

# NEW GROUND

*The World Conformation Horse Association continues to move toward standardizing its judging.*

**By Christine Hamilton and Holly Clanahan**

“I JUST LOVE THIS FILLY,” WCHA JUDGE TOM ROBERTSON SAID over the microphone, mentioning the yearling’s elegant topline and overall correctness before moving on to compliment and critique the other horses he had placed below her.

Hearing a judge give reasons for how he placed a class is standard procedure in a WCHA class, and it’s one of the reasons that Randy Myers of Warsaw, Indiana, the filly’s owner, appreciates the fledgling association’s efforts.

“The feedback is good,” he said, “I am an amateur. I do all this on my own. Nobody’s fitting anything for me.”


This was the second year for the WCHA classes at the Region Four Experience in Columbus, Ohio, and although the association wants to develop and promote halter horse competition, its primary mission is to educate the public about the value of good conformation in the horse and how to recognize it.

To that end, WCHA began a formal testing and approval process for WCHA judges in 2008, and granted its first 13 cards. The newly approved judges judged various WCHA classes across the country this year. Many of those judges are AQHA Professional Horsemen and AQHA judges.

The WCHA had its second judges’ credentialing in Oklahoma City, timed to coincide with the 2009 Ford AQHYA World Championship Show youth judging contest in Oklahoma City.

Prospective WCHA judges attended educational sessions on ethics, conformation and giving oral reasons on the first day. On the second day, they took a written test, then judged a series of classes and presented oral reasons for their placings to the approval panel.

“We want to keep our standards high,” said Tim Finkenbinder, of Collinsville, Texas, one of several WCHA executive committee members on hand to help run the credentialing. “We don’t want this to be just another card.”

At press time, results were still pending for those individuals who went through this year’s testing. More information on WCHA rules regarding judges are at the association’s Web site [www.conformationhorse.com](http://www.conformationhorse.com). 



CHRISTINE HAMILTON

WCHA judging procedures includes a requirement for the judge to “... give oral reasons in at least one class ... at a WCHA sanctioned event ...,” per WCHA Judges Qualification Guidelines 04.23.09.



CHRISTINE HAMILTON

The WCHA had its second judges credentialing and testing August 5-6 in Oklahoma City. For more information, visit [www.conformationhorse.com](http://www.conformationhorse.com).