
	15 halter pts.*
	20 performance pts.
Supreme Champion (Amateur/Youth)	50 total pts.
	15 halter pts.*
	20 pts.
Superior (Event) Horse	50 total pts. (Level 3 pts. only)
Superior All-Around	50 all-around titles
Performance Champion	
Supreme Performance Champion (Amateur/Youth)	

*A minimum of 8 halter points must be earned during or after the horse's 2-year-old year. Refer to the AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations for additional information.

EVENTS	NO. OF DIFFERENT SHOWS AND JUDGES	AWARD TYPE
1 or more event		Certificate
		Certificate
8 events (not including halter)		Plaque
5 separate events		
3 additional events		
		Trophy
2 halter grand championships	5 or more	
2 performance events		
		Trophy
2 halter grand championships		
8 pts. earned in specific events		
5 pts. In each of 4 categories	5 or more	Plaque
1 event		Plaque
		Plaque
has won 3 Superior performance (event) horse awards		Plaque
has won 6 Superior performance (event) horse awards		Trophy

Show Formats

Most AQHA shows offer a variety of classes (English, halter, western) and divisions (youth, amateur, open) for competitors of different skill levels. Some shows may offer Level 1 classes for the youth and amateur divisions, and some offer the special Select classes for amateur exhibitors who are 50 years of age and over.

ALL-LEVEL 1/ROOKIE SHOWS (LV1**)**

Have fun showing while getting your feet wet at all-Level 1 shows. These events are specially designed for youth and amateur exhibitors who are eligible to compete in Level 1. This means you'll compete in classes with people of similar skill and experience levels. All-Level 1 shows are hosted by AQHA state and provincial affiliates, and are usually held as stand-alone events or can be held during an open show.

INTRODUCTORY CLASSES/SHOWS

For these events, AQHA-approved classes are offered during open or 4-H horse shows. For example, AQHA members exhibiting in the open show's western pleasure class can also receive points based off their placings against other AQHA members in that class. While AQHA points earned at introductory shows are recorded on their exhibitor's record, they do not count toward the AQHA Incentive Fund and world show qualifying points.

SPECIAL EVENTS (SPEV**)**

Want to meet more people who show in the same event as you? A special event just might be the ticket. Special events, as the name implies, may feature two single events, like team penning and cutting, barrel racing and pole bending or roping events like team roping and tie-down roping. The serious and the casual competitor attend these special events. A single set of points is awarded at each special event.



DOUBLE-JUDGED/DOUBLE-POINT (DJ/DP**)**

Want to earn points fast? Then look for double-judged/double-point shows. This format features one show with two judges, meaning that your top placings could earn two sets of points without having to exhibit twice. Double-judged/double-point shows are primarily found at major livestock shows where there are a large number of exhibitors. The majority of exhibitors who attend these shows are highly competitive, so expect top-quality exhibitors and American Quarter Horses. And expect to pay two entry fees.

SPLIT/COMBINED (S/C**)**

Another efficient way for exhibitors to rack up more points is to attend a split/combined show. Any two consecutive shows (like a Saturday and Sunday show) can be combined into one show and split over two days. There are two judges and two sets of points, and the class is held only once, a real bonus for exhibitors who are trying to qualify for the world shows or earn year-end awards. Expect to pay two entry fees, which is the norm for most split/combined shows.

ALLIANCE SHOWS (AL EV**)**

You can earn AQHA points by competing at shows hosted by AQHA alliance partners, such as the National Cutting Horse Association, National Reining Horse Association, National Reined Cow Horse Association, National Snaffle Bit Association and United States Team Penning Association. These approved events award points based on the AQHA system to those exhibitors who like to show in both organizations. You can expect all levels of competitors from the Novice to the professional. AQHA rules are applicable, and exhibitors must meet AQHA ownership and eligibility requirements.

VERSATILITY RANCH HORSE COMPETITION (VRH**)**

As its name suggests, this division demon-

strates the versatility of the working ranch horse in six classes – ranch riding, ranch trail, ranch cutting, ranch reining, ranch cow work and ranch conformation. Classes are offered in the open, amateur, youth and cowboy divisions.

