

2019 AQHA RANCHING HERITAGE CHALLENGE RULES

GENERAL RULES

1. The Ranching Heritage Challenge shows may consist of five different classes:
 - ❑ Working Ranch Horse – reining and cow work
 - ❑ Limited Working Ranch Horse – reining and cow work (Box-Drive-Box-Drive; amateur and youth only)
 - ❑ Ranch Riding
 - ❑ Team Roping (offered at discretion of show management)
 - ❑ Barrel Racing (offered at discretion of show management)
2. Equipment, tack, and exhibitor attire should reflect the ranching traditions of the working ranch horse classes.
3. These classes should exemplify the reining ability, cow sense and roping ability of the ranch horse.
4. These classes are available exclusively to horses bred by AQHA Ranching Heritage Breeders.
5. All exhibitors must be AQHA (or AQHYA for youth) members in good standing.
6. Ranching Heritage Challenge shows will offer certain divisions for specific levels of riders. The following criteria are used to determine in which division the rider would qualify:
 - ❑ **Open** - For any exhibitor with any horse regardless of ownership. Both the owner and the exhibitor must be members of AQHA in good standing.
 - ❑ **Limited Open** – For any exhibitor with less than 25 AQHA or American Paint Horse Association (APHA) Open Points in Reining, Cutting or Working Cow Horse within the previous 10 years. For exhibitors with less than \$15,000 lifetime earnings in any of the following: National Reined Cow Horse Association (NRHCA), National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA), National Reining Horse Association (NRHA), American Cutting Horse Association (ACHA), Ranch Horse Association of America (RHAA), American Stock Horse Association (ASHA) or Stock Horse of Texas earnings (SHXT). No exhibitor can have earned more than \$15,000 in any individual association.
 - ❑ **Amateur** – For any exhibitor meeting AQHA Amateur eligibility and ownership requirements as described in the *AQHA Handbook of Rules and Regulations* and possess or purchase an AQHA amateur card.
 - ❑ **Level 1 Amateur** – For any amateur member meeting AQHA Level 1 eligibility requirements as described in Rule SHW245 of the *AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations*. A Level 1 amateur must annually file a Level 1 application, available at aqha.com/level1.
 - ❑ **Cowboy** - For working ranch cowboys who are full-time employees of a working ranch. The horse must be a Ranching Heritage-bred horse and must be owned by a family member or the full time employee of the ranch. Employees must have been employed for a minimum of 90 days prior to competing in the Ranching Heritage Challenge. The rider must have less than \$15,000 lifetime earnings in any of the following: NRCHA, NCHA, NRHA, ACHA, RHAA, ASHA or SHXT or less than 25 AQHA or American Paint Horse Association Open Points in Reining, Cutting, Working Cow Horse or Versatility Ranch Horse within the previous 10 years. No exhibitor can have earned more than \$15,000 in any individual association.
 - ❑ **Youth** – For any AQHYA member in good standing.
 - ❑ **Level 1 Youth** – For any youth member meeting AQHA Level 1 eligibility requirements as described in Rule SHW245 of the *AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations*. A Level 1 youth must annually file a Level 1 application, available at aqha.com/level1.

RHC WORKING RANCH HORSE CLASS (FENCE CLASS) RULES:

Working Ranch Horse will offer the following classes:

- **Open** – RHC 4-Year-Old Working Ranch Horse
 - **Limited Open** - RHC Limited 4 Year-Old Working Ranch Horse
 - **Open** – RHC 5 & 6-Year-Old Working Ranch Horse
 - **Limited Open** – RHC Limited 5 & 6-Year-Old Working Ranch Horse
 - **Cowboy** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Cowboy Working Ranch Horse
 - **Amateur** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Working Ranch Horse
 - **Level 1 Amateur** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Working Ranch Horse
 - **Youth** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Working Ranch Horse
 - **Level 1 Youth** – RHC Level 1 – 4 Year-Old & Up Working Ranch Horse
1. Each contestant will perform individually, first in the reining pattern and then releasing one cow into the arena.
 2. The class will be judged in two parts: reining followed by cow work. **Rules for each portion are listed below.** At the end of the performance, the scores for the two portions will be added together for the final score. Rules for scoring the reining portion are defined in SHW562 of the *AQHA Official Handbook*.

SHW562.VRH RANCH REINING. 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. The ideal VRH ranch reining horse should 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 the show management and judge.

SHW562.1 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 or praise, etc.

SHW 562.2 To rein a horse is not only to guide him but also to control his every movement. The best reined horse should be willingly guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance and dictated to completely. Any movement on his own must be considered a lack of control. 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.

