



# THE PONY CLUB

## TEST SHEET

### 2023

## AH Standard

The Pony Club 'AH' Test stands alone as the highest Test of Horsemastership available in The Pony Club. It is a pre-requisite for the 'A' Test Riding, replacing the Horsemastership section of that Test.

Candidates must be 16 years or over although at least 17 years is recommended. They must hold the 'B' Test Horse and Pony Care and the Lungeing Test, before applying for the 'AH' Test.

### OBJECTIVES:

The candidates should:

- Show a wide experience of caring for and handling different types of horses and ponies.
- Have the experience and knowledge to be able to look after two fit competition horses, a fit competition pony, a recuperating horse, an elderly retired horse and a mare and foal turned out.
- Support practical work shown with logical theory relevant to the individual horses.
- Carry out practical work swiftly and safely showing familiarity with the tasks.
- Be able to lunge fresh and fit horses as a form of exercise.
- Understand how the systems of the horse affect daily care in fit and resting horses.
- Recognise the symptoms of ailments and the problems that may arise from these, and be able to undertake suitable action.
- Understand the implications when breeding from a mare.
- Be aware of modern practices; all theory must be grounded, and candidates must be able to apply their knowledge to the horses supplied during the exam.
- Have an understanding of current legislation in place when working with horses.

- The assessor will expect the candidate to show normal daily competence in their answers, but also the ability to observe any unusual behaviour or problem and to suggest a sensible solution.

## **SECTION A Social Licence, Ethology, Learning Theory including Handling, Employment**

Requirements: One horse stabled, a variety of methods of restraint. Set of clippers

- A1. Discuss the meaning of the term 'Social Licence' when connected to horses, and how it corresponds with the horse's natural ethology.
- A2. Explain how a horse learns, including natural instinct (cognitive abilities), memory, social behaviour, and intelligence.
- A3. Show an understanding of why punishment is ineffective and should be avoided.
- A4. Observe the horse provided and assess for stereotypical behaviours. Discuss possible causes and how to minimise them.
- A5. Demonstrate the steps that might be taken when handling young or fit horses who may have challenging behaviour, both in and out of the stable.
- A6. Discuss best practise when managing in horses on long-term box rest.
- A7. Outline some modern methods of rehabilitation following a period of box rest.
- A8. Discuss clipping a nervous or frightened horse, considering the safety of the person clipping, the preparation of the horse, the environment and the care of the clippers. Outline possible means of retraining or desensitisation, and sedation.
- A9. Appreciate the need for a contract when employed and know how the Lone Worker Policy may be included.
- A10. Discuss some of the legal requirements for self-employment.

## **SECTION B Lungeing, Insurance, Contracts and The Older Horse**

Requirements: Lunge area – Horse to be lunged (tacked up, minus side reins), lunge whip and lunge line

- B1. Check the horse's equipment, and adjust if necessary, put on and fit side reins.
- B2. Work the fit/fresh horse for exercise on the lunge in a safe, efficient, effective and practical way, using all three gaits if appropriate.

- B3. Lunge off the bit if more control is required, demonstrating suitable methods.
- B4. Recognise the quality of work shown.
- B5. Demonstrate care to maintain the safety and welfare of the horse and handler.
- B6. Discuss what forms of insurance may be advisable when keeping horses at home or in a commercial yard.
- B7. Know what should be contained in a livery contract and understand the advantages of possessing one.
- B8. Outline some of the physical changes seen in the older horse.
- B9. What may indicate that a horse may need their workload reduced/changed?
- B10. Describe some of the advantages and disadvantages of retiring horses.
- B11. Explain some of the signs that indicate a need for euthanasia.
- B12. Consider the different options of euthanasia, and body disposal.

