

# Trails and Tails

## Atlantic Canada Trail Riding Association Newsletter

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With spring conditioning underway and the first ride of the season this weekend we can hopefully say that summer is just around the corner!

I've included a number of articles and one that is specifically geared towards the trot out. Something that we all practice at home before attending a ride, right?

The Spring Meeting brought some changes in our rules once again. Please note that the Limited Distance rides are now following AERC rules for LD Rides with the exception that LD's can be stand alone rides and a AERC Vet is not required. There will be no Year End Awards for Limited Distance. Ride Managers have the option of offering Best Condition, High Vet or Order of Finish at their rides or a Completion prize only. Please visit the AERC website at [www.aerc.org/](http://www.aerc.org/) for the complete Rule Book and other Handbooks/Information. Please note that some of the AERC LD Rules do not apply to ACTRA Year End Awards.

The Ride Schedule has not received any new rides since the last mail/email, so I did not include them in this newsletter. If any new rides are sanctioned a new schedule will be mailed/emailed out.

I know I had more to report/say, but my mind has gone blank (doesn't take much these days!). I hope to see everybody out on the trail this summer and that everybody reaches their own personal goal with their horses!

At the Spring Meeting we forgot to ask if anybody was willing to take on the task of organizing the Year End Banquet for 2009. Any volunteers?



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**I WISH TO REGISTER THE FOLLOWING MOUNT WITH ACTRA (Lifetime Mount Registration Fee \$25.00)**

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BY BECKY HART, © 2008

The purpose of the trot out is to give the veterinarians a chance to examine the horse's gait and look for soundness. A well-executed trot out by the rider or groom will show the horse off to its best advantage. Ideally, the handler is well away from the horse, the horse is on a loose lead and the picture presented is one of efficiency and elegance.

This article is to give riders tips to perfect the trot out. The details in the trot out are every bit as important as the work a rider puts into training, blood analysis, electrolyte preparation and riding ability. A poor trot out can instantly negate all the work put into getting to, riding and finishing a ride.

The purpose of this article is to teach you how to show your horse to the vets in the best possible way—not to sneak a horse through a ride that needs to be pulled. The welfare of the horse is always of primary importance.

The rider or handler tends to be the biggest impediment to showing the horse at its best. Training the person who does the trot out is just as important as training the horse. The most frequent mistakes I see are:

- trotting too slowly
- trotting too fast
- lead rope swinging and pulling the horse's head
- handler's hand pulling the rope and giving appearance of lameness
- lead rope dangling
- handler swinging the lead rope behind him at the horse.

## 12-step trot out program

Trotting out your horse is just part of its regular training program and should be done after almost every training ride. It is an excellent opportunity to see how your horse looks after a long ride and teaches the horse that it must always trot out briskly.

Here is your 12-step program:

1. Square the horse up, at least in front.
2. Face the horse in the direction you will be trotting.
3. Your leading hand is back, under the horse's jaw, or along side the neck.
4. To trot, bring your hand forward. This movement tells the horse it is time to spring into the trot.
5. Look up and ahead. Look where you are going and go there. Do not look at the horse.
6. Stop quickly at the turnaround point.

# TROTting OUT:

## ARRIVAL INDUSTRIAL GEAR

# Arai

& SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES



John Crandell III trots out HH Saba Shams for the Haggin Cup judges at the 2007 Tevis Cup ride. Photo © Cristy Cumberworth, [www.cristyc.smugmug.com](http://www.cristyc.smugmug.com).

## Presenting a complete picture

7. Walk calmly and quietly around the cone, always turning the horse to the right.
8. Count three paces and resume trotting after you have passed the cone.
9. Look up and trot to the veterinarian. Trot at a pace that is comfortable for the horse.

continued on next page

## Fanny Packing

by Pam Thornton

- ✓ If you take a cellular phone on your trail ride, it is best to pack it in your fanny pack, on you, in case you and your horse get separated.
- ✓ Although you may not need to use your cellular phone yourself, you may encounter someone on the trails or in the woods in need of assistance. It may be necessary to ride to the top of a hill to make a call.
- ✓ Make a photocopy of your health card, driver's license, and a list of "who to contact" in case of emergency. Contact names could also include owners of stables where you ride. Have this laminated and keep it in your fanny pack or in the pocket of your riding jacket. Remember to keep it on you — not in your saddlebags.
- ✓ A name tag and phone number on your horse's saddle and bridle could be of benefit to the catchers, if your horse runs off.
- ✓ Your fanny pack should contain a triangular bandage, hoofpick, knife, pen, paper, leather thong for repairs, and a bit of money for a phone call (or for ice cream). A garbage bag takes little space, and can be used as an emergency raincoat by punching a hole in the bottom for your head.

## trotting out ...

10. Stop right in front of the vet. Keep control of the horse all the way to the end. Touch the horse lightly about six inches below the ears on the neck.
11. Step out of the way of the vet during examination. Stay in front of the horse while the vet examines him. Move to the side when the vet is looking at the head.
12. Reward your horse for a job well done.

## What's behind the 12 steps

Now, let's talk about the purpose behind the steps.

**1. Square the horse up.** If one foot is out in front of the other, the horse may stumble over that foot on the first step, giving the vets very good reason to look more closely. Another way to start the trot out is to back two steps (provided there is room). The horse must spring forward right out of the back up. This puts his weight on the hind end and lightens the front.

**2. Face your horse in the direction you will be trotting.** The majority of trot outs are done on a slant or in a crooked line. When the horse is facing the wrong way the handler has to make corrections during

the trot out. If the correction is done abruptly, the horse may appear lame or take a bad step. If a correction must be made, do it over the entire length of the trot out lane. Of course, you will have to be looking up to notice if you are headed for the correct cone.

**3. Place the leading hand under the horse's jaw or alongside the neck.** Using this type of signal works well. If the horse is eager it is easy to hold him by taking the slack out of the lead rope. You can give the horse a little bump under the jaw if it is giving you trouble (this will usually be before the ride).

**4. Swing your hand/arm forward when asking for the trot.** This movement tells the horse it is time to spring into the trot. As you bring the arm forward you can slide your hand down the rope and give

## Lead rope lessons

The lead rope should be folded, never coiled, in your left hand. The end should be in your hand, not dangling down and flopping. The right hand should be up, about even with the horse's nose, with a slack line. Any pull at all from your hand will cause the horse to tip its head towards you—some horses get in the rhythm of the swing and bob their heads towards you, making them appear to be off.

To teach the trot out have one person trot the horse and another use a whip. Take the time to do it right—use two people for training. You may need to tap the horse, or just hit the ground with the whip or make a noise. Be sure the horse will go out and back equally well. Coordinate your efforts, so the horse learns your hand movement is the signal to trot out.

A common fault often seen in a vet check is the rider who tries to hit the horse around his back with the lead rope. This action has several unfortunate consequences, the first being that the horse's head gets pulled toward the handler and cause its hind end to swing away from you, again giving the appearance of lameness. Additionally, the horse appears reluctant to trot out and tired, when it may just be lack of training.

—Becky Hart

the horse some slack. The horse needs to be trained to allow you to be several feet away from him on a loose line.

**5. Look up and ahead.** Look where you are going and go there. Do not look at the horse. The biggest mistake people make in trotting out the horse is looking back at the horse. Staring them in the eyes is the

## Sulfur Sauce

Powdered sulfur- sometimes available in pharmacies in same section with witch hazel and other common chemicals they can legally sell. I've also bought it in bulk at coop or feed stores.