EQUESTRIANS WITH DISABILITIES

AQHA-approved Equestrians with Disabilities competition is open to people with physical or cognitive disabilities who love competing with the American Quarter Horse. These classes provide an arena for everyone to enjoy the rewards of hard work, determination and perseverance. This program allows exhibitors to show in eight classes and earn points for year-end, high-point awards, along with the satisfaction of a job well done.

To compete in AQHA-approved Equestrians with Disabilities competitions, three forms must first be completed: AQHA membership, special diagnosis and special adaptive equipment. Head to aqha.com/ewd to download forms and learn more about these classes.

DRESSAGE

Dressage is a French term meaning “training,” and its purpose is to develop the horse’s natural athletic ability and willingness to work making him calm, supple and attentive to his rider. Dressage patterns, or “tests,” are designed to showcase the horse’s ability to demonstrate these strengths through various movements. Competition occurs in a regulation size arena with specific apparel and equipment all regulated by United States Equestrian Federation.

AQHA-approved dressage classes are only held concurrently with USEF/United States Dressage Federation-licensed shows, which must be AQHA-approved. Open, amateur and youth eligibility are based on AQHA criteria. More information about AQHA dressage classes is available at aqha.com/dressage.

Championship Dreams

REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

aqha.com/regionalchampionships

Bring your American Quarter Horse to the AQHA Regional Championship closest to you, and experience an event that tests your skills in a fun, rewarding environment! No matter where you live, you can compete in the regional championship of your choice (exhibitors can only compete at one per year). You can win great prizes from our team of AQHA corporate partners!

LEVEL 1 CHAMPIONSHIPS

aqha.com/level1championships

Level 1 competitors can qualify for an invitation to the AQHA Level 1 Championships. After an exhibitor has earned a qualification, he or she may choose which event to attend: either the West, Central or East event. These championship shows also host Rookie classes, which do not require qualification, but the exhibitor and horse must be eligible for the class and enter before the deadline.

AQHA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW

aqha.com/worldshow

It is here that years of dedication, motivation and commitment come down to a remarkable two weeks of top-level competition. The AQHA World Championship Show is the industry's premier event – with good reason.

It is the pinnacle event for American Quarter Horse owners and exhibitors around the world, who vie to win world championships in 99 demanding classes representing the halter, English and western disciplines. Not just any horse can enter – he must qualify for the event by earning a predetermined number of points.

AQHYA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW

aqha.com/youthworld

For one week each summer, youth from virtually every corner of the globe vie to be named the world's best among 2,000 participants vying for 35 world championship titles. The AQHYA World Championship Show is the payoff for months of preparation and hard work. Participants must have qualified through the state in which they reside or nationally with a specified number of points. It's nine days of intense competition to be certain. But the AQHYA World Championship Show is much more than that.

In addition to show competition, there are other events and activities for members, including judging contests and public speaking contests. All of this is designed so that each participant will bring home a lifetime of values and increased appreciation for the American Quarter Horse.





AQHA SELECT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW

aqha.com/selectworld

The AQHA Select World Championship Show is only for AQHA amateur members that are 50 years of age or over on or before August 1 of the qualifying year. Participants must have qualified to compete at the Select World Championship Show by earning the minimum number of points assigned to that class at AQHA-approved shows or earning an invite through the Amateur Invitational Program.

AQHA VERSATILITY RANCH HORSE AND COWBOY MOUNTED SHOOTING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

aqha.com/versatility

Every year, the world's best Versatility Ranch Horse and cowboy mounted shooting exhibitors head to the world championship show celebrating the two events. Versatility Ranch Horse includes ranch riding, ranch trail, ranch cutting, ranch reining, ranch cow work and ranch conformation, with world championship titles going to the top all-around finishers in the open, amateur, limited amateur, youth and cowboy divisions. For cowboy mounted shooting, world champions are crowned in the youth, amateur, Select amateur and open divisions. To earn an invitation, exhibitors and their horses must qualify by earning the designated number of points during the qualifying period.