## **SECTION C Conformation, Foot, Shoeing and Lameness, Vetting**

Requirements: One shod horse in stable yard. Current remedial shoes

- C1. Consider the conformation of the horse shown, how this relates to its age/breeding/type and the effect that it might have on its way of going and the type of work it may be suited to.
- C2. Demonstrate your ability to trot a horse up, discuss the value of trotting up a horse and make an evaluation of its action. Assess both the stance and swing phase of the stride pattern. Include discussion on faulty action and if it would predispose the horse to lameness.
- C3. Show methods that could be used to help discover the source of possible lameness.
- C4. Know what is included in a 2 and 5 stage pre-purchase examination. Explain why you might request blood tests, x-rays and scoping during a vetting.
- C5. Observe and discuss the balance of the feet from all angles, relating it to the type or breed of horse
- C6. Notice and discuss current remedial or corrective shoeing, the use of pads, wear of shoes and relate this to movement previously assessed.
- C7. Discuss importance and locations of common ailments and injuries.
- C8. Discuss the prognosis for diseases and ailments related specifically to

the foot.

## **SECTION D Tacking up for Dressage and Healthcare**

Requirements: One horse in stable, a selection of dressage saddles and double bridles. Current leg protection including protective boots and schooling bandages. Bandages and padding suitable for knee and hock bandages

- D1. Understand how to tack up a horse to ensure comfort, taking into consideration the structure of the mouth and head. Evaluate the conformation and muscle development of the withers, the back and rib cage.
- D2. Select and fit a suitable double bridle. Discuss the suitability of the chosen bridle and bits.
- D3. Select and fit a suitable dressage saddle and girth.
- D4. Put on current, suitable, leg protection for dressage and training.
- D5. Explain the care of horses' teeth and discuss how to examine for sharp or wolf teeth. Know how to recognise discomfort in the mouth. Relate this to fitting the double bridle.
- D6. Demonstrate applying knee or hock bandages, and / or other current veterinary bandages suitable for overnight application. Discuss up to date bandaging methods.
- D7. Discuss bio security. How can people on the yard minimise bio security risks. Summarise precautions that can be taken against contagion and infection. What could you do if you suspected an outbreak?
- D8. Have a practical current understanding of influenza and tetanus inoculations and be able to evaluate the records in a passport.
- D9. Discuss possible upper/ lower respiratory tract complications, their symptoms and management
- D10. Explain how to deal with severe bleeding.
- D11. Summarise common forms of soft tissue injury to tendons and ligaments. Discuss possible treatments of soft tissue injuries.
- D12. Describe the symptoms and possible treatments of a variety of skin conditions.
- D13. Explain safe practice for treating equine eye problems to prevent deterioration and promote recovery.

## **SECTION E Tacking up for Cross Country and Paddock Management**

Requirements: One horse in a stable, a choice of tack for cross country,

including boots and studs. A nearby field to discuss.

E1. Select and put on suitable equipment to ride *this* horse around a cross country course, include boots. Consider the requirement for type of bit / noseband / breastplate relating to conformation and muscle structure.

E2. Discuss the use of studs for the competition horse and compare their advantages and disadvantages. Choose the studs that would be suitable for the current weather or going.

E3. Why should yards have a risk assessment and what might one contain?

E4. Outline action to be taken in the event of an accident to a person in a stable yard.

E5. How might COSHH, RIDDOR and Health and Safety legislations affect the running of a yard?

E6. Know the legislation concerning muck heap effluent.

E7. Evaluate the paddock provided and explain various pasture routines, including how the grassland quality can be improved.

E8. Know the precautions necessary during and after the use of sprays, fertilizers, lime etc. Include H&S and COSHH.

E9. Discuss the identification of and how to deal with poisonous plants.

Explain possible consequences should a horse ingest unsuitable flora.

E10. Show an understanding of the principles and methods of controlling worm infestation. Discuss the advantages of modern worm burden tests for all types of worms.

E11. Show an awareness of health and safety implications when worming, including the disposal of worming syringes.

## **SECTION F Nutrition**

Requirements: One horse in a stable. Somewhere to sit down

F1. Assess the stabled horse and discuss the required nutrients in its diet.

F2. Estimate the weight of the horse shown, consider the use of weigh tapes and weigh bridges.

F3. Observe and condition score the horse, explaining the indications for your conclusion. Have some knowledge of the suitable weight of rider this horse could carry comfortably.

F4. Consider the dangers of equine obesity.

F5. Discuss how you would feed this horse if stabled the majority of the time.

F6. Review bio security in feed rooms. Include rodent control.