## Vaseline

put amount of vaseline you want to make up in a bowl, start grinding the sulfur powder into the vaseline (back of a spoon works OK), as you get sulfur incorporated into the vaseline keep adding sulfur gradually to get the max sulfur to vaseline ratio you can. Grind and stir until smooth consistency, then put the ointment into a container with a good lid for storage. It will keep for YEARS!

This is anti biotic and anti fungal and is the best thing for treating greasy heels, rain rot, scurffy cannons etc. Just about any skin disorder responds good with slathering this stuff on it, sulfur kills the organisms and vaseline keeps the skin soft and helps heal. It's also extremely cheap to make a bunch, give some to your friends as gifts!

act of a predator, and most horses will not want to move forward. Promise your horse you will never act like a predator by looking back at him in the eyes.

Looking where you are going prevents your horse from stopping since you are not turning to look back at him. When you look back at your horse you lose your straight line and may end up in front of the wrong veterinarian or get in someone's way.

When you look down you can't see where you are going—it's like driving your car and looking at the steering wheel. It also throws your weight forward onto your toes. Your shoulders come forward and you move heavily. Looking up keeps you more balanced.

**6. Stop quickly at the turnaround point.** A slow stop can load the horse's front end and make it look lame. Teach your horse to stop just as nicely as it goes into trot.

The TTEAM method is very effective for training a nice halt: Carry a dressage whip in your left hand. To start the trot, have the stick up under the horse's neck, touching the chest. To trot, sweep the stick forward under the head and face the stick straight ahead. To halt, raise the stick in front of the horse's face and bob it up and down twice, then bring it back under the horse's neck—you can tap (or bop) the horse's chest to remind it to slow down.

Practice this first at the walk so the horse is very familiar with it, and so you coordinate your lead rope hand with the stick. When the horse is accomplished at the walk, then progress into the trot. This should only take a few days.

**7. Walk calmly and quietly around the cone.** Always turn the horse to the right, even if you are trotting the horse from the horse's right side. Tradition and safety dictates that the horse be turned away from the handler. If the horse spooks he won't go over the top of the handler. If you feel your horse needs a correction this is where you will do it—when the horse's body is between you and the vet. Let go of the lead rope with your right hand and give him a slap on the girth area with that hand.

**8. Count three paces after you have passed the cone and resume trotting.** Make sure the horse is completely straight before you trot again. That way you do not ask the horse to trot while it is curving around the cone. Nothing looks worse than a horse who is trotted around the cone or whose walking hind end is trying to catch



Jennifer Miller, DVM, watches Patty Betts trot out her Arabian mare Myah at last year's Lakeview Ranch endurance ride, held near Odessa, Washington. Photo © Karen Kvernes, windphoto@earthlink.net.

up to the trotting front end. Count three full strides from the time you pass the cone and begin trotting again. The vets want a nice view of the trot in a straight line. Get out of your horse's way and show them what they want to see.

**9. Look up at the veterinarian and trot to him/her.** Trot at a pace that is comfortable for the horse. Too slow a pace makes the horse look bad and will accentuate any oddities in the gait. Too fast a pace may look as if you are trying to hide something. Handlers often trot too slowly and it makes the horse look bad.

**10. Stop right in front of the vet.** Keep control of the horse all the way to the end, and make a nice stop. Many handlers give up about 10 feet in front of the vet. They let the horse wander, or scratch or butt its head into someone. This is rude behavior and must not be allowed. Would you trot

up to the vet and scratch your armpits? Do you head-butt the vet? One hopes not. Once the horse has stopped, move away from the horse. No cuddling its head, rubbing, etc.

Touch the horse lightly about six inches below the ears on the neck as you approach the vet. This is a reflex place and will cause the horse to prick its ears briefly. If the horse has good expression and is alert, you don't need to do this. If your horse is sour-eared give him a light touch.

**11. Step out of the way of the vet.** Stand to one side while the vet examines the head. Visualize your own heart rate falling—conjure up a mental image of a heart beating and see the beating getting slower and slower. Keep 75% of your focus on you and your slowing heartbeat. The other 25% of your focus is making sure your horse is standing quietly.

During the rest of the exam, continue standing in front of the horse. Keep your hands off the horse while the vet is doing the exam.

**12. Reward your horse for a job well done.** Once the veterinarian has finished the exam, let your horse know he has done a good job with a pat or a kind word.

## Conclusion

The techniques explained in this article are the same ones used at the recent USEF East and West training sessions. A good trot out is a good trot out—whether in a local ride, big ride or international ride. ♦

## Electrolyte Cookie Recipe

2 Cups Sweet Feed

½ Cup Applesauce

1/3 Cup Molasses

1 Cup Coarsely Chopped Carrots

2 Cups Quaker Oats

1/3 Cup Oil

1 tsp Cornstarch

6 scoops Perform 'n Win Electrolytes (one big cookie = ½ dose electrolytes)

Mix all together.

Pack the "dough" in tight, hamburger patty size balls. Flatten slightly and bake on a cookie sheet for ½ hour at 350 degrees F.

# What word gets riders in trouble? Over!

Is your endurance horse over fed? Over trailered? Over supplemented? Over worked? Get over it, and take care of your horse

**O**vertrained. Over ridden. Over fed. Over electrolyted. Over heated. Over supplemented. Over worked. Over trailered.

Over—that's the word that gets many horses and riders in trouble.

You, as a rider, must decide whether you want to be a "front runner" or "finisher." The workload for both horse and rider increases dramatically with speed. The necessity for preparation to attempt consistent top ten placings increases exponentially. A front runner needs planning, a crew, and a great horse. Finishers need less planning, maybe no crew and a sound, healthy horse.

Competitive desire can be an asset, but if not managed well, can be dangerous. The desire to be a front runner can lead to unsafe actions, in attempting to make a good horse great. Let's look at these "overs" and see if there are ways to avoid them.

**Over trained.** A general rule is that the rider needs more training and the horse needs less. The horse is a natural athlete that has relied on his innate ability to escape danger for thousands of years. While some conditioning is required for our horses, it is important to remember that they are already athletes that can negotiate a trail effectively.

You, the rider, do not usually possess the natural athleticism of horses. Humans have relied on mental capacity to anticipate, avoid and escape danger, at the expense of athleticism. Spend time doing strength training, flexibility exercises and endurance exercise, to achieve a level of athleticism approaching that of your horse, rather than over training the horse and risking unnecessary wear and tear on him.

Front runners are usually very athletic riders, capable of balanced and efficient riding that helps their horses conserve energy and maximize performance. Avoid the pitfall of trying to "train and train" to improve your horse's performance—at some point, you begin to wear down the horse's condition. Continued training cannot improve a horse's performance above that of his genetic potential—it will simply lead to destruction of the horse's physical ability. Improve your own athletic ability, and that will improve your horse's performance.

**Over ridden.** The combination of horse sweat and competitive drive can be deadly.

Listen to your horse, feel his rhythm and impulsion. Carefully observe his recovery parameters. Get to know him well in training, so that you can interpret his signals in competition. It is far too easy to explain away things like lack of appetite on competition day as just due to excitement, when maybe decreased appetite is a signal your horse is being ridden beyond his ability.