SHW562.3 PENALTIES:

- One-half (1/2) Penalties: Starting a circle or exiting a roll-back at a trot for up to two (2) strides; delayed change of lead by one stride where the lead change is required by the pattern description; failure to remain a minimum of twenty feet from the wall or fence when approaching a stop and/or roll-back; over-spin or under-spin up to 1/8 turn.
- 1 Point Penalties: 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); Over or under spinning 1/8 to 1/4 turn. Slip-ping rein.
- 2 Point Penalties: Break of gait; freeze up in spins or roll-backs; failure to stop or walk before executing a lope departure on trot-in patterns; failure to be in a lope prior to the first marker on run-in patterns; failure to completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position, trotting beyond strides, but less than 1/2 circle or 1/2 length of the arena.
- 5 Point Penalties: Spurring in front of cinch; blatant disobedience; use of either hand to instill fear/praise; use of two hands per maneuver; more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins per maneuver (except two rein).
- Excess rein may be straightened anytime during the pattern, provided the rider's free hand

remains behind the rein hand. Any attempt to alter tension or length of the reins from the bridle to the rein hand is considered use of two hands and a penalty score of – 5 will be applied.

- Off-Pattern (OP): breaking pattern; inclusion of maneuver (e.g. over or under-spinning, backing more than two (2) strides, etc.); leaving arena before pattern is complete; repeated blatant disobedience; Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete the pattern correctly.

- Disqualification (DQ): Lameness; abuse; illegal equipment; disrespect or misconduct; improper western attire; fall of horse/rider.

- 10 point: Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse's tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver)

SHW563. VRH RANCH COW WORK. The ideal Ranch horse must also be a cow horse and this class demonstrates and measures the horse's ability to do cow work. In addition the ideal ranch cow horse 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.

SHW563.1 CONTENT. Exhibitors in the open, cowboy, amateur and 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. There are three parts to the class: boxing, fence work and roping or circling.

- 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 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 exhibitor 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.

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 rating and tracking and will be assessed a 2 point penalty. 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.

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.

SHW563.2 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 or praise, etc.) 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 1/2 to +1 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 1/2 to +1 1/2 points for each direction. Penalties will be assessed as follows:

- **1 Point Penalties:** Loss of working advantage; Using the corner or the end of the arena to turn the cow when going down the fence; changing sides of arena to turn cow; 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.
- **2 Point Penalties:** Going around the corner of the arena before turning cow; 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; failure to catch if roping in amateur and youth classes.
- **3 Point Penalties:** Exhausting or overworking the cow before circling or roping; hanging up on the fence (refusing to turn); knocking down the cow without having a working advantage; two-loop catch when roping in open/ cowboy class.
- **5 Point Penalties:** Failure to turn the cow both directions on the fence; spurring in front of cinch; Blatant disobedience; use of either hand to instill fear/praise; use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver; more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver; failure to catch when roping, in open/cowboy class.
- 10 point: Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse’s tail is obvious and consistently
- **Off-Pattern (OP):** Turning tail; failure to attempt any part of the class; leaving arena before run is complete; repeated blatant disobedience; schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow; schooling horse between cows, if new cow is awarded, or complete loss of rope in open/cowboy class, cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.
- **Disqualification (DQ):** lameness, abuse, illegal equipment, disrespect or misconduct, improper western attire; fall of horse/rider

If the open or cowboy rider runs out of time to rope, there will be no credit for the stop/hold maneuver and a 2 point penalty for failure to catch. Riders may still earn credit for tracking/rating/control/position and speed/ degree of difficulty.

RHC LIMITED WORKING RANCH HORSE (BOX-DRIVE-BOX-DRIVE) CLASS RULES:

- **Limited Working Ranch Horse** (Box-Drive-Box-Drive; amateur and youth only) will offer the following classes:
- **Amateur** – RHC Limited 4-Year-Old & Up Working Ranch Horse
- **Level 1 Amateur** – RHC Level 1 Limited 4-Year-Old & Up Working Ranch Horse

- **Youth** – RHC Limited 4-Year-Old & Up Working Ranch Horse
- **Level 1 Youth** – RHC Level 1 – Limited 4-Year-Old & Up Working Ranch Horse

Each contestant will perform individually, first in the reining pattern and then releasing one cow into the arena.

SHW564. LIMITED RANCH COW WORK AMATEUR/YOUTH

SHW564.1 Content. Exhibitors in the limited ranch cow work cannot compete in both the ranch cow work and limited cow work class, at the same show with the same horse. Limited ranch cow work exhibitors are allotted one minute and thirty seconds to complete the work. When there is 30 seconds left, the announcer will announce, 30 seconds remaining. At one minute and thirty seconds, the announcer will call for time. Exhibitors are not required to use all of 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; and 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’, rather 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 on the entry fence.
- **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 again control or “hold” the cow for the remainder of time at end of the arena to demonstrate the horse’s ability to “hold” the cow.
- **Part Four – Drive the Cow back down the fence past the middle marker and continue until the judge blows the whistle to show completion.**

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 or praise, etc.) 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. Penalties will be assessed as follows:

- **1 Point Penalties:** Loss of working advantage; working out of position; slipping rein; in limited cow work, failure to drive cow past the middle marker on second drive before time expired.
- **3 Point Penalties:** Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage; losing a cow while boxing.
- **5 Point Penalties:** Spurring in front of cinch; blatant disobedience; use of either hand to instill fear/praise; use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver; more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver.
- **10 Point:** Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse’s tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver).
- **Off-Pattern (OP):** Turning tail; failure to attempt any part of the class; leaving arena before run is complete; repeated blatant disobedience; schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for

cow; schooling horse between cows (if new cow is awarded); cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.