- F7. Explain how to purchase, store and ensure the quality of feed, both economically and safely, using efficient practice for feeding regimes
- F8. Discuss various forage alternatives. Talk about the value of fibre-based diets. Discuss how this relates to horses' natural ethology, when and how to add concentrates to the diet.
- F9. Debate the value of balancers and other feed additives on the market.
- F10. Discuss how the digestive tract affects the way horses are fed, and the problems that could arise.
- F11. Know how to tempt a difficult feeder.
- F12. Discuss the work and feed requirements for different sports.
- F13. Discuss health problems caused by feeding.
- F14. Consider how to make a yard eco-friendly. When may a change of planning permission be required?

## **SECTION G Health and Condition, Care of the Competition Horse, Grooming**

Requirements: A fit horse in a stable plus necessary first aid equipment

- G1. Discuss grooming versus bathing
- G2. Assess the horse for current health, demonstrate taking a temperature, pulse and respiration rate. Discuss what variations in these parameters can indicate.
- G3. Discuss how to estimate the observed horse's fitness.
- G4. When working horses identify how respiration relates to the amount of work the horse is doing and their speed of recovery.
- G5. Discuss problems of the respiratory system which affect fittening
- G6. Assess the muscle development of the horse presented, highlight possible strengths and weaknesses. Explain potential remedial exercises to make improvement to the muscular system to support ridden work.
- G7. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of using horse walkers and alternative methods of fittening.
- G8. Discuss getting differing types of horse fit for various sports. Seasonal plans, interval training – distance and speed.
- G9. Describe azoturia (Exertional Rhabdomyolysis, ERM), outline its possible causes and treatment.
- G10. Understand how the colour of urine can be related to practical problems.
- G11. Discuss current methods of warming down horses and ponies after hard work.

G12. Discuss current thinking on the effect of heat on tendons. Talk about cooling methods for legs after hard work.

G13. Describe the points to consider when travelling horses long distances.

G14. Discuss considerations to be made in the care of a horse to ensure a fit relaxed horse at a competition.

G15. Describe how to recognise and deal with the causes and symptoms of stress, dehydration and exhaustion. Outline how these conditions can be recognised and prevented.

## **SECTION H Care and Handling Mares, Foals and Young Stock**

Requirements: One mare in a stable

H1. Understand the current legislation for your country concerning passports and micro chipping. Discuss the purpose of the Central Equine Data Base.

H2. Observe a mare and discuss what factors you would consider when deciding whether to breed from her.

H3. Briefly discuss the differences between natural covering, artificial insemination and embryo transfer, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

H4. Explain the veterinary procedures required before a mare can go to stud.

H5. Discuss how you might recognise when a mare is in season.

H6. Know the factors behind the choice of service date – and describe the basic outline of a covering programme.

H7. Describe how you would determine that a mare was in-foal, care of an in-foal mare, including feeding, vaccinations and worming .

H8. Discuss different foaling environments and what facilities and equipment you would require.

H9. Be able to recognise the signs of a mare about to foal.

H10. Compare a normal birth to a situation requiring veterinary attention

H11. Describe the use of a foal slip.

H12. Discuss problems and solutions that may arise when handling foals and young stock.

H13. Discuss the deciding factors in whether to return a mare to stud or not.

H14. Explain how to travel mares and foals safely.

H15. Discuss the timing and procedure for weaning foals and the impact it might have on their behaviour.

H16. Compare the advantages and disadvantages and timing of gelding colts.

H17. Outline the care and feeding of young stock up to the age of three years.

H18. Discuss the implications of Developmental Orthopaedic Disease (osteochondrosis) in youngstock

H19. Discuss possible genetic and congenital problems when breeding.

H20. Discuss the implications of incorrect feeding on youngstock development.

### **Test notes:**

- All content covered in lower tests may be reassessed in this test
- The B Test Care and Lunge Test must be held before entering the AH Test.

**Recommended Minimum Age: 16 years**

**Felt Colour –  
Orange**

**Honours: Salmon Pink**

### **Please Note:**

**The assessor team reserves the right to withdraw any candidate at any stage if there are concerns about the welfare of the horse or pony they are riding, or the safety of others. All decisions will be made in line with The Pony Club's commitment to safeguarding and animal welfare.**

### **©Updated 2025 – The Pony Club**

All rights reserved. No parts of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of The Pony Club.