It is important that you are able to rate your horse's pace, and he doesn't get caught up staying with horses that may be able to work faster than his capability that day. It is also important that you realize your own capability in competition—if you are exhausted, you drastically increase your horse's workload, and you may make critical judgment errors that can lead to over riding your horse.

**Over fed.** While horses should have good body condition and adequate body fat to provide energy sources, they should not be obese. Obesity leads to increased workload and decreased heat dissipation, both of which contribute to exhaustion. In addition, occasionally riders or crew will feed far more foodstuffs than horses are accustomed to, in an attempt to provide extra energy the day of competition.

Remember that horses can be adversely affected by abrupt changes in feed, both quantity and type. Accustom horses at home to eating beet pulp, alfalfa and other energy sources that will be available on competition day.

**Over electrolyted.** More is not always better. Tailor electrolyte usage to the conditions of the day. Heat and humidity lead to increased water and electrolyte losses in sweat, and necessitate more replenishment than cool, dry conditions. Make sure that your electrolytes are absorbable and complete. Consider a buffered formulation to decrease oral or gastric irritation from the salts.

Be familiar with their use during training rides (what?! you think horses only sweat on competitive rides?). Be aware of your horse's water intake and correlate that with electrolyte administration. Bottom line: Be familiar with why and how electrolytes are to be used.

**Over heated.** Some horses are not,

repeat not, good hot weather performers. Heavy muscle mass, thick skin, thick hair coat, inefficient sweating, even dark coloration can decrease heat accommodation. Some horses simply cannot work fast and hard in hot conditions. If your horse has trouble in hot, humid conditions, then be aware that you must slow down, as well as maximize cooling techniques, to prevent early fatigue or exhaustion. You may have to settle for slower ride times to get that particular horse through rides in those conditions.

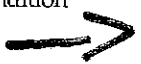
**Over supplemented.** Many riders/owners use many unnecessary supplements and additives in an attempt to improve performance. Ask your veterinarian about content and concentrations of supplements. Question label directions—remember that the manufacturer is trying to sell a lot of the product. Caution: Supplements may contain substances that are not allowed in endurance competition!

**Over worked.** Big rider, small horse, too fast / poor rider, uncooperative horse—all are combinations that lead to over work. Attempting to use an unsuitable horse for endurance can lead to overwork for the horse, particularly if behavior problems result in energy wasting, such as a horse running sideways, head tossing or rearing. Proper preparation for endurance involves selection and training of an appropriate horse for that rider.

**Over trailered.** Traveling too far, too fast, when it's too hot, too humid and too dusty is too stressful. Decrease dust and particulate matter in the trailer as much as possible to protect the respiratory system from irritation. Use fly masks to protect the horse's eyes from swirling dust and hay.

Plan trailering so that there is adequate rest time for the horse, and adequate time for drinking. For long trips, plan time to unload and hand walk the horse a bit. Graze the horse if you can be sure that the available grass hasn't been treated with dangerous chemicals.

Arrive at the competition site with plenty of time for your horse to rehydrate and recover from the trailering stress. Studies have demonstrated that many horses are dehydrated and showing evidence of muscle damage at the beginning of rides due to trailering. Optimal management of transportation can result in a well rested horse in good condition to begin the rigors of a competition.



## Over? Get over it

For success in endurance riding, you need a sound, willing horse that is well conditioned and well trained. Make sure your horse is suited for the sport, and fit. Make sure you are fit, and have realistic goals and aspirations for the sport. Begin endurance as a finisher, and gain the experience and knowledge to be successful before deciding whether to be a front runner.

Do not "over" your horse. Horses are kind and unselfish creatures that are susceptible to humans that "over" them. Don't be an "over" rider, trainer or owner. Have safe fun on the trails with your equine partner. ✦

### Rider Checklists by Keith Hosman

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I'm going to give you three "Rider Checklists" today. Together they'll keep you safer and accelerate your training to boot. They'll keep you rational; they'll keep you from "losing it" which has the effect of setting your training back. The fact is, when we don't have an objective means of approaching our training, when we simply "ride", reacting emotionally to what's happening, we're asking for a wreck or at the very least, a bad day. The horse gets confused and we get frustrated or lose our temper. Not an environment conducive to a proper education, would you say? Each of the following lists will cover small things you can simply check off in your brain. Basically, has something happened or not? If the answer is "not", I'll tell you what to do. Your answers to those questions will, flowchart like, tell you how to act in the moment or how best to form your day's game plan. The lists were created to be done in order.

#### **Checklist One: How To Keep From Totally Losing It**

Back when you're approaching the barn, ask yourself one easy question "Am I training today or am I joyriding?" If you answer training, skip to Checklist Two. If you answered "Uh, I'd like a day off from training please. I got a horse to have FUN, Mr Wet Blanket Trainer Man"- that's great too. It's great as long as you can honestly say that not

once in the last few days or months have you turned to a friend and said something akin to "Flicka nearly bucked my teeth out back there" or "This (expletive deleted) horse keeps trying to eat grass. What's the number for the tiger sanctuary?" If there are no issues, then it doesn't matter where you ride (trail or arena), the fact is, you need to be training as opposed to joyriding.

At clinic after clinic I get a version of the same question: "I'm out on the trail. On a cliff. With a ten thousand foot drop to my right and cactus on the left. My horse hates plastic bags - but one blows by and he freaks. What do I do?" To which I answer something akin to "Say your prayers!" See, training is not a widget that you carry in your back pocket and pull out like a parachute when the plane goes down. It's about practice and preparation. Ignoring warning signs and riding into potential disaster is like eating a cake every night and suddenly freaking when the scale reads 300 pounds.

If riding your horse has become an aggravation or something that - even at times - frightens you, then you gotta answer "training" until riding is fun again. Following this simple thought process will have a bigger impact than if I told you to specifically do a, b, or c - because there are trillions of horse/rider combinations and situations that might be described. So, with a nod to the ol' John Lyons axiom "Ride Where You Can, Not Where You Can't", we'll consciously pick a reasonably safe place to do our training and get at it.

Example One: Is your horse jiggy? Then you need to capture his attention by improving his performance. How do you do that? By being a proactive rider. Keep giving the horse something to do. Make his spin enough plates and he'll hand you control.

Example Two: Does your horse keep munching grass? Then develop a zero tolerance policy toward any resistance on the part of your horse. Be on the lookout for resistance in the form of a stiff neck or a horse that won't move forward when asked. Don't

wait till his head's on the ground. Test constantly and the instant you feel resistance, correct the situation. If you feel an ounce of stiffness in the neck, apply pressure and get the horse moving till he relaxes, then you relax. Teach the horse that the way to get you out of his mouth is to stay soft and obliging.

The answer is the same if he drops to a speed you didn't ask for. Be ready with a good kick and swift reward. If you just thought to yourself "That's what I do and it doesn't work" then what's happening is that you're keeping pressure on the horse's mouth all the time (example one) or kicking all the time (example two). The horse has learned "I get punished no matter what I do so I might as well do what I wanna do." Learn to be more aware of when you're applying pressure. It doesn't matter what you think you're doing, your horse's actions tell a different story.