- **Disqualification (DQ):** lameness, abuse, illegal equipment, disrespect or misconduct, improper western attire, fall of horse/rider.

RANCH RIDING CLASS RULES:

Ranch Riding will offer the following classes with descriptions to follow:

- **Open** – RHC 3-Year-Old & Up Ranch Riding
- **Amateur** – RHC 3-Year-Old & Up Ranch Riding
- **Youth** – RHC 3-Year-Old & Up Ranch Riding

SHW560. RANCH RIDING. 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. The ideal ranch horse will travel with forward movement and 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. The ideal VRH ranch riding horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.

SHW560.1 No horse may cross enter western pleasure and ranch riding at the same show regardless of the division. Show management may run AQHA ranch riding and full versatility ranch horse ranch riding concurrently if held within a versatility ranch horse show. If held concurrently, AQHA ranch riding rules (SHW416- 419.7) will apply.

SHW560.2 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. Show management has the option to set markers to designate gait changes. If the class is held inside an arena, the course shall be set up to make approximately one pass of the arena in each direction. The optional ranch riding pattern may be used or another pattern may be used as long as all elements of the class are fulfilled as follows:

- Horses will be shown individually at three gaits; walk, trot and lope in each direction of the arena
- Horses will also be asked to reverse, stop and back
- The judge must ask for an extended trot and extended lope at least one direction of the ring.

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. Penalties will be assessed as follows:

- **1 Point:** Over-bridled, out of frame, too slow, gapping mouth, break of gait at walk or trot for two (2) strides or less.
- **3 Point:** Wrong lead or out of lead, draped reins, break of gait at lope, break of gait at walk or trot for more than two (2) strides.
- **5 Point:** Spurring in front of cinch, blatant disobedience, use of either hand to instill fear/praise,

use of two hands per maneuver, 1st or 2nd cumulative refusal, more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between reins (except two rein) per maneuver. Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.

- 10 Point: Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse's tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver).

(OP) Off-Pattern: Breaking pattern, leaving working area before pattern is complete, repeated disobedience. Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.

Disqualification (DQ): Lameness, abuse, illegal equipment, disrespect or misconduct, improper western attire. fall of horse/rider.

TEAM ROPING will offer the following classes at the discretion of show management. Rules and regulations will be sent prior to RHC event.

- **Open** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Team Roping
- **Amateur** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Team Roping
- **Youth** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Team Roping

BARREL RACING will offer the following classes at the discretion of show management. Rules and regulations will be sent prior to RHC event.

- **Open** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Barrel Racing
- **Amateur** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Barrel Racing
- **Youth** – RHC 4-Year-Old & Up Barrel Racing

AGE OF HORSES

Open for 4-Year-Old Horses

- a) For 4-year-old horses as of January 1 of the competition year
- b) Will follow AQHA equipment rules for junior horses

Limited Open for 4-Year-Old Horses

- a) Runs within the open class and will require separate entry fee
- b) No horse may be exhibited in both the open and limited open classes by different riders

Open for 5 & 6-Year-Old Horses

- a) For 5 & 6-year old horses as of January 1 of the competition year.
- b) 5-year old horses are considered junior horses and may be shown according to AQHA junior horse equipment rules. Six-year-old and older horses are considered senior horses and must be shown according to senior horse equipment rules.

Limited Open for 5 & 6-Year-Old Horses

- a) Runs within the open 5 & 6 and will require separate entry fee
- b) No horse may be exhibited in both the open and limited open classes by different riders

Amateur Class for 4-Year-Old & Up Horses

- a) 4-and-5 year old horses are considered junior horses and may be shown according to AQHA junior horse equipment rules. Six year old and older horses are considered senior and must be shown according to senior horse equipment rules.
- b) Will follow the Working Ranch Horse Heritage Challenge rules with the option of circling rather than roping the cow.

Level 1 Amateur Class for 4-Year-Old & Up Horses

- a) 4 and 5-year-old horses are considered junior horses and may be shown according to AQHA junior horse equipment rules. Six year old and older horses are considered senior horses and must be shown according to senior horse equipment rules.
- b) Will follow the Working Ranch Horse Heritage Challenge rules with the option of circling rather than roping the cow.
- c) Runs within the Amateur Class and requires a separate entry fee.

Cowboy Class for 4-Year-Old & Up Horses

- a) Will run as a separate class and requires its own entry fee
- b) 4-and 5-year old horses are considered junior horses and may be shown according to AQHA junior horse equipment rules. Six year old and older horses are considered senior horses and must be shown according to senior horse equipment rules.