Resources

STATE, PROVINCIAL & INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES

Your link to AQHA

Whether you are a new or renewing member of AQHA, we know your dedication and loyalty to the American Quarter Horse is not something you take for granted. Right in your own backyard is a group of people who share those same feelings. We encourage you to join them and get involved with your state/provincial/international AQHA affiliate. You will find a group of dedicated people working together to promote the American Quarter Horse. They share ideas, plan activities, monitor legislation, sponsor shows and support community involvement and youth programs.

A directory of AQHA's state/provincial/international affiliates is available at aqba.com/affiliates. We invite you to contact an organization near you.

SHOW AND TELL

AQHA believes that your success is the direct result of our commitment to promoting and maintaining a standard of excellence in the show industry. It's a commitment to achieve the very best. As an AQHA member, you have access to a number of resources designed to help you be your best.

There's no denying that *The American Quarter Horse Journal* is your complete source for American Quarter Horse competition. In addition to the flagship magazine, *The American Quarter Horse Journal*, AQHA competitors will also enjoy the *Performance Horse* and *Ranch Horse Journals*.

Join us online at aqba.com/showing, where the *Journal* provides show coverage, important news for AQHA exhibitors, helpful horse-showing blogs and updates from around the show industry. There you'll also find essential resources, such as links to



knowledge and performance. Start receiving this award-winning magazine at aqha.com/magazines.

FINDING THE PRO WHO'S RIGHT FOR YOU

The American Quarter Horse Association of Professional Horsemen

the AQHA world shows and Level 1 championships, show schedule, patterns and more.

For decades, exhibitors have clamored for the monthly *American Quarter Horse Journal*. All AQHA-approved shows are listed in the magazine, with details including dates, events, fees and entry deadlines. The magazine also features many show- and training-related articles to improve your

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned show person, the key to success in the show ring is proper training – for both your horse and you. Not everyone has the time or expertise to develop a horse or a rider to their full potential. This is where AQHA provides members with another valuable service: We can help match you with a professional who fits your needs.

AQHA Professional Horsemen are qual-



ified trainers who can help you and your horse establish a productive relationship with each other. These AQHA member trainers specialize in preparing you for entering your horse into competitions.

AQHA is dedicated to helping horse owners find the right trainer for their specific needs, from general training assistance to professionals specializing in specific disciplines, such as cutting, barrel racing, western pleasure, working hunter and racing.

Head to aqha.com/findatrainer to access the directory of AQHA Professional Horsemen. There, choose your preferred discipline – Western, English, halter or racing – then search by state, province or country to find a trustworthy professional near you.

JUDGING EXCELLENCE

Professional Show Judges

The American Quarter Horse is a special breed. And it takes a special breed of human to judge him.

The process of selecting judges is a long and difficult one, ensuring that only the best are selected. We believe that desig-

nation as an AQHA-approved judge is a privilege that must be earned by those with proven expertise and personal integrity. The application to become an AQHA-approved judge is a year-long process.

Each application and accompanying reference letters must first be approved by the AQHA Judges State Selection Committee. Next, each applicant must be approved by the AQHA Judges Committee. The next step is intense testing over a two-day period. But even those receiving the highest scores cannot be assured they'll be approved. The AQHA Executive Committee can increase or decrease the number of new judges approved each year based on score results. So, when you see AQHA-approved judges scoring a class, you can be certain that they have worked long and hard to earn their place in the show arena.

STEWARDS

AQHA Stewards

The health and well-being of the American Quarter Horse is AQHA's utmost concern. In accordance with AQHA's mission statement, the American Quarter Horse shall

be treated humanely, with dignity, respect and compassion at all times. It is the goal of AQHA to educate members and non-members on this issue. The AQHA steward program is one piece in the animal-welfare puzzle.

