



TEXAS RANCH HORSE  
CHAMPIONSHIP

# RULEBOOK

RANCHING TRADITION • HORSEMANSHIP • WESTERN HERITAGE



# RULEBOOK

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## SAFETY POLICY

- Inhumane or abusive treatment may result in disqualification at the discretion of show management, members of the horse show management team, and/or judges. Decisions are non-negotiable and final.
- Unsoundness may be penalized at the discretion of the judge – this is not subject to protest.
- The use of any stimulants or depressants is strictly prohibited.
- Any surgical procedure or drug that could affect a horse's performance or alter its natural conformation is prohibited.
- Only NSAIDs prescribed by a licensed veterinarian are allowed (e.g., phenylbutazone).
- Any time a horse's mouth is tied or fastened in a performance class, the horse shall be disqualified.
- Any open, raw sores or bleeding body parts that come in contact with a hackamore, bit, spur, or related equipment may be penalized at the judge's discretion.

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## ATTIRE

- The use of properly fitted protective headgear by exhibitors is optional and encouraged.
- Riders are asked to wear a western hat, long-sleeve shirts, and western cowboy boots.
- The use of spurs and chaps is optional.
- Clothing should be neat and clean.
- This is a ranch competition—no bling, sparkles, braids, black hoof polish, etc.

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## EQUIPMENT

- Horses shall be shown in a stock saddle.
- Silver equipment will not count over good, clean, working equipment.
- It is suggested competitors use a breast collar and a rear cinch.
- Horses may be ridden with a snaffle, curb, or spade bit.
- No more than one finger is allowed between the reins when using split reins; except when riding a snaffle.
- When using romal reins, no fingers between the reins are allowed.
- During reining, the use of the free hand while holding romal reins to alter rein tension or length is considered the use of two hands, and a score of 0 will be applied, except where the horse is allowed to be completely stopped during the pattern.
- In all other classes, riders will be considered off pattern when switching hands once their run has started, including switching from one to two hands or vice versa.

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## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Negative Coggins



## **TEXAS LIABILITY DISCLAIMER**

Under Texas Law (Chapter 87, Civil Practice and Remedies Code), an equine professional is not liable for injury to or death of a participant resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities. Tejas Ranch Horse Show Association and its representatives do not assume responsibility for the safety of participants.

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## **CURB BIT REQUIREMENTS**

- Curb bits must have a curb chain or strap.
  - It must be at least 1/2 inch in width and lie flat against the horse's chin.
  - No wire curbs are permitted, regardless of padding or tape.
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## **PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT**

- Mechanical hackamores are prohibited.
  - Bosals or nosebands are not permitted with a bit.
  - Tie downs, martingales, and draw reins are prohibited.
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## **NON-PRO DEFINITION**

A non-pro is someone whose sole income is not horse-related (training, showing, coaching, schooling) and who has never won a World Title in the Open/Junior Horse divisions with any organization.

- This applies to individuals receiving monetary compensation but not qualifying as a professional.
  - If you give occasional lessons (e.g., backyard lessons), you are still considered an amateur and may compete in Amateur, Limited Amateur Cow Class, or Intermediate Cow Class divisions.
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## **WARM-UP ARENA ETIQUETTE**

- Riders must maintain awareness of others at all times
  - Riders must pass one another left shoulder to left shoulder (passing on the left side)
  - Do not stop or stand on the rail; consider the rail as the fast lane
  - Look behind before stopping or changing direction
  - Faster gaits should remain to the outside of the arena
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## **CLASS PROCEDURES (GENERAL REFERENCE)**

- Please reference AQHA Versatility Ranch Horse rules for:
    - Ranch Riding
    - Ranch Trail
    - Ranch Reining
    - Conformation
    - Cattle Classes
  - This section is based on the AQHA Rule Book (2024).
  - The scoring system is designed to be:
    - Positive
    - Straightforward
    - Encouraging of growth and improvement for both horse and rider
  - The system is designed to give credit for work done.
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## RANCH RIDING (SHW560) VRH & RHC RANCH RIDING

### Description

The purpose of the ranch riding class is to measure the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from performing one ranch task to another.

- The horse should reflect the versatility, attitude and movement of a working ranch horse riding outside the confines of an arena.
- The horse should be well-trained, relaxed, quiet, soft and cadenced at all gaits.
- Ideal ranch horses travel with forward movement & demonstrate an obvious lengthening of stride at extended gaits.
- The horse can be ridden with light contact or on a relatively loose rein without requiring undue restraint, but not shown on a full drape of reins.
- The overall manners and responsiveness of the ranch riding horse to make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as the quality of the movement are of primary considerations.
- Ideal VRH ranch riding horses have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.

### SHW560.3 - Credits and Penalties

Part of the evaluation of this class is on smoothness of transitions.

- A horse may be collected from the extended trot as the horse moves into the lope.
- The transition from the extended lope down to the trot is a transition to the seated trot not the extended trot. Therefore, an extra cue to achieve this gait is expected.
- Horses that complete this total transition within three strides calmly and obediently should be rewarded.
- Horses that attempt to stop or do stop prior to trotting will be penalized.