### **Checklist Two: The Best Advice I Will Ever Give You**

Emotion is a wonderful thing when the sensation you're experiencing is "elation" but it's a total bummer when you're feeling "anger" or "frustration". In that respect riding can be truly feast or famine. I'll explain. As rider/trainers we've got great days and we've got "blech" days. A blech day happens when we allow our emotions to creep into our training. The horse doesn't get it or just doesn't give a darn and we get angry. That's bad mojo there - because what happens is that anger causes us to let go of the reins not when the horse simply gives to pressure - but after we've "really mad our point". Or to give them an extra kick after they've sped up to "really teach them not to slow down". Things go from bad to worse and we walk back to the barn dejected. We spend the rest of the day depressed or wondering what we're doing with a horse in the first place.

But you can have a great day every day! A great day is any day that we make an improvement, however small, and keep our negative emotions in check. Doing so will keep you and your horse on the same page and build a positive relationship. Get busy with

your training and react objectively to any roadblock your horse (or nature) might erect and you'll find yourself enjoying the heck out of riding that day.

So Checklist Two only has one question on it: Are you keeping things objective or letting negative emotion creep into your reactions? Notice the word "reactions" in that last sentence. Becoming emotional puts you in a position of reacting rather than being proactive. That's a downhill slide. The horse misunderstands something and you react by jerking the reins. The horse reacts to that by bracing and stiffening up. Break this cycle: Every so often as you ride, take stock of the situation. Are you staying calm and methodical? Are you trying your level best to break things down into their simplest form? Or are you beginning to blame the horse? Blaming the horse is a pretty good sign we're not being rational. Get off and walk around, cool out. Ask yourself if you couldn't break down your lesson even more. Then give it another shot. The single best advice I can ever give you in the world of horse training comes into play right here: No matter what your horse (or the day) throws at you, learn to find joy in it. Short of getting kicked in the head, you've got to react to your horse's reaction by smiling and telling yourself two things. One, your horse has given you a gift; he's told you exactly what you need to work on. No more wondering "What do I do today"? He's told you. Two, well, there is no "two". Go back and re-read number one. It all boils down to this: Approaching your riding with "We're going to do what I want to do" is asking for trouble. Riding with the attitude of "Horse, what would you like to work on?" will keep you forever in a positive frame of mind. You will enjoy your horse's company; he will enjoy yours.

### **Checklist Three: When Can I Get Medieval On Ol'Dobber?**

Whether you're leading, feeding, roundpenning, riding or just hanging out with your horse, there should always be "two versions of you" out there with the horse. One of you is Dr. Jekyll the other, Mr Hyde. Dr



Jekyll is the nice guy, the one who everybody loves, the life of the party. He's patient, easy going, fun and kind. Still, nobody messes with him. Why? Because of his close relationship with Mr Hyde. Mess with Jekyll and Hyde comes out of nowhere, delivering his punishment and then vanishing in an instant.

Now, let's not take this analogy to an extreme. Nobody's suggesting that you get all medieval on your horse. But what I like is the idea of staying cool the bulk of the time and meting out punishment quickly, a reprimand served cold, sans emotion.

But is punishment even called for most of the times? More often than not, no. Can we simply stipulate here then, that smacking your horse unnecessarily is just asking for trouble? We must because it's more than that. Being "rude or disrespectful" isn't winning any points either. There are two ways to quickly lose your horse's respect: 1) smacking them randomly for no good reason and 2) Not dealing instantly with their disrespect. Be consistent on those two matters and you'll be fine. Slack off and you'll have a brat that you can't take to a restaurant and who mouths off at family get together's.

If you find yourself going around in circles, so to speak, and your horse just "ain't getting it", begin by asking yourself "Have I kept things business like and kept emotion out of this?" "Can I break the lesson down to make it even simpler", as outlined in checklist two? If you can honestly say "yes and yes" then next ask this: Do I have a horse that is trying at this moment or not? If you're asking and your horse is trying, then no punishment is called for. Not ever. I'll type that again, because it's just that important: If the answer is "He is trying" then you cannot punish whether he's doing what you expect or not. I define "punish" as any sort of punitive action such as yanking the reins, spurring, screaming obscenities, etc. If he's trying, you keep asking until he finally stumbles upon the answer or you find another way to ask. Patience is the rule here. Smile: your horse is teaching you to be a better trainer. Have fun:

He can only go 6 directions (up, down, left, right, etc.) so we know he'll get it sooner or later if we stay consistent. And keep Dr J locked up.

Questions and answers have led us to "He ain't trying and a reprimand is called for" then try making the "wrong thing uncomfortable and the right thing comfortable" as Clinton Anderson likes to say. Apply more motivation in the form of speeding the horse up, changing the angle of your rein or asking for a different movement entirely. A classic example would be the horse who won't back up or the horse that won't move his shoulders. Rather than getting into an argument, we ask for something entirely different like asking him to disengage his hips. Above all keep this in mind: your horse is going to make great sport out of throwing roadblocks out in front of you. You can win the day by finding pleasure in successfully dodging them!

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## Homemade Horse Remedies

### Mane & Tail Detangler

Mix Calgon Bath Oil Beads (dry) with water (one part Calgon to three parts water). Store in a spray bottle. It will help recondition horses mane and tails and works well on knots and tangles.

### Homemade Showsheen

1/4 cup Human Hair Conditioner

1/4 cup Baby Oil

2 Tbsp Vinegar (repels flies)

1/4 cup Water

Mix into a spray bottle and apply.

### Cool Down Bath

Mix one cup of vinegar in a gallon of water and use it as an after work out cool down bath and liniment.

Anybody have any more recipes they would like to share?

# ACTRA Spring 2009 Meeting

April 19<sup>th</sup>, Sobeys, Truro

Members in attendance:

Donna Munn, Donna Lee Cole, Pat Rideout, Russalyn Dyke, Dave Dyke, Elliott Bridges, Jean Bridges, April Haliburton, Lynn Beezley, Pam Throton, Pam Rutage, Elwood Munrow, Lucy Rudge, Deanna Johnston, Kaaren Lebert, Steve, + 1 (can't read the name...)

Meeting called to order by Deanna at 13:15

Minutes from 2008 Fall meeting read by Bev, motion to accept made by Lucy, seconded by Pat, carried.

## Committee Reports:

- Financial Report offered by Pat
  - o ACTRA has \$5712 in bank
  - o Insurance is paid for 2009
  - o Bob Gielen has not received his Malaysia financial support monies from ACTRA as of yet
  - o Motion to accept as presented made by Bev, seconded by Russalyn, carried
- CaLDRA Report offered by Donna
  - o ACTRA's 2009 membership has been paid
  - o There is a new CaLDRA website [www.caldra.ca](http://www.caldra.ca)
    - It is for members only
    - User only screen name is "member"
    - Password is "paid-up"
  - o The 2008 Rule Book was utilized at the National Championships with good reviews
  - o Motion to accept report made by Bev, seconded by April, carried
- Public Relations Report offered by Lynn
  - o 2009 subscriptions for Horse and Pony has been sent in
  - o ACTRA ride schedule is on Atlantic Rider
  - o Current ACTRA website has been updated
  - o Members ride photos can be sent to Lynn or Karen Murray
  - o Jean Bridges has spoken about Distance Riding in Hartland, NB