AQHA stewards' responsibilities include

- Monitoring show grounds for inhumane treatment of horses and unsportsmanlike conduct;
- Answering exhibitors' questions about rules;

- Evaluating potentially unsafe conditions related to the show, e.g. poor footing in the warm-up area, and bring to attention of show management to correct;
- Issuing warning or removal cards from show grounds as warranted according to AQHA rules and/or guidelines.

These stewards are assigned to specific regions, are not permitted to actively show in AQHA competition and are required to attend steward seminars to expand their knowledge on animal welfare.



Glossary of Show Terms

AGE OF A HORSE

Computed on the basis of January 1 of a calendar year. The South American countries of Argentina and Brazil are computed on July 1 for show and race purposes.

ALL-AROUND

To be eligible for all-around honors, a horse in the open division, amateur in the amateur division, or youth in the youth division must compete in at least three AQHA approved events in one division – open, amateur or youth – in three or more categories. For specific requirements regarding this award, please refer to AQHA's Official Handbook.

AMATEUR

An exhibitor who has not shown, judged, trained or assisted in training a horse for remuneration for at least three years prior to application for amateur status. For more requirements, see the AQHA Handbook.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

A listing of AQHA-approved shows and events published in *The American Quarter Horse Journal* and online at aqha.com/showschedule.

CANTER

In English classes, a three-beat gait; smooth, free moving, relaxed and straight on both leads

CATTLE CHARGE

Fees assessed to exhibitors entering classes requiring cattle

CIRCUIT

Shows or set of shows on multiple days in same location

COURSE

A specified pattern exhibitors must follow in performing certain classes in AQHA approved shows

DISQUALIFICATION

A procedure used to remove an entry from a class in which an exhibitor and/or horse violated an AQHA rule

DOUBLE-JUDGED/DOUBLE-POINT STATUS

Major livestock shows or state fairs that have two judges judging the same class independently of each other at one show, resulting in two sets of points

ENTRY FEES

Fees paid by an exhibitor for entry into a class

FINALS

In terms of AQHA shows, a final is a round of competition to determine winners and placings.

FUTURITY

In shows, it can be applied to a 2- or 3-year-old performance event or yearling or weanling halter event.

GAIT

A manner of moving the feet; walk, jog and lope in western events; walk, trot and canter in English events

GO-ROUND

In terms of AQHA shows, a go-round usually refers to a preliminary round of competition used to select finalists.

GRAND (CHAMPION)

Stallion, mare or gelding selected as champion over all sex divisions halter entries

HAND GALLOP

In English classes, this should be a definite lengthening of the stride with a noticeable difference in speed.

JACKPOT

Money paid by exhibitors in addition to entry fees and kept separate that will then be dispersed among the top placings

JOG

In western classes, a smooth, ground-covering two-beat diagonal gait

JUDGE OVERTIME FINE

A monetary penalty imposed on show management as a result of an individual judge working longer than 15 consecutive hours at a given show

JUNIOR

Refers to age of horse in AQHA competition; junior horses are 5 years and younger.

LAMENESS

Defect in the foot or leg causing marked nodding, hitching or shortened stride

KNOCKDOWN

In over fence classes, an obstacle is considered knocked down when a horse or rider lowers any part of an obstacle.

LAST SHOW DATE

Last show date is the last show entered on horse's or exhibitor's record, not necessarily the last show attended.

LEFT LEAD

The horse's left foreleg extends during a lope or canter

LOPE

In western classes, an easy, rhythmical three-beat gait

OPEN

Anyone possessing a current AQHA or AQHYA membership may show their American Quarter Horse in open competition. Open classes can be divided according to the age of the horse. Amateur exhibitors must meet their ownership requirements even if they are competing in an open class. A youth can show another person's horse in the open division; however, this could jeopardize their amateur status.