Judges expect to see horses that have been trained to respond to cues. To see these cues applied discretely and the horse responding correctly could be a credit-earning situation. Maneuver evaluations and penalty applications are to be determined independently.

### Penalties

| 1 Point                                                   | 3 Point                                                                                | 5 Point                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Over-bridled (per maneuver)                               | Wrong lead or out of lead for more than two (2) strides                                | Spurring in front of cinch         |
| Out of frame (per maneuver)                               | Draped reins                                                                           | Blatant disobedience               |
| Too slow                                                  | Break of gait at lope, except when correcting an incorrect lead                        | Use of either hand to instill fear |
| Break of gait at walk or trot for two (2) strides or less | Break of gait at walk or trot for more than two (2) strides                            |                                    |
| Wrong lead or out of lead for two (2) strides or less     | Out of lead or cross-cantering more than two strides when changing leads               |                                    |
|                                                           | Trotting more than three (3) strides when making a simple lead change                  |                                    |
|                                                           | Trotting for more than three (3) strides in lope departures or when exiting a rollback |                                    |

| Off Pattern (OP)                                                                                     | Disqualification (DQ)                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.</i>                          | Lameness                                        |
| Repeated blatant disobedience                                                                        | Abuse                                           |
| Breaking pattern                                                                                     | Illegal equipment                               |
| Incomplete maneuver                                                                                  | Disrespect or misconduct                        |
| Eliminating or adding maneuvers                                                                      | Leaving working area before pattern is complete |
| Use of two hands (except junior and Level 1 horses shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore)                 | Improper western attire                         |
| More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein) | Fall of horse/rider                             |



## **RANCH TRAIL (SHW561) VRH RANCH TRAIL**

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### **Description**

The ranch trail class should test the horse's ability to cope with situations encountered while being ridden through a pattern of obstacles generally found during the course of everyday ranch work.

- The horse and rider are judged on the correctness, efficiency and pattern accuracy with which the obstacles are negotiated and the attitude and mannerisms exhibited by the horse.
- Judging emphasis is on identifying the well-broke, responsive and well-mannered horse which can correctly navigate and negotiate the course.
- Ideal VRH ranch trail horses have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.

### **SHW561.3 - Course Design and Time Requirements**

- When setting courses, management will be mindful that the idea is not to trap a horse or eliminate an exhibitor by making an obstacle too difficult.
- All courses and obstacles are to be constructed with safety in mind so as to reduce the risk for accidents.
- Show committee shall have the option of setting up the trail course to best fit the conditions.
- An outdoor course is recommended if appropriate terrain is available.
- Each single-performance event can be time consuming, especially with large classes, so it is imperative that time restrictions are placed on this class.
- The show committee, either through a pilot run or estimation, shall select a course that has a continuous and positive flow that can be negotiated in four minutes or less.

### **SHW561.4 - Course Inspection and Modification Authority**

- Judges must inspect the course and have the right and duty to alter the course if it is not in keeping with the intent of the class.
- Judges may remove or change any obstacles they deem unsafe, non negotiable or unnecessarily difficult.
- Any time a trail obstacle becomes unsafe during a class, it shall be repaired or removed from the course.
- If the course cannot be repaired and some horses have completed the course, the score for that obstacle shall be deducted from all previous draws in that class.

### **SHW561.10 — Credits and Penalties**

- All runs begin upon entering the pen and any infractions are subject to penalty at that time (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear).
- The rider has the option of eliminating any obstacle, however this will result in being "off pattern" (OP) and the horse/rider team may not place above others who have completed the pattern correctly.
- A judge may ask a horse to pass on an obstacle after three refusals or at any time for safety concerns.

### **SHW561.11 — Judging Credit**

- Credit is given to horse/rider teams who negotiate the obstacles correctly and efficiently.
- Horses should receive credit for showing attentiveness to obstacles and ability to negotiate through the course when the obstacles warrant it while willingly responding to rider's cues on more difficult obstacles.
- Quality of movement and cadence should be considered part of the maneuver score for the obstacle.
- Natural ranch horse appearance will also be evaluated ranging from plus 1 ½ to minus 1 ½.
- Maneuver evaluations and penalty applications are to be determined independently.



