

Identification of Horses

Importance of Equine Identification:

Permanent identification of horses serves many purposes. Horse theft in this country is an all-too-familiar reality for some horse owners, and being able to identify a horse among many is very important to law enforcement officials. This unit will describe some of the methods used to identify a horse.

Horse identification is important for several reasons. It:

- provides a method for proof of ownership or transfer of ownership.
- increases the number of stolen horses that are recovered and may deter theft.
- is necessary for registry with a breed organization.
- can be used as an advertising method (permanent identification).
- There are several different methods that one may use to identify a specific horse as his or her own. With all of these methods, it is important that the owner be able to identify a unique or uncommon characteristic of the horse.



Using Body Color in Horses:

Solid horse colors include bay, black, brown, chestnut (or sorrel), buckskin, gray, white, and palomino. If a horse is roan, owners are encouraged to specify whether it is a blue or a red roan. If the horse has a paint or pinto color pattern, owners should specify if it is overo or tobiano and what the base body color is (black, brown, chestnut, or bay). For appaloosa coloring, owners should record the base color as well as the coat pattern. For example, use descriptive terms, such as "A dark bay Appaloosa with a white blanket and spots that extend up to the withers and a mottled muzzle." Certain breed associations have different ways to characterize the coloring of a horse.

Identification Using Head Markings in Horses Equine

head markings include any white markings that are visible on the head of the horse. A horse can have one type of head marking or a combination of several types.

A-The head:

The description should begin at the forehead, followed by the nasal bone, the muzzle, lips and chin. The description of the markings on the head should be clearly specified with reference to the whorls and with reference to the median line and to eye level

1. Star: Any white mark on the forehead. Size, shape, intensity, position and coloured markings (if any) on the white to be specified. Should the markings in the region of the centre of the forehead consist of a few white hairs only it should be so described and not referred to as a star.
2. Stripe: The narrow white marking down the face not wider than the flat anterior surface