PARK GAIT

In pleasure driving, a forward, free flowing, square trot with impulsion

PERFORMANCE CLASS

A class in which either the horse or the exhibitor is judged upon their actions

REFUSAL

In over-fence classes, when a horse stops in front of an obstacle and takes one step backward

RESERVE CHAMPION

Second place stallion, mare or gelding selected over all-age division halter entries; any horse placing second in any class held at an AQHA world championship show

RIGHT LEAD

During a lope or canter, the horse's right leg extends before the left leg

RING STEWARD

The person who assists the judge and has charge of the activity in the ring or arena

Glossary of Show Terms

ROAD GAIT

In pleasure driving, an extended trot showing a definite lengthening of stride, with a noticeable difference in speed

RUN OUT

In over-fence classes, this occurs when the horse evades or passes the obstacle to be jumped.

SENIOR

Refers to age of horse in AQHA competition; senior horses are 6 years and older.

SHOW APPROVAL

Organizations or individuals desiring to hold an AQHA-approved show must obtain AQHA approval. For specific requirements, please refer to the AQHA Handbook.

SHOW BILL

Program/schedule of events published by show management and offered to exhibitors/spectators at shows

SHOW FINE

A monetary penalty imposed on show management as a result of a disqualification

SHOW MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

A seminar to educate show officials about the procedures used in conducting an AQHA-approved show

SHOW MANAGER

The person responsible for conducting an AQHA-approved show and has the authority to enforce all AQHA rules

SHOW MEMBERSHIP

Membership purchased at show sent in by show secretary

SHOW OFFICIALS

Any person performing the duties of a show manager, ring steward, show secretary or any person having direction over a show

SHOW RESULTS

The final outcome of a show or special event submitted by show management to AQHA for point tabulation and placings on horse's record

SHOW SECRETARY

This person is responsible for maintaining and recording entries and show results of the American Quarter Horse division of the show and shall be held responsible for the entry fees, office charges, etc., and for any fees collected for membership on behalf of AQHA and AQHYA.

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

This program gives registered American Quarter Horses recognition on AQHA records for outstanding achievements in special events not approved by AQHA. For example, if a horse participates in the Horseback Riding Program or the Special Olympics

SPECIAL EVENT

An AQHA-approved special event is different from an approved show in that a maximum of two class types are allowed to be held. For example, team penning and working cow horse may be held as a special event.

SPEED EVENT

A class judged solely by a timer

SPLIT/COMBINED FORMAT

Any two consecutive shows can be combined to be one show with classes split over two consecutive days with two judges and two sets of points with classes only held once.

SPONSOR

The individual or group financially responsible for holding a show

TROT

In English classes, a two-beat gait, comprised of long, low, ground covering, cadenced and balanced strides



WALK

In English and western classes, a natural, flat-footed, four-beat gait

WORLD CHAMPION

The horse placing above all others in any class held at the AQHA World Championship Show, the AQHYA World Championship Show, AQHA Select World Championship Show or AQHA Versatility Ranch Horse and Cowboy Mounted Shooting World Championships

YEAR-END ALL-AROUND HIGH-POINT

An award given to any horse in the open division or any single horse/exhibitor combination in the amateur or youth divisions earning the most points in halter and performance classes at AQHA-approved shows

YEAR-END HIGH-POINT

An award given to any horse in the open division or any single horse/exhibitor combination in the amateur or youth divisions based on the total number of points earned during a calendar year in each AQHA-approved event in which points are awarded

YOUTH

An exhibitor who is 18 years of age or younger as of January 1 of the current year may compete in the youth division. Youth exhibitors are eligible to compete in the youth or open divisions.

10 Most Asked Questions

1. WHAT ARE THE MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS FOR SHOWING?

Every person competing in an AQHA-approved class must possess a current, individual AQHYA or AQHA membership card. To compete in amateur classes, you must have a current AQHA amateur membership. Any exhibitor who does not have a current individual membership can purchase one at the show.

2. WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIP REQUIREMENTS FOR SHOWING IN OPEN, YOUTH AND AMATEUR DIVISIONS?