## Penalties

| 1 Point                                                           | 3 Point                                                         | 5 Point                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Over-bridled (per maneuver)                                       | Wrong lead or out of lead for more than two (2) strides         | Spurring in front of cinch                          |
| Out of frame (per maneuver)                                       | Draped reins                                                    | Blatant disobedience                                |
| Touching or stepping on a log, cone, plant or obstacle            | Break of gait at lope, except when correcting an incorrect lead | Use of either hand to instill fear                  |
| Break of gait at walk or trot for two (2) strides or less         | Break of gait at walk or trot for more than two (2) strides     | Dropping an object required to be carried           |
| Incorrect number of strides, if specified                         | Knocking down or severely disturbing an obstacle                | First or second refusal                             |
| Incorrect or break of walk or trot while in an obstacle           | Stepping out of an obstacle with one foot                       | Letting go of gate                                  |
| Stepping outside of designated boundary of obstacle with one foot | Missing a portion of an obstacle with one foot                  | Use of romal to hit horse                           |
| 1–2 steps on mount/dismount or ground tie                         | 3–4 steps on mount/dismount or ground tie                       | Stepping out of an obstacle with more than one foot |
| Wrong lead or out of lead for two (2) strides or less             |                                                                 | Missing an obstacle with more than one foot         |

| Off Pattern (OP)                                                            | Disqualification (DQ)                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.</i> | Lameness                                        |
| Incomplete maneuver                                                         | Abuse                                           |
| Eliminating or adding obstacles                                             | Illegal equipment                               |
| Third refusal                                                               | Disrespect or misconduct                        |
| Repeated blatant disobedience                                               | Leaving working area before pattern is complete |
| Failure to dally or remain dallied during drag                              | Improper western attire                         |
| Use of two hands (except junior horses shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore)    | Fall of horse/rider                             |
| More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins |                                                 |
| Failure to complete gate                                                    |                                                 |



## RANCH REINING (SHW562) VRH & RHC RANCH REINING

### Description

The ranch reining class measures the ability of the ranch horse to perform basic handling maneuvers with a natural head carriage in a forward looking manner.

- Ideal VRH ranch reining horses have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.
- Patterns may be chosen from any of the ranch reining patterns or approved by show management & judge.

### SHW562.2 — Credits and Penalties

All runs begin upon entering the pen and any infractions are subject to penalty at that time such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear.

### SHW562.3 — Performance and Judging

- To rein a horse is not only to guide him but also to control his movement.
- The best reined horse should be willingly guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance.
- All deviations from the exact written pattern must be considered a lack of or temporary loss of control and therefore a fault that must be marked down according to severity of deviation.
- The horse/rider team's overall performance should be credited for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of performing various maneuvers while using controlled speed which raises the degree of difficulty and makes the horse/rider team more exciting a pleasing to watch.

### SHW562.4 — Penalties

| ½ Point                                                                                                    | 1 Point                                                                                                                                                                          | 2 Point                                                                           | 5 Point                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Starting a circle or exiting a roll-back at a trot for up to two (2) strides                               | Over-bridled (per maneuver)                                                                                                                                                      | Break of gait                                                                     | Spurring in front of cinch         |
| Delayed change of lead by one stride where the lead change is required by the pattern description          | Out of frame (per maneuver)                                                                                                                                                      | Freeze up in spins or roll-backs                                                  | Blatant disobedience               |
| Failure to remain a minimum of twenty feet from the wall or fence when approaching a stop and/or roll-back | Out of lead in the circles, figure eights or around the end of the arena (this penalty is cumulative and will be deducted for each quarter of a circle the horse is out of lead) | Failure to stop or walk before executing a lope departure on trot-in patterns     | Use of either hand to instill fear |
| Over-spin or under-spin up to 1/8 turn                                                                     | Over or under spinning 1/8 to 1/4 turn                                                                                                                                           | Failure to be in a lope prior to the first marker on run-in patterns              |                                    |
|                                                                                                            | Slipping rein                                                                                                                                                                    | Failure to completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position |                                    |
|                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                  | Trotting beyond two strides, but less than 1/2 circle or 1/2 length of the arena  |                                    |

| Off Pattern (OP)                                                                                     | Disqualification (DQ)                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.</i>                          | Lameness                                        |
| Breaking pattern                                                                                     | Abuse                                           |
| Inclusion of maneuver (e.g. over or under-spinning, backing more than two (2) strides, etc.)         | Illegal equipment                               |
| Trotting in excess of 1/2 circle or 1/2 length of the arena                                          | Disrespect or misconduct                        |
| Repeated blatant disobedience                                                                        | Leaving working area before pattern is complete |
| Use of two hands (except junior and Level 1 horses shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore)                 | Improper western attire                         |
| More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein) | Fall of horse/rider                             |



# **RANCH COW WORK (SHW563) VRH & RHC RANCH COW WORK**

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## **Description**

Ideal ranch horses must also be a cow horse; this class demonstrates/measures the horse's ability to do cow work.

- Ideal ranch cow horses should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.
- Holding the saddle horn is permitted.
- There is a time limit per horse/rider team to perform the work depending on the division and the time begins when the cow is turned into the arena.
- If the time has not elapsed and the judge is satisfied that all requirements of the class have been met, the judge should blow the whistle for the exhibitor to cease work.
- The judge may blow a whistle at any time for the exhibitor to cease work for safety reasons.
- Judges will give credit for what they have seen.
- Only the judge may award a new cow to a contestant to replace a cow that will not honor a horse.
- If the judge awards a new cow, the exhibitor has the option to refuse the new cow by continuing to work.
- If the exhibitor accepts the new cow, the time for working the cow will start over.
- If the exhibitor intends to accept the new cow, the exhibitor must pull up immediately.
- When multiple judges are scoring, any one of the judges may terminate the work or signal for a new cow.

