

# A Q H A Versatility Ranch Horse

## A return to versatility



American Quarter Horse Association members have a new type of competition available which showcases the ranch horse. Born at the request of AQHA members and others who wished for an AQHA-approved event which centered on the talents of a working stock horse, the Versatility Ranch Horse competition demonstrates the versatility of the ranch horse in five categories ranch riding, ranch trail, ranch cutting, working ranch horse and ranch conformation.

## THE CLASSES

**Ranch Riding** This class shows the horse's ability to move at a working speed with a rider. Horses will be shown at three gaits walk, trot and lope in each direction of the arena. Horses also will be asked to change directions while on the rail, stop and back. A horse will be given credit for traveling with his head held in a normal position, ears alert and moving at a natural speed for the gait requested. Horses will be asked to extend the lope and the trot in at least one direction. Credit also will be given for making a smooth transition between the gaits, for keeping the correct lead and for maintaining the gait until the judge asks for a change. A rider must show his horse with only one hand on the reins, unless the horse is five years old or younger and is being shown in a snaffle bit or hackamore (bosal).

**Ranch Trail** This class contains a course with a minimum of six obstacles and is designed to show a horse's ability and willingness to perform several tasks that might be asked of him during the course of a normal day's ranch work. Whenever possible, realistic or natural obstacles are encouraged and the course is encouraged to be set outside of an arena using the natural terrain of the land. The horse will be judged on three gaits walk, trot and lope performed between the six obstacles to be determined when the judge chooses the pattern. A horse will be rewarded with higher credit for performing these gaits on the correct lead and with an alert attitude. Mandatory obstacles include opening and closing a gate; dragging a log either in a straight line or around a pattern; unbridling, bridling and picking up all four feet. Some optional obstacles include crossing a water hazard; crossing a bridge; and roping a stationary steer.

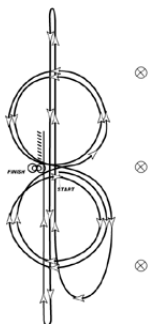
**Ranch Cutting** A specified numbered cow is cut from the herd and the horse must demonstrate its ability to work the cow. When satisfied that the horse has proven its cutting ability, the horse and rider must then pen the cow at the far end of the arena. Contestants will have two and one-half minutes to cut and pen a designated cow from a herd of at least 10 head. Horses will not be penalized for reining during the cutting portion and should display horse's natural cow ability.

**Working Ranch Horse** This class combines the ability of the working ranch horse to rein, handle cattle and put his rider in the position to rope and stop a cow. The class is to be judged in three sections reining, cow work and roping with scores from each section added together for the final score of the class. Each contestant will perform individually. A maximum of six minutes is allowed to complete the class. When the six-minute time limit has expired, the exhibitor will be required to exit the arena.

Reining pattern: One of two approved patterns will be used for this class. Maneuvers include at least one circle in both directions, a change of leads in each direction, at least one 360-degree turn in each direction, a rollback in each direction, stop and back.

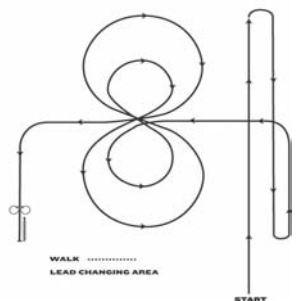
Working the cow: After the exhibitor has completed his reining pattern, he will call for the cow to be turned into the arena. Upon receiving the cow, the contestant shall hold the cow on the prescribed end of the arena for a sufficient amount of time to demonstrate the ability of the horse to contain the cow. After a reasonable amount of time, the contestant shall take the cow down the fence, making at least one turn each way on the fence.

WORKING COWHORSE PATTERN I



Working Ranch Horse Pattern

WORKING RANCH HORSE PATTERN II



Working Ranch Horse Pattern

**Roping:** The exhibitor must then rope the cow and bring it to a stop. The horse is judged on his ability to trail, rate and stop the cow. There is to be no dragging and the exhibitor is allowed only two throws. Ropes cannot be tied to the saddle horn. It's not necessary for the exhibitor to catch in order to receive a score. However, if there is no catch, a five point penalty will be subtracted from the roping score.

**Ranch Conformation** The ranch conformation class will be based on balance, structural correctness, breed and sex characteristic, and degree of muscling, with balance being the most important. Horses are to be shown in a good working halter (rope, braided, nylon or plain leather). All sexes will be judged in one class. Horses will walk to the judge one at a time then trot straight to a cone. At the cone, the horse will continue trotting, turn to the left and 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. The conformation class should be held as the last class in the Versatility Ranch Horse competition

## DIVISIONS

**Open Ranch** This division is for horses shown by the recorded owner or by immediate family members as outlined in the AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations; or for horses shown by a full-time employee (six months or more) and/or children of the ranch which owns the horse.

**Youth** Exhibitors 18 years of age or younger (age as of January 1) may show in this division. The exhibitor must be the recorded owner of the horse shown or show a horse owned by his or her immediate family members. The exhibitor may show horses owned by a ranch where the exhibitor's family is a full time employee (for six months or more).

## GENERAL RULES

H All horses must be registered with the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA)

H Each exhibitor must have current individual membership in the American Quarter Horse Association or American Quarter Horse Youth Association (AQHYA)

H No horses less than three years of age may be exhibited

H No hoof polish, braided or banded manes or tail extensions

H Trimming the inside of ears is discouraged, although trimming the bridle path is allowed, as well as the fetlocks or any excessive (long) facial hair

## TACK AND EQUIPMENT

H A good working outfit is encouraged and should count over silver-inlaid equipment. Silver on bridles and saddles is discouraged.

H Refer to guidelines listed in Sections 442 and 443 of the AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations regarding the use of bits and other equipment

## POINTS

AQHA points will be awarded based on the final placing of all eligible horses. To be eligible for points in the Versatility Ranch Horse competition, one rider/one horse must enter all five classes. Credits will be applied per class according to the placing received based on the number of

horses competing in that particular class. Horses competing and placing in the top nine will be awarded one credit for each horse or contestant placing below them, plus one credit. Total credits will not exceed nine credits for first place. Credits received in each class will be totaled. After totaling, the horse receiving the highest number of credits will be placed first in the Versatility Ranch Horse competition. The horse receiving the second highest credits will be placed second in the Versatility Ranch Horse competition and so on. AQHA points will be awarded in the Versatility Ranch Horse class according to the existing point schedule. (Chart 415A of the AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations) Ties in the final placing for the Versatility Ranch Horse competition will be broken by the highest placing horse in the Working Ranch Horse class.

### EXAMPLE OF CREDIT DISTRIBUTION

Contestant Number	Ranch Riding	Ranch Cutting	Ranch Trail	Working Ranch	Conformation	Total Credits	Final Versatility Placing	AQHA Points
#233	6	4	5	6	5	26	1st	1
#285	3	3	6	5	4	21	2nd	2
#289	5	5	2	2	6	20	3rd	0
#186	2	6	1	4	2	15	4th	0
#222	4	1	4	3	1	13	5th	0
#193	1	2	3	1	3	10	6th	0

This example represents a class with six contestants. Refer to the AQHA Official Handbook of Rules & Regulations for more information on the number of points earned in larger-entry classes.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

H An AQHA Year-End High-Point award will be awarded in both the Open and Youth divisions based on the number of points earned from January 1 to December 31 of each year

H All achievements will be included on horses show record and exhibitor/owner award record

H Awards at individual shows may vary

H Owners of horses enrolled in the Incentive Fund are eligible

For more information, contact AQHA at [www.aqha.com](http://www.aqha.com) or (806) 376-4811

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