In open, there are no relationship requirements. However, if the exhibitor wishes to maintain his or her amateur status, he or she must be the owner of the horse or be immediately related to the owner; the exhibitor may show in the open division, but the amateur rules still apply. In youth classes, the exhibitor must either own the horse or be immediately related to the owner. Although it is legal for youth to show a non-owned horse in the open division, this action could violate Rule SHW225 of the AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations concerning amateur eligibility.

3. DO I NEED TO OWN A HORSE TO COMPETE AT AQHA-APPROVED SHOWS?

Rookie and Level 1 exhibitors may compete with a horse that he or she does not own. There is an exception to this, and that's for Level 1 exhibitors showing at one of the top-10 show circuits (meaning the 10 largest AQHA shows; you can learn more about this at aqha.com/level1).

The rules are a little different for Level 2 and Level 3 classes. To do so, the youth or amateur exhibitor must first send AQHA a showing lease form, and the term of the lease must be for a minimum one-year period.

To comply with Rule SHW240, the lessee must be responsible for expenses associated with the care of the horse: boarding, feeding, routine farrier services and routine services.

4. WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE SHOWS IN MY AREA?

All upcoming AQHA-approved shows are listed in the back of *The American Quarter Horse Journal* in the Calendar of Events. The calendar reports show dates, locations, classes offered, entry fees and approved judges for the succeeding two months. You can also access the list online at aqha.com/showschedule.

5. WHAT IS THE PROPER ATTIRE IF I SHOW IN WESTERN EVENTS?

It is mandatory to wear appropriate western attire, including shirts with long sleeves and a collar, western hat and cowboy boots.



The hat must be on the rider's head when the exhibitor enters the arena. Spurs and chaps are optional.

5 A. WHAT IS THE PROPER ATTIRE IF I SHOW IN ENGLISH EVENTS?

Riders should wear hunt coats of traditional hunt-seat style and conservative color, breeches of traditional shades of buff, gray or rust, high English boots or jodhpur shoes. A tie or choker is required. Black, navy blue or brown hunting cap is mandatory. All exhibitors in youth English classes are required to compete in an American Society for Testing and Materials/Safety Equipment Institute-approved hard hat with harness. Spurs of the unrowelled type, crops or bats are optional. Hair must be neat and contained (as in a net or braid).

6. MY HORSE HAS BEEN ON A PARTICULAR MEDICATION. IS THIS AN ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE?

The Therapeutic Medication Addendum (Rule VIO400) addresses this topic in detail. Forbidden substances include any stimulant, depressant, tranquilizer or sedative that could affect the performance of a horse. Your best bet is to call the Therapeutic Medication Hotline at 1-800-633-2472 and read Rules VIO400-406.

7. WHAT ARE THE QUALIFYING PERIODS FOR THE AQHA CHAMPIONSHIP SHOWS?

- AQHYA World Championship Show: shows held May 1 through April 30
- AQHA Select World Championship Show: shows held June 1 through May 31
- AQHA World Championship Show: shows held August 1 through July 31
- Versatility Ranch Horse and Cowboy Mounted Shooting World Championships: shows held January 1 through December 31

- Level 1 Championships: shows held January 1 through December 31

8. DOES SHOWING COUNT TOWARD AQHA HORSEBACK RIDING PROGRAM HOURS?

Yes! Any time you spend in the saddle of your American Quarter Horse counts toward earning prizes through the Horseback Riding Program. To learn more or sign up for the program, head to aqba.com/riding.

9. HOW DO I KNOW WHICH LEVEL(S) I AM ELIGIBLE FOR?

Go to aqba.com/leveling to find your level for the current show season.

10. HOW CAN I FIND A TRAINER TO HELP ME?

A directory of AQHA Professional Horsemen is available at aqba.com/findatrainner. Choose your preferred discipline, then search by state for a professional near you. AQHA Professional Horsemen are qualified trainers who can help you and your horse establish a productive relationship with each other. These AQHA member trainers specialize in preparing you for entering your horse into competitions.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Visit aqha.com/contact

to submit questions,

give us a call at 806-376-4811

or connect with us on Facebook.

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Learn more about AQHA programs at aqba.com