## **SHW563.2 — Content**

- Exhibitors in the open, cowboy, amateur & youth divisions are allotted three minutes to complete the work.
- When there is one minute left, the announcer will announce, one minute remaining.
- At three minutes, the announcer will call for time.

## **Part One – Boxing the Cow**

- The rider rides into the arena, faces the cattle entry gate & signals for their cow to be turned into the arena.
- The cow shall be controlled on the entry end of the arena for a sufficient amount of time to demonstrate the horse's ability to hold the cow.
- If the cow does not immediately challenge the horse, the rider shall aggressively move in on the cow to demonstrate his horse's ability to drive and block the cow on the entry fence.

## **Part Two – Fence Work**

- After the cow has been controlled on the entry end of the arena, the rider shall set the cow up and drive it down either side of the arena.
- The cow should be turned on the fence at least once in each direction.
- The first run out for a turn shall be past the half-way mark of the arena.
- All turns down the side shall be completed before reaching the end fence.

## **Part Three – Roping or Circling**

- The amateur and youth exhibitors has the option of circling the cow in the middle of the arena in both directions in lieu of roping.
- An amateur or youth exhibitor may circle or rope the cow but cannot combine the two to get credit for this portion of the run.
- Open and cowboy exhibitors must rope the cow.



## **Roping**

- To rope the cow, the exhibitor must be carrying a rope when the run starts.
- The exhibitor may pull up after the fence work, take down the rope and proceed to rope and stop the cow.
- The exhibitor must then rope the cow and bring it to a stop.
- In the roping portion of the class, two throws are permitted and the horse will be judged on two maneuvers: tracking/rating and stopping the cow.
- It is not necessary that the exhibitor catch to receive a score in the roping portion.
- The catch is legal as long as the cow looks through the loop and the rope pulls tight on any part of the animal's body except the tail.
- The rope may be tied on or dallied.
- If the exhibitor does not catch, the horse will be given credit for tracking and rating and will be assessed the appropriate penalty per SHW563.3.

## **International Option**

For shows conducted in international countries, the exhibitor has the option of circling the cow each direction instead of roping or breakaway roping and wearing traditional attire of the country

## **Circling**

- To circle the cow, the exhibitor will maneuver the cow smoothly at least 360 degrees in each direction without interference from the fence.
- The circle's size, symmetry, speed and relative balance from right and left show control.
- Tightening the circles down with fast head-to-head speed will be a credit situation.
- The circles should be completed before the cow is exhausted.
- Once an exhibitor has committed to circling a cow, if the cow falls no new cow will be awarded.
- The exhibitor will complete the run by riding around the fallen cow to fulfill circling requirements.
- In the circling portion of the judging, one whistle will terminate the work and two whistles will award a new cow.

## **SHW563.3 — Credits and Penalties**

- All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear) are subject to penalty at that time.
- During Boxing, credit will be given for the horse's expression and its cow sense (i.e., making moves with little rider assistance); holding, controlling, and turning the cow; the amount of work actually done; and the degree of difficulty of the work.
- Credit will be given during Fence Work for making the first run past the center of the arena; making turns right on the cow; and controlling a difficult cow.
- If Roping, credit will be given for rating and following cow to allow rider the optimal roping position; stopping hard; and staying in the ground during the hold.
- Credits for each element of Roping range from  $-1 \frac{1}{2}$  to  $+1 \frac{1}{2}$  points.
- If Circling, credit will be given when the horse works willingly; acknowledges the cow; and gets close enough to the cow to control the circles.
- Credits for Circling range from  $-1 \frac{1}{2}$  to  $+1 \frac{1}{2}$  points for each direction.
- Maneuver evaluations and penalty applications are to be determined independently.



## Penalties

| 1 Point                                                                            | 2 Point                                                                                                                                                 | 3 Point                                                     | 5 Point                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Over-bridled (per maneuver)                                                        | Going around the corner of the arena before turning cow                                                                                                 | Exhausting or overworking the cow before circling or roping | Failure to turn the cow both directions on the fence                                                                               |
| Out of frame (per maneuver)                                                        | When working an animal in the open field (at least 20' from the side of arena) and the animal gets within 3 feet from the end fence before being turned | Hanging up on the fence (refusing to turn)                  | Spurring in front of cinch                                                                                                         |
| Loss of working advantage                                                          | An illegal catch (loop fails to pass over head or pulls tight on tail only), or failure to catch if roping in amateur and youth classes                 | Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage    | Blatant disobedience                                                                                                               |
| Using the corner or the end of the arena to turn the cow when going down the fence |                                                                                                                                                         | Two-loop catch when roping in open/ cowboy class            | Use of either hand to instill fear                                                                                                 |
| Changing sides of arena to turn cow                                                |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                             | An illegal catch (loop fails to pass over head or pulls tight on tail only), or failure to catch when roping, in open/cowboy class |
| For each length horse runs past cow                                                |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |
| Working out of position                                                            |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |
| Slipping rein                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |
| Failure to drive cow past middle marker on first turn                              |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |
| Two-loop catch in amateur and youth classes                                        |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |

| Off Pattern (OP)                                                                                      | Disqualification (DQ)                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.</i>                           | Bringing the cow straight over backwards landing on its back or head with all four feet in the air |
| Turning tail                                                                                          | Lameness                                                                                           |
| Failure to attempt any part of the class (includes no attempt at roping in the open/cowboy divisions) | Abuse                                                                                              |
| Repeated blatant disobedience                                                                         | Illegal equipment                                                                                  |
| Schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow                                           | Disrespect or misconduct                                                                           |
| Schooling horse between cows (if new cow is awarded)                                                  | Leaving working area before run is complete                                                        |
| Complete loss of rope in open/cowboy class                                                            | Improper western attire                                                                            |
| Complete loss of rope in amateur or youth classes, once committed to roping                           | Fall of horse/rider                                                                                |
| Use of two hands (except junior and level 1 horses shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore)                  |                                                                                                    |
| More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein)  |                                                                                                    |

### Note:

- If the open or cowboy rider runs out of time to rope, there will be no credit for the stop/hold maneuver and a 5 point penalty for failure to catch.
- Riders may still earn credit for tracking/ rating, control/position and speed/ degree of difficulty



## **BOX – DRIVE – BOX - DRIVE (SHW564) LIMITED RANCH COW WORK**

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### **SHW564.1**

- Exhibitors in the VRH limited amateur and VRH limited youth ranch cow work may only compete in one sub-division of amateur or youth ranch cow work at the same show with the same horse.
- These subdivisions may not be run concurrently.
- Example: VRH limited amateur may not run concurrently with VRH amateur.

#### **SHW564.1.1 — Content**

- Limited ranch cow work exhibitors are allotted one minute and forty-five seconds to complete the work.
- When there is 50 seconds left, the announcer will announce, “50 seconds remaining”.
- At one minute and forty-five seconds, the announcer will call for time.
- Exhibitors are not required to use all the allotted time but must ride until the judge whistles the end of the run or time expires, whichever occurs first.
- There are four parts to the work: boxing the cow; setting up the cow and driving it down the fence to the opposite end of the arena; boxing it at the opposite end of the arena, and then driving the cow past the middle marker again.
- There is no expectation that the exhibitor will make a fence turn, instead the drive down the fence demonstrates correct position and control around the corner.

#### **Part One – Boxing the Cow**

- The rider shall ride into the arena, face the cattle entry gate, and signal for their cow to be turned into the arena.
- The cow shall be controlled on the entry end of the arena for a sufficient amount of time to demonstrate the horse’s ability to hold the cow.
- If the cow does not immediately challenge the horse, the rider shall aggressively move in on the cow to demonstrate his horse’s ability to drive and block the cow.

#### **Part Two – Set Up Cow and Drive Down Fence to Opposite End of Arena**

- After the cow has been controlled on the entry end of the arena, the rider shall set the cow up for driving down the side of the arena.
- When coming out of corner, the horse shall be close enough to cow to demonstrate control with cow against the fence.
- This distance and control should be maintained for approximately 1/2 to 3/4 the length of arena.
- Rider will then stop and release the cow and move horse toward center of arena to set the cow up for boxing.

#### **Part Three – Boxing the Cow at Opposite End of Arena**

- The exhibitor will regain control or hold the cow at end of the arena to demonstrate the horse’s ability to “hold” the cow.

#### **Part Four – Drive the Cow Back Down the Fence**

- Drive the cow back down the fence (original side) past the middle marker and continue until the judge blows the whistle to show completion.
- While boxing the cow at the opposite end, if the rider loses control and allows the cow to cross the center line, the judge will whistle the end of the run.
- The rider will receive off pattern penalty (OP) for the run.



## SHW564.2 — Credits and Penalties

- All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear) are subject to penalty at that time.
- During Boxing, credit will be given for the horse's expression and its 'cow sense' (i.e., making moves with little rider assistance); holding, controlling, and turning the cow; the amount of work actually done; and the degree of difficulty of the work.
- Credit will be given during Set Up Cow and Drive Down Fence for rating the cow; blocking the cow with pressure towards the end of the arena; driving the cow with control down the side of the arena; and controlling a difficult cow.
- Maneuver evaluations and penalty applications are to be determined independently.