- Motion to accept the rules as presented made by Russalyn, seconded by Bev, carried.
- Sanctioning Report offered by Donna
  - There are 6 LD's, 2 CTR's, 2 IDR's and 3 JP's currently sanctioned for 2009
  - Motion to accept made by Bev, seconded by Lucy, carried.
- Newsletter Report offered by Bev
  - Bev has emailed members to ask their opinion of the e-newsletter
  - First hardcopy of the newsletter cost \$70
  - Motion to accept report made by Pat, seconded by Donna, accepted
- Rules Report offered by Donna
  - Eric has presented a draft Rule Book
  - Current rule book is very outdated
  - Round table discussion re: current rule book
  - Committee struck of Donna, Pat, Eric, and Bev to modify the ECTRA rule book for ACTRA.
  - ACTRA would like to thank Eric for all his hard work in presenting the draft Rule Book
  - Motion to accept made by Bev, seconded by Pat, carried
- Volunteer Report offered by Lucy
  - There will be volunteer forms available at rides for the Volunteer Program
  - Motion to accept report made by Bev, seconded by Kaaren carried

#### Old Business:

- Insurance Waivers
  - Donna will obtain new insurance waivers from Sylvia to add to ride packages.
- LD Rules for Standardized Procedures
  - Round table discussion about the proposed changes to LD Rules
  - Pat made a motion "LD Rides revert to AERC rules and that the new LD Rules for Standardized Procedures not be adopted" Seconded by Kaaren. Motion carried, one opposed
- Ride Review Sheets
  - Bev is continuing to work on these sheets

## New Business:

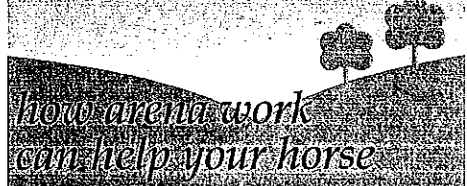
- Public Relations
  - o Lynn would like to develop a strategic plan for ACTRA
  - o Discussion about the importance of new riders
  - o Discussion about the development of a one day Educational Training Ride
  - o Lynn has been in contact with Can-Am
    - Committee to be developed for 2010 Can-Am's
  - o Discussed using current ACTRA website for promoting ACTRA
- Bev made a motion that "ACTRA will subsidize veterinary costs for ACTRA sanctioned rides of CTR/IDR or ER/LD rides, for the 2009/10 season, at the cost of \$200/day. Rides must be held on the same day (not on separate days), and paperwork and sanctioning fees must be submitted within two weeks before the Ride will be eligible to receive reimbursement" Seconded by Lucy, carried.
- Pat noted that ACTRA received a donation from Dr Ackerman. A thank you has been sent to him.
- Nominations were held for the ninth BOD position
  - o Bev nominated Kaaren Lebert, seconded by April, accepted
  - o Russalyn nominated Pam Thorton, declined
  - o Russalyn nominated Pam Snow, declined
  - o Kaaren elected as Director at Large
- Breed Awards
  - o Bev noted that several breed awards have not been utilized for the past several years
  - o General discussion
    - Awards will remain as standing
- Jean requested that the membership think about IDR and JP rides be changed to reflect mileage rides only

Motion to adjourn made by Dave Dyke, seconded by Pam Thorton.

Meeting adjourned at 15:15

Minutes submitted by Donna Lee Cole

# DRESSAGE on the trail



by Donna Snyder-Smith

If your idea of heaven is trotting through the woods and up and down hills, you're probably a dyed-in-the-wool trail rider and wouldn't be caught dead wearing a black jacket and white breeches and riding your horse in a ring surrounded by a foot-high fence and big letters. However that doesn't mean that dressage has no value for you and your horse, especially when you compare the attributes of a good trail horse and a good dressage horse on this page.

Judging from this list, it would seem that good trail horses and dressage horses have a lot in common. That's because in its purest form dressage is not a competition but a training method. It helps the horse regain all of his natural unencumbered balance, suspension and elasticity of steps through the use of supplying, engaging, strengthening and straightening exercises.

Dressage training teaches a horse to move more efficiently when carrying a rider by "rounding up." As a horse strengthens the muscles in the neck, back and croup, he is able to flex at the poll, lift his back, shift more weight to the hindquarters and step more underneath himself. This prevents excessive concussion on the front legs, so horses stay sound longer and are less subject to injury and arthritis as they age. As an added bonus, dressage enhances a horse's natural beauty by encouraging him to relax his head and neck and stretch into a graceful arch.

Pleasure riders as well as endurance riders can benefit from this training. The only difference is the length of time a horse is ridden, the amount of conditioning required and the speed at which a course is covered. All horses that spend time on the trail must meet and handle the dynamics of topography and footing. These elements ask balance and strength questions of the horse that he must be able to answer successfully if he is to maintain his soundness over the miles and years and succeed in competitive situations.

## Benefits of cross-training

AERC member Steve Rojek and his wife Dinah, who have represented the U.S. in multiple Pan American and World Championships, take dressage lessons three times a week with Robin Groves and Jane Ashley. "Allowing a horse to run over a 100-mile course on the forehand is unfair and will only serve to shorten his competitive career," says Rojek. "That's why Dinah and I feel very strongly that dressage is a great way to cross train for the sport of endurance riding. Encouraging the horse to move forward with suppleness, straightness and self-carriage can

### Trail horse

- Calm, responsive, obedient
- Able to move out when asked
- Able to slow the gait when asked
- Stops obediently and stands still until asked to move off
- Works in a relaxed manner
- Should be a pleasurable ride
- Needs to be balanced to avoid excessive concussion on front end
- Suppleness and obedience makes the horse much more fun and comfortable to ride

only be to his advantage while traveling over the trail. We are always seeking those moments of true balance, half-halting by inviting the horse to work from his hindquarters. The endurance ride is the test to see if the horse can maintain this balance at all gaits over the long haul."

### Keep it simple

When considering dressage training for your trail horse, you needn't get fancy. Stick with the basics. Ask for energetic but calm, forward movement that is balanced, and strive for lateral and longitudinal suppleness from the horse from nose to tail. Ask for prompt responses to both upward and downward transition aids. If you work regularly and diligently on these simple things, you can't help but improve your horse. If you are uncertain how to get your horse balanced and supple, take some dressage lessons.

Ever get caught behind a slow horse on a single track trail and have your horse fuss and fume as you pull on the reins in an attempt to keep him from running into the horse in front of you? Dressage training can help you can solve this problem and keep your horse from getting kicked. First, you have to evaluate your horse's

balance and pay attention to the tempo of his gait. Then you can learn to shorten his stride length without changing the gait tempo and how to do it with subtle rein, leg and seat aids without having to resort to pulling on the reins.

One of the easiest ways to evaluate balance in a horse is to pay attention to the tempo of the horse's gait. Every time a horse loses his balance, the tempo of his gait will alter—sometimes subtly and sometimes radically. If it is hard for you to determine when your horse changes his tempo, try riding to music or buy an electronic metronome at your local music

### Dressage horse

- Calm, responsive, obedient
- Able to extend all gaits when asked
- Able to collect the gaits
- Stands squarely and quietly until asked to move off
- Works in a relaxed, rounded outline
- The correct frame makes them easier to sit and control
- The goal is to be balanced and light in all movements
- Objective is to be supple and obedient to rider's aids

store. Put it in your arena and practice riding your daily exercise routine to different settings: the four-beat walk, two-beat trot and three-beat canter.

Of course not all horses will move at the same tempo at each gait. Some will tend to have a quick tempo to their footfalls and others will have a slower tempo, so you may need to play around with your new toy until you can find the tempo setting that seems to click right in to your horse's movement. Keep in mind that a horse with a very quick tempo is often rushing and out of balance.

