



New Zealand

# **Irish Draught Horse**

## **Breed Standard**

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# Irish Draught Horse Breed Standards (Characteristics)

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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.

Horses being licensed carrying other bloodlines will also need consideration of their different Breed characteristics when inspections are being carried out.

### **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:**

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

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

This also needs to be in proportion to the size of the horse. The bone is measured directly below the knee.

### **Head:**

Should be generous and in proportion to the horses' size. 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.

*Note: Upright shoulders cause short choppy strides and concussions.*

### **Chest:**

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

*Note: A narrow chest causes problems in movement with the horse traveling too close in front, the horse tends to roll and paddle.*

**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 of the knee or tied in below the knee, nor pigeon toed, or toes turned out. The forearms should continue with short cannon bones and with clean flat bone.

The slope of the pastern and the slope of the hoof should be congruent and at an angle of 45-50 deg.

**Knees:**

Large and flat with no puffiness, or lumps.

**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 run down the groves. Excessive feathering is not desirable.

**Hind Legs:**

Strong gaskins, well-shaped clean hocks (free from lumps) 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 pastern angle should be 50-55 deg.

**Body:**

Deep Girth. The ribs should be flat, smooth and well sprung.

**Back:**

Strong and short in males but may be slightly longer in mares. The neck, shoulder, back and hips should all be approximately of equal length.

Overall, the top line should be shorter than underline.

The curve of the back and withers should look as if a saddle would fit comfortably as if it were made for that purpose.

**Hind Quarters:**

If viewed from behind the quarters should be almost 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.

*Note: A croup high horse finds it difficult to bend the three joints of the hind legs.*

The hips should be proportionately broad and hidden from view.

**Hooves:**

Should be of equal size, hard and sound, open at the heel and proportionate to the size and weight of the horse.

The slope of the pasterns to hoof angle 50-55deg.

**Action:**

Should be straight and free 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 shoulders.

The Irish horse should show flexion in the joints, engagement of the hindquarters, freedom of the shoulder 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 powerful and has suppleness, elasticity impulsion, balance. The horse should display self-carriage.

**Colour:**

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

Excessive white markings of face and legs e.g. white above the knee are not desirable.

The Constitution allows for the inclusion of coloured horses in the Appendix however these horses will not be eligible for upgrading or licensing but will be eligible for other Society benefits.

**Requirement to Meet the NZ Breed Standard:**

To meet the Irish Horse NZ breed standard the horse should have:

**Many Good Points**

**Few Indifferent Points**

**No bad Points**

*This Irish Draught Horse Breed Standard was approved by the Irish Draught Horse Society of New Zealand Council in March 2021*