### Penalties

| 1 Point                                                                                              | 3 Point                                                  | 5 Point                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Over-bridled (per maneuver)                                                                          | Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage | Spurring in front of cinch         |
| Out of frame (per maneuver)                                                                          | Losing a cow while boxing                                | Blatant disobedience               |
| Loss of working advantage                                                                            |                                                          | Use of either hand to instill fear |
| Driving cow down the opposite fence (changing sides)                                                 |                                                          |                                    |
| Working out of position                                                                              |                                                          |                                    |
| Slipping rein                                                                                        |                                                          |                                    |
| In limited cow work, failure to drive cow past the middle marker on second drive before time expired |                                                          |                                    |

| Off Pattern (OP)                                                                                     | Disqualification (DQ)                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <i>Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.</i>                          | Lameness                                    |
| Turning tail                                                                                         | Abuse                                       |
| Failure to attempt any part of the class                                                             | Illegal equipment                           |
| Repeated blatant disobedience                                                                        | Disrespect or misconduct                    |
| Schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow                                          | Leaving working area before run is complete |
| Schooling horse between cows (if new cow is awarded)                                                 | Improper western attire                     |
| Complete loss of rope in open/cowboy class                                                           | Fall of horse/rider                         |
| Use of two hands (except junior and level 1 horses shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore)                 |                                             |
| More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein) |                                             |



## ROOKIE RANCH COW WORK (SHW565) VRH & RHC ROOKIE RANCH COW WORK

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### SHW565.1 - Content

- Exhibitors in the VRH rookie ranch cow work may only compete in one sub-division of VRH cow work at the same show with the same horse.
- These subdivisions may not be run concurrently.
- Example: VRH limited amateur may not run concurrently with VRH rookie amateur.
- Horses, regardless of their age, may be ridden with one hand and a standard western bit as approved by AQHA equipment rules or with one or two hands and a snaffle bit or hackamore as described under AQHA equipment rules.
- Rookie ranch cow work exhibitors are allotted 50 seconds to complete the work.
- The rider shall ride into the arena, face the cattle entry gate, and signal for their cow to be turned into the arena.
- The cow shall be controlled on the entry end of the arena to demonstrate the horse's ability to hold the cow.
- If the cow does not immediately challenge the horse, the rider shall aggressively move in on the cow to demonstrate his horse's ability to drive and block the cow.

### SHW565.2 — Credits and Penalties

- All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear) are subject to penalty at that time.
- During Boxing, credit will be given for the horse's expression and its 'cow sense' (i.e., making moves with little rider assistance); holding, controlling, and turning the cow; the amount of work actually done; and the degree of difficulty of the work.

### Penalties

| 1 Point                     | 3 Point                                                  | 5 Point                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Over-bridled (per maneuver) | Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage | Spurring in front of cinch         |
| Out of frame (per maneuver) | Losing a cow                                             | Blatant disobedience               |
| Loss of working advantage   |                                                          | Use of either hand to instill fear |
| Working out of position     |                                                          |                                    |
| Slipping rein               |                                                          |                                    |

| Off Pattern (OP)                                                                                     | Disqualification (DQ)                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <i>Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.</i>                          | Lameness                                    |
| Turning tail                                                                                         | Abuse                                       |
| Failure to attempt any part of the class                                                             | Illegal equipment                           |
| Repeated blatant disobedience                                                                        | Disrespect or misconduct                    |
| Schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow                                          | Leaving working area before run is complete |
| Schooling horse between cows (if new cow is awarded)                                                 | Improper western attire                     |
| Use of two hands (except junior and level 1 horses shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore)                 | Fall of horse/rider                         |
| More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein) |                                             |



# **RANCH CUTTING (SHW566) VRH & RHC RANCH CUTTING**

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## **Description**

- This class is judged on the ability of the horse to work a cow by separating it from the herd and holding it to demonstrate the horse's ability to work the cow.
- A single cow is cut from the herd and the horse must demonstrate its ability to work the cow.
- The ideal VRH ranch cutting horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.

## **SHW566.1 — Objective**

- To cut two cows from the herd and work the cow(s) with the assistance of two turn-back riders and two herd holders.
- Show management may supply two herd holders and two turn back riders, or exhibitors may supply their own helpers.
- If an exhibitor is a herd holder or turn back rider, he or she may use the horse that they are competing on, or use a different horse.
- Herd holders' and turn back riders' horses must be American Quarter Horses.

## **SHW566.2**

- In all divisions, there will be a two minute time limit.
- The announcer/time keeper will give a warning when one minute of the two minute working time has expired.
- Each exhibitor must work two head and has the option of ending their run before the two minute limit or working the full two minutes.
- For international countries, show management has the option of allowing exhibitors to work the two head or there may be a one and one half time limit and work only one head.

## **SHW566.3**

- Time will begin when a rider crosses a time line just prior to entering the herd.
- Time should not start until contestant crosses a pre-determined and marked timeline.
- The rider will then quietly separate his/her cow from the herd.

## **SHW566.4**

Unnecessary roughness or disturbing the herd excessively could result in disqualification.

## **SHW566.5**

Ultimate credit will be given to horses demonstrating excellence in the herd work by committing to, driving, setting up and working a cow in the center of the arena with minimal disturbance to the herd.

## **SHW566.6**

Exhibitors will not be penalized for reining during the cutting portion but should display natural ability.

## **SHW566.7 — Scoring**

100 percent will be judged by the horse's performance and natural ability.