Then work your horse through various school figures—circles, serpentines, half-circles, transitions, etc.—and pay close attention to using the balancing aids of half-halt and the activating leg to steady or slow your horse's tempo. A half-halt is a momentary rebalancing of your horse that encourages his hindlegs to step further underneath his body and lightens the load on his front legs. It is used to prepare a horse for a change in direction, position or tempo. Simply drive your horse forward by closing your legs and pushing with your seat and the moment you feel

*continued on next page*

## dressage on the trail . . .

his energy, contain it by closing your hands on the reins.

Riding school figures accurately, while combining them together into gymnastic patterns, teaches your horse to balance himself. For instance, you might ask for a serpentine at the trot, cue your horse for a canter when he reaches the rail and then midway down the rail ask for a circle. However that means you'll have to think through the demands each exercise calls for and how one exercise might be blended with another to enhance your horse's strengths or strengthen his weaknesses. It will take time, thought and practice, just like it would take you time to build various muscle groups so you could perform at a favorite sport without injury and with more grace, power and ease.

You can also use cavalletti (simple poles on the ground) to teach a horse to alter his stride length without changing the gait tempo (see sidebar below). "Doing cavalletti work is a great way to encourage the horse to lift and strengthen his shoulders," says Rojek. "It's another bit of cross training that the horse can call upon when the going gets tough."

When you can shorten (collect) and lengthen (extend) your horse's stride fluidly at the walk, trot and canter without loss of tempo, you have effectively taught your horse how to cover ground more efficiently. You've also been training him to be more obedient and contain his physical energy without breaking gait, or letting his stride becoming tense and choppy.

As you teach your horse to shorten and lengthen his stride, you will also want to introduce basic lateral work, which asks the horse to move his legs on a diagonal as well as a forward path. Exercises such as shoulder-fore, shoulder-in and leg yield prepare the horse to comfortably accept and carry more of his body weight and the weight of his rider on his rear legs. Lateral work stretches and strengthens the tendons, ligaments and muscles of the legs and the supporting muscle groups in the body. It does this by putting the horse into physical postures which require he "bench press" a part of his own body weight upward by flexing the various major joints in his limbs as he travels. Again, this is just like working out in a strength training program at your gym.

If you want more in-depth information about how to ride the various exercises to the greatest advantage, the following books are recommended: *The All Around Horse and Rider* by Donna Snyder-Smith (Howell), *The Athletic Development of the Dressage Horse—Manège Patterns* by Charles de Kunffy (Howell) and *101 Arena Exercises* by Cherry Hill (Storey).

Happy, healthy and successful trail riding to all and just for fun, sometime after you cross a finish line, smile, halt squarely in front of the vet and salute! ✦

*This article was originally published in the February/March 2004 issue of Arabian Horse Magazine.*

*Donna Snyder-Smith is a master biomechanics coach, with 40 years experience, who works primarily with amateur adult riders and their horses in a variety of disciplines. She offers five-day "learning vacation" clinics in California. More information about her clinics and books can be found on her website at [www.donnasnydersmith.com](http://www.donnasnydersmith.com).*

*AHA is a 42,000 member equine association that registers and maintains a database of more than 1,000,000 Arabian, half-Arabian and Anglo-Arabian horses. It offers more than \$100,000 in prize money to regional and national distance ride top finishers and activities and programs to recognize endurance, competitive and recreational riders. Call 303-696-4500, e-mail [info@ArabianHorses.org](mailto:info@ArabianHorses.org) or visit [www.ArabianHorses.org](http://www.ArabianHorses.org) for information.*

## Using cavalletti as a gymnastic training system

To think of cavalletti as a training tool only for hunters and jumpers is to shortchange your horse's workout program. The list of what can be done using cavalletti and the disciplines it can help is nearly endless. Ground poles, as they are sometimes called, can be used for:

- Improving balance
- Improving tempo and rhythm
- Improving articulation of all of the joints of the legs (because the work makes a horse more attentive to where he is placing his feet)
- Increasing the muscle strength of the back
- Loosening the hips and mobilizing the shoulders
- Increasing thrusting power
- Altering stride length
- Creating a better jumping bascule

When working over cavalletti, you want to keep your horse calm but also require him to move in an active manner. Any mental or physical tension in your horse hinders his ability to move well. Work over cavalletti is all about relaxed, forward movement, so your horse can learn to adjust his body quickly and invisibly to accomplish a variety of athletic maneuvers using the most efficient muscle groups.

When incorporating cavalletti exercises into your training program, start simply, putting one pole on the ground and asking your horse to walk over it repeatedly until he does it quietly, as though it were no big deal. From there you can add additional poles, one at a time, until you have six, allowing your horse to become comfortable with what you are asking him to do each time you add another pole, until he is negotiating all six poles quietly at a walk. Then start again, this time trotting over two poles, working up to six in a row.

Finally you can add work in a canter, but again, begin with one pole and

only add additional ones when your horse no longer makes any extra fuss or effort when cantering over a single pole on the ground. When working through the various cavalletti exercises, the distances between the poles must be adjusted for the horse's gait and speed, and also for your horse's stride length; a 17-hand Thoroughbred should not be expected to have the same trotting stride as a 14.2-hand pony.

The distance between poles will also be decided by what you wish to teach the horse. If you wish to collect his stride, begin with a distance the horse finds comfortable to manage and gradually shorten the distance between the poles over several weeks. If, on the other hand, you wish to teach your horse to lengthen his stride, gradually increase the distance between the cavalletti. When the horse is familiar and comfortable with poles on the ground, you can graduate to true cavalletti, which offer three height settings. The lower two can be practiced at a walk or a trot, and the highest is reserved for cantering work. Cavalletti poles are generally 12 feet long, but can be modified to as short as six feet in length.

### Some rules about cavalletti

1. Don't scare your horse by riding him into a long line of poles the very first time you work him over cavalletti.
2. If you use poles on the ground, be sure they are secured so they will not roll if your horse steps on them.
3. Adjust the distances between the poles to your horse's stride length.
4. Use "wings," if necessary, to help you funnel your horse through the cavalletti without having to do a lot of pulling on his mouth.
5. Splint boots and possibly bell boots (for young, unbalanced horses) should be used to protect your horse's legs when working over cavalletti.

*Excerpted from the book, The All-Around Horse & Rider, by Donna Snyder-Smith, published by Howell Book House.*



# 2009 RULES & REGULATIONS



(Unabridged – sized for your pocket or saddlebag!)

## LIMITED DISTANCE RULES

The following AERC rules apply to limited distance only. For rides of 50 miles and over see AERC Endurance Ride Rules.