**SHW566.8 — Penalties**

| 1 Point                               | 3 Point                       | 5 Point                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Over-bridled (per maneuver)           | cattle picked up or scattered | horse quitting cow                                         |
| Out of frame (per maneuver)           | spurring on shoulder          | losing cow                                                 |
| Loss of working advantage             | pawing or biting cattle       | changing cattle after a specific commitment                |
| toe, foot, or stirrup on the shoulder | back fence                    | failure to separate a single animal after leaving the herd |
| Working out of position               | hot quit                      | blatant disobedience                                       |

| Off Pattern (OP)                                                                                     | Disqualification (DQ)                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.</i>                          | Lameness                                                                              |
| Turning tail                                                                                         | Abuse                                                                                 |
| failure to cut two cows                                                                              | Illegal equipment                                                                     |
| Repeated blatant disobedience                                                                        | Disrespect or misconduct                                                              |
| Use of two hands (except junior and level 1 horses shown in a snaffle bit/ hackamore)                | Leaving working area before run is complete                                           |
| More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein) | Improper western attire                                                               |
|                                                                                                      | Fall of horse/rider                                                                   |
|                                                                                                      | Excessive disturbance of herd to the point that exhibitor is asked to leave the arena |



# RANCH RAIL

## Description

- The ranch rail pleasure class is a foundation class measuring the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from one ranch task to another and should reflect the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working horse.
- The horse should be well-broke, relaxed, quiet, soft, and cadenced at all gaits.
- The horse should be ridden on a relatively loose rein with light contact & without requiring undue restraint.
- The horse should be responsive to the rider and make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner.
- The horse should be soft in the bridle and yield to contact.
- The ideal ranch rail horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait.
- In all gaits, movement of the ranch rail pleasure horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly, like that of a working ranch horse.
- The class should show the horse's ability to work at a forward, working speed while under control.
- Light contact should be rewarded, and horses shall not be shown on a full drape of reins.
- The horse's overall manners, responsiveness, correctness, and quality of movement are the primary considerations for this class.

## Class Procedure

- Horses are shown at a walk, jog, and lope with light contact or on a relatively loose rein without requiring undue restraint but not shown on a full drape of reins.
- Horses must be worked both ways of the ring, at all three gaits (excluding walk/trot divisions), to demonstrate their ability with different leads and transitions.
- Riders may be asked to extend the jog or lope (in large arenas with adequate space) at judge's discretion.
- Passing is permissible & should not be penalized when the horse maintains an even cadence and rhythm.
- Horses are to be reversed to the inside (away from the rail).
- Posting at the extended trot is acceptable.
- Horses should back easily and stand quietly when/if called for.

## Credits and Evaluation

- Part of the evaluation of this class is on the smoothness of transitions.
- A horse may be collected from the extended trot as the horse moves into the lope.
- Transition from the extended lope down to the trot is a transition to the seated trot, not the extended trot.
- Therefore, an extra cue to achieve this gait is expected.
- Horses that complete this total transition within three strides calmly and obediently should be rewarded.
- Horses that attempt to stop or do stop prior to trotting will be penalized.
- Judges expect to see horses that have been trained to respond to cues.
- To see these cues applied discretely and the horse responding correctly could be a credit earning situation.
- The class will be judged on the performance and condition of the horse at the discretion of the judge.

| Penalties                                                                                           | Disqualification (DQ)                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Entries shall be penalized (but not necessarily disqualified) each time the following occur:</i> | <i>The following shall be cause for disqualification:</i>                                                    |
| Too slow/per gait                                                                                   | Major disobedience or schooling                                                                              |
| Over-bridled                                                                                        | Willful abuse                                                                                                |
| Out of frame                                                                                        | Switching/changing hands once their run has started, including switching from one to two hands or vice versa |
| Break of gait at any gait                                                                           |                                                                                                              |
| Wrong lead or out of lead                                                                           |                                                                                                              |
| Draped reins                                                                                        |                                                                                                              |
| Trotting more than two strides when taking lead                                                     |                                                                                                              |
| Blatant disobedience (kick, bite, buck, rear, etc.)                                                 |                                                                                                              |
| Major disobedience or schooling                                                                     |                                                                                                              |
| Spurring in front of cinch                                                                          |                                                                                                              |
| Use of either hand to instill fear/praise                                                           |                                                                                                              |



# STOCK HORSE PLEASURE

## Description

- The purpose of the stock horse pleasure class is to measure the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from performing one ranch task to another.
- The horse should reflect the versatility, attitude, & movement of a working ranch horse outside of an arena.
- The horse should be well-trained, relaxed, quiet, soft, and cadenced at all gaits.
- Ideal ranch horses travel with forward movement & demonstrate obvious lengthening of stride at extended gaits.
- The horse can be ridden with light contact or on a relatively loose rein without requiring undue restraint but not shown on a full drape of reins.
- The overall manners and responsiveness of the ranch riding horse to make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as the quality of the movement are of primary considerations.
- The ideal stock horse pleasure horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait.

## Class Procedure

- Horses shall be shown individually, and the class may be conducted inside or outside of an arena.
- The pattern may be started either to the right or left direction.
- Markers shall be set up to designate gait changes.
- Order of maneuvers may be varied per judge's discretion, but the stop should not follow the extended lope.
- Judges are encouraged to walk the course prior to judging.

## Credits and Evaluation

- The overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be as those described in ranch horse gaits above, with an emphasis on forward movement, free-flowing, and ground covering for all gaits.
- Part of the evaluation is on smoothness of transitions, which should be performed smooth & responsive.
- A horse may be collected from the extended trot or walk as the horse moves into the lope.
- During transition from extended lope down to trot, walk or extended walk an extra cue is expected.
- Horses that complete this total transition within three strides calmly and obediently should be rewarded.
- Horses that attempt to stop or do stop prior to the specified gait will be penalized.
- Judges expect to see horses that have been trained to respond to cues.
- To see these cues applied discreetly and the horse responding correctly could be a credit earning situation.
- All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions are subject to penalty at that time.

## Penalties

| 1 Point                                               | 3 Points                                                | 5 Points                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Over-bridled (per maneuver)                           | Wrong lead                                              | Spurring in front of cinch                |
| Out of frame (per maneuver)                           | Draped reins                                            | Blatant disobedience                      |
| Too slow                                              | Break of gait at lope                                   | Use of either hand to instill fear/praise |
| Break of gait at walk or trot for two strides or less | Break of gait at walk or trot for more than two strides |                                           |

| Off Pattern (OP)                                                                                             | Disqualification (DQ)                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>(Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly)</i>                                            | Lameness                                                                                                                                |
| Breaking pattern                                                                                             | Abuse                                                                                                                                   |
| Repeated disobedience                                                                                        | Illegal equipment                                                                                                                       |
| Switching/changing hands once their run has started, including switching from one to two hands or vice versa | Disrespect or misconduct                                                                                                                |
| More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins                                  | Leaving working area before pattern is complete                                                                                         |
| When riding in a snaffle bit two hands are acceptable                                                        | Fall of horse/rider (run ends; scores will be given for work done but the horse/rider team will be disqualified and will not be placed) |
| Three or more refusals to complete a maneuver                                                                |                                                                                                                                         |



# CONFORMATION (SHW567) VRH RANCH CONFORMATION

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## Description

- The purpose of ranch conformation is to preserve American Quarter Horse type selecting well-mannered individuals in the order of their resemblance to the breed ideal and that are the most positive combination of balance, structural correctness, and movement with appropriate breed and sex characteristics and adequate muscling.
- The ideal VRH Ranch conformation horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail.

## SHW567.1 — Eligibility

To be eligible to compete in the ranch conformation class the horse must be shown in at least two riding classes in that division at the same show.

## SHW567.2 — Divisions

- Horses in each division will be shown as one class.
- Stallions, mares and geldings will compete together in each of these divisions: open, cowboy, amateur and limited amateur.
- Mares and geldings will compete together in each of these divisions: youth, limited youth, rookie youth and rookie amateur.
- Divisions/subdivisions may not be run concurrently.
- VRH amateur and VRH youth exhibitors may only compete in one subdivision at the same show with the same horse (amateur, limited amateur or rookie amateur; youth, limited youth or rookie youth.)

## SHW567.3 — Ineligibility and Inspection

- All horses whose registration certificates are marked with a parrot mouth, cryptorchid or excessive white notation are ineligible to compete in the ranch horse conformation class.
- All stallions shall be examined to confirm that they have two visible testicles.
- All stallions and mares shall be examined for parrot mouth.
- If examination reveals that a horse has parrot mouth or is cryptorchid, such horse should be excused from the ring prior to final placing by the judge regardless of whether the parrot mouth or cryptorchid condition is marked on the horse's registration certificate.

## SHW567.4 — Equipment

- Horses are to be shown in a good working halter: rope, braided, nylon or plain leather.
- Horses may not be shown with a lip cord or safety lead; however, a chain may be used under the chin or over the nose.
- It is recommended but not required for exhibitors to remove their spurs.

## SHW567.5 — Class Procedure

- As the horse approaches, the judge will step to the right to enable the horse to trot straight to a cone placed 50 feet away.
- At the cone, the horse will continue trotting, turn to the left & trot toward the left wall or fence of the arena.
- After trotting, horses will be lined up head to tail for individual inspection by the judge.
- The judge shall inspect each horse from both sides, front and rear & place the horses in order of preference.

## SHW567.6 — Exhibitor Rules

- Exhibitors may enter more than one horse in ranch conformation classes.
- This allows the horses to remain eligible for VRH all-around awards.
- Any Current AQHA member may show a horse for another competitor in open VRH ranch conformation.
- Any current amateur or youth member or a family member of the competitor may show a horse in amateur or youth VRH ranch conformation.
- An exhibitor with multiple horses entered in a VRH conformation class must lead one of their horses.



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