**L1. Limited Distance rides must be at least 25 miles but not exceed 35 miles in length. These rides must be sanctioned into the Limited Distance Program and held in conjunction with or within an adjacent 24 hour time period of an AERC Sanctioned Endurance Ride.**

**L1.1 Mileage must be a multiple of 5, ending in 0 or 5, whichever is the nearest whole number to the actual ride mileage (e.g. 22.4 = 20 miles, 22.5 = 25 miles.)**

**L1.2 Limited Distance rides which are sanctioned for more than one distance (such as a 25 and a 35 held over the same course at the same time) have the option of allowing a rider to "elevate" from one ride distance into the other, subject to the following restrictions: The rider may only elevate from a shorter distance to a longer distance; the rider may only elevate once; upon elevating, the rider is no longer considered a starter or a finisher in the shorter ride.**

**L1.2.1 Elevator rides must be indicated on the sanction application and advertised as such.**

**L1.2.2 The rider must state which distance he will enter, if a multiple mileage ride; e.g. 25 mile, 20 mile, or 35 mile.**

**L1.2.3 A rider who elevates is eligible for completion only.**

**L1.2.4 If starting times are not the same, elevating riders must have the time limits of Rule 5 applied to their original ride's starting time.**

**L1.2.5 A Limited Distance rider may elevate to the lowest Endurance distance (in sanctioned elevator rides) for completion only, if the equine is 60 months old or older.**

**L1.2.6 A rider may not elevate from any ride sanctioned for less than 25 miles.**

**L1.2.7 In order for a rider to elevate, the equine he is riding must meet the age requirements for the distance he is elevating into as stated in rule #3 and L3.**

**L1.3 The sanctioned ride mileage(s) cannot be changed later than 90 days before the ride: points and miles will be awarded according to the mileage for which the ride is sanctioned (see rule 11).**

**L1.3.1 An exception to the policy is the case where an emergency forces a last minute trail change, in which case points and mileage are awarded according to the actual mileage reported to the AERC.**

**L1.3.2 A change in mileage and/or ride results certified by AERC may be mandated by the Protest and Grievance Committee or the Board.**

**L1.4 Limited Distance rides must be regulated by the AERC Limited Distance Ride Rules.**

**L1.4.1 Limited Distance competitors must be offered a separate and specific briefing on the special features and requirements of Limited Distance Rides.**

**L2. The equines must be under the control of control judge(s) experienced with equines or endurance rides.**

**L2.1 The ride must employ at least one control judge whose services will be exclusive to that event pre-ride, during the ride, and post-ride. At least one control judge must be at the ride site for at least one hour after the last equine crosses the finish line or has returned to camp.**

**L2.1.1 The AERC Ride Manager's Handbook and the AERC Control Judge's Handbook must be provided to the control judges prior to the ride.**

**L2.1.2 Control judges are veterinarians employed by ride management to monitor the equines and counsel riders and ride management on equine welfare as well as to uphold the AERC rules. Control judges are persons that have**

graduated with a Degree in Veterinary Medicine from an institution of recognized standing. A control judge will provide judgment as to an equine's ability to remain in competition. Control judges are not to provide a diagnosis and will refer equines identified as requiring diagnostics to a veterinarian legally licensed to practice. A control judge who is also a veterinarian legally licensed to practice may perform concurrent duties outside the role of control judge such as providing a diagnosis and/or medical treatment. A control judge must be an AERC member, either as a regular member or as a control judge member. A veterinarian supplying treatment only is not required to be an AERC member.

**L2.1.3 A veterinarian who is serving as a ride manager of an AERC sanctioned event is prohibited from serving that same event as a control judge.**

**L2.1.4 Each equine will receive a substantive physical examination of metabolic and mechanical parameters before the ride, at a minimum of one control checkpoint located at or near the halfway point of the ride, and after the ride. All control points for limited distance rides must incorporate gate into hold criteria. Control checkpoints are mandatory during the course of all limited distance rides. All AERC sanctioned rides must use an AERC approved rider card for the control judge(s) to record the results of their examinations.**

**L2.1.5 The control judges' decisions regarding disqualification must be final and ride management must stand behind the control judges' decisions.**

**L2.1.5.1 A Ride Manager may not overrule a control judge's decision on a judging matter.**

**L2.1.5.2 Equines disqualified by the control judges must not continue on. This practice by a rider is considered grounds for barring that rider from future rides.**

**L2.1.5.3 The rider/owner of an equine disqualified by a control judge should be notified immediately by that control judge or the ride manager.**

**L2.1.6 Management must be confident that there is complete understanding with the control judge(s) regarding P&R criteria, any other disqualification criteria, and particularly post-ride criteria for completion.**

**L2.1.6.1 The setting of judging parameters, including but not limited to pulse and respiration, shall be determined by the head control judge. Since the ambient conditions are of prime concern in the setting of parameters, these parameters should not be finalized more than 24 hours prior to ride start.**

**L2.1.7 All control checkpoints must be staffed by a control judge who will**

provide the required control. The type of checkpoint and duration of the hold will, in all cases, be designated by the head control judge. It is recommended that all checkpoints be of the "gate into a hold" type.

**L2.1.8** Equines that are treated or die at rides shall be reported on a form with ride results to be completed by the control judge and submitted with ride results. This information will be kept permanently on file at the AERC office.

### **L3. The ride must be open to any breed or type of equine.**

**L3.1** Equines must be at least 48 months old at the time of the ride.

**L3.1.1** Age is figured from actual date of birth. In cases of no papers on an equine, a control judge's opinion and discretion must prevail.

**L3.2** Rides may limit the number of competitors provided that prior publicity states the limitation and that all spaces and vacancies are filled on a first come, first served basis.

**L3.3** An equine which constitutes a clear danger to other equines and/or persons may be disqualified at any time from competition by the ride manager or control judge.

### **L4. Entry to a ride may be refused for cause, however:**

**L4.1** Entry may not be denied if to do so would violate Federal and State civil rights laws.

**L4.2** Entry may not be denied if the sole purpose is to intentionally provide an unfair competitive advantage to one rider over another.

**L5. The ride must provide a specific amount of time (total competition time) which will include all stops and holds, and within which competitors must complete the ride to qualify for placing or completion.**

**L5.1** There may be no minimum time limit for completion.

**L5.2** Completion time will be according to the Limited Distance chart in Appendix A.

**L5.3** Riding time is the time used by competitors to complete the course and reach criteria, excluding all hold times. This is the time used for AERC ride results.

**L5.4** At the finish ride time of the competitor continues until a preset judging criteria of 60 heartbeats per minute or less is met. (Finishing time is recorded as the time at which the rider asks for and subsequently meets this preset criteria.) There is no marked finish line on the course that is used to determine placing or completion time.

**L5.5** All riders must be notified in writing of cut-off times no later than the pre-ride meeting.

### **L6. Completion requires meeting all of the following criteria:**

a. All riders and mounts must be present and accounted for at the start of the ride.

b. Properly entered in the ride

c. Obeying all the rules

d. Following the prescribed course, and doing multiple loops in the correct order

e. Passing all control points

f. Passing all control judge requirements

g. Finishing within the prescribed maximum time

h. Not being disqualified

i. Meeting criteria at post finish line check.

j. Meeting any other criteria prescribed by ride management.

k. Not having been paced or prompted by an un-entered, withdrawn, or otherwise unauthorized equine, vehicle or person other than another entrant. This does not preclude the ordinary support services of attendants or pit crews. A crew may accompany their rider down a public road in a support vehicle (unless there is a ride management prohibition against it) provided they do not push or haze the equine.

**L6.1** A competitor must pass all judging criteria for completion; a competitor who fails any of the other completion criteria should be pulled from top ten placing, but may be allowed a completion, if in the opinion of ride management, the violation was not intentional and did not result in making the course easier or shorter.

**L6.2** Each AERC sanctioned ride must have a post-finish-line control check which the equine must pass for a successful completion, the criteria to be announced prior to the ride.

**L6.2.1** The minimum criteria for the post finish line control check are as follows. Any ride may adopt more stringent criteria but these must be provided to

competitors before the ride in written form. The post-finish-line control check is where the final criteria for completion must be met; an equine has not completed the ride until he has passed this check. The post finish-line control check also serves as a safety check to monitor for late-developing problems (so that they can be treated if necessary) as well as extending judging over the last leg of the ride. Because an equine at the finish line is not in actuality going on -- and not going into the wilderness far from veterinary aid -- the standards for completion need not be as strict as those on the trail, but they must meet the minimum standards below. See the Control Judge's Handbook for more information.

**L6.2.1.1** All equines must stand a mandatory post ride evaluation within one half hour of finishing the course. Riders may present their equines for the final examination at a time of their choosing during the one half-hour period. An equine that does not meet the established criteria within one half hour of arrival time shall be disqualified. Once a completed horse has passed the post ride examination, it may not be removed from completion for veterinary reasons.

**L6.2.1.2** The equine must reach a reasonable pulse recovery based on ambient conditions, within 30 minutes of arrival time at all control points during the ride. The maximum pulse criterion is 60 beats per minute. Respiration should be evaluated on its own merit. Ambient temperature and humidity effects need to be recognized and their effects considered.

**L6.2.1.3** The equine must be metabolically stable, sufficient to demonstrate fitness to continue.

**L6.2.1.4** There will be no gait aberration that is consistently observable under all circumstances that results in pain or threatens immediate athletic performance. This examination will be conducted at a trot, or equivalent gait, straight out and back, without prior flexion or palpation.

**L6.2.1.5** Soreness, lacerations, and wounds on the limbs and body—including the mouth—must be noted on the rider card. Lesions that are aggravated to a degree that affects the equine's ability to continue may be a cause for failure to complete the ride. It must be recognized by control judges that lesions caused by tack and interference may be from mild to severe and need to be evaluated on their own merit.

**L6.2.1.6** Evaluation of other monitoring parameters must indicate the equine is not in need of any medical treatment. It must be borne in mind that pulse, respiration, and soundness are but three of the important parameters considered in

the state of condition evaluation.

**L6.2.1.7** The equine may not have received medical treatment by veterinarian or layman prior to the final examination. Any equine that a control judge advises should be treated for a metabolic or soundness problem, but treatment is refused by the rider or owner, shall be considered in the same light as a treated equine and will be disallowed a completion.

**L6.3** All riders who successfully complete the ride must receive a completion award.

**L7. If placements are given, they must be determined using the procedure described in L5.3 and L5.4. The ride results will be posted in this order, but no points for placement or for completion will be awarded.**

**L8. The AERC shall record Best Condition points and mileage for members in Limited Distance rides. All Best Condition points and all miles remain in the Limited Distance Program and are not transferable. Best Conditions will be published.**

**L8.1** Members whose dues are not paid by February 1st will receive no points or miles for rides held between December 1st and the date their membership is restored.

**L8.1.1** These points cannot be recovered, but the miles may be recovered by contacting the AERC office.

**L8.2** A new member will be able to obtain mileage credit for miles ridden prior to the date of joining AERC by contacting the AERC office.

**L8.3** Ride results list all completing riders in order of finish.

**L8.4** If a member moves to a different AERC Region prior to June 1st, all Best Condition points and mileage will be recorded in the region to which that member moves; in a move on or after June 1st, all points and mileage remain in the original region.

**L8.5** The AERC has two divisions (Senior and Junior) based on the age of the rider, independent of any ride management rules governing junior and senior riders.

**L9. An award may be available for the horse judged to be in the Best Condition.**



L9.1 The award does not have to be given.

L9.1.1 The control judge(s) may feel that none of the horses in contention for the award deserve to receive it.

L9.2 Use of the AERC Best Condition System is optional with ride management.

L9.2.1 Only horses selected as Best Condition using this system (with Best Condition forms returned along with the results) are recognized by the AERC.

L9.2.2 Rides have the option of giving other Best Conditions besides the AERC Best Condition if they wish.

L9.2.3 The AERC recognizes only one Best Condition horse at any one ride.

L9.3 Under the AERC system, all of the first ten finishing horses are eligible for consideration, whether ridden by a junior, featherweight, lightweight, middleweight or heavyweight rider. Keep in mind that the order of finish for Limited Distance riders is determined using recovery time as described in rule L5.4.

L9.3.1 The control judge(s) will be the sole judge of the equine scoring portion of the award.

L9.3.2 Ride management determines the weight and time portion of the awards.

L9.3.3 Procedure in the event of a tie (best condition score), the equine among those tied with the highest equine scoring section will be the winner. If there is still a tie, the equine among those still tied that finished ahead of the other(s) will be the winner.

L9.4 The AERC recognizes a Regional Best Condition Champion Equine (Limited Distance) according to the following system:

L9.4.1 Each member owned equine receiving a Best Condition by the ride shall receive one point per mile of sanctioned ride length (in the Best Condition point system—those points do not go into the overall point system).

L9.4.1.1 If there are fewer than ten starting equines, the points are reduced by 10% for each starter fewer than ten; that is, if there are nine starters, the points are reduced by 10%, for eight starters, by 20%, and so forth. However if there is only one starting equine, no Best Condition points shall be awarded.

L9.4.2 At the end of the ride season, the member owned equine in each Region with the highest number of points in this system, irrespective of the number of different riders which may have ridden the equine, shall be the Regional Best Condition Champion for Limited Distance.

L9.4.2.1 Equines must receive at least two Limited Distance Best Condition awards during the ride season to qualify for this award.

### Fly Repellent

**2 cups White Vinegar**  
**1 cup Avon Skin So Soft (bath oil)**  
**1 cup Water**  
**1 tbsp Eucalyptus Oil**

### Fly Control

**This spray attracts dust, but really works!**

**2 cups Light Mineral Oil**  
**½ cup Lemon Juice**  
**2 tsp Citronella Oil**  
**2 tsp Eucalyptus Oil**  
**2 tsp Lemon Dish Detergent**  
**125 ml Glycerin (optional)**  
**Mix in a spray bottle and spray away!**

### Horse Insect Repellent Mix

**1 oz Citronella Oil**  
**2 oz Skin So Soft**  
**1 cup Cider Vinegar**  
**1 cup Water**  
**Mix in a 20 oz spray bottle**

### Internal Fly Repellant

**If your horse is allergic to fly bites, try 1/4 cup of Apple Cider Vinegar on their grain once a day. This raises the blood acid level just enough to bother flies, but is completely healthy for the horse.**

### Easy Fly Sprays

**You can mix seven parts water with one part Citronella as a fly spray. Mix it four parts water to one part citronella during the worst of the fly season.**

**You can take a bottle and fill it with White Vinegar and two tablespoons of dish soap. Add water if you wish to dilute it a little. Shake and spray.**

**Next time you go riding tie a Bounce Fabric Softener sheet to your horse's headstall and stick one in your back pocket.**

### Fly Repellent

**15 oz Water**  
**5 oz Commercial Fly Spray (any brand)**  
**5 oz Vinegar**  
**2 oz Vegetable Oil**  
**2 oz Green Dawn Dish Soap**  
**Mix and spray.**

**Feed your horse garlic!! The sulfur in garlic is excreted through the horses skin, keeping flies at bay.**

### Barn Fly Relief

**3 cups Water**  
**1/4 cup Sugar**  
**1/4 cup White Vinegar**

**Mix, punch holes in the lid and set it where needed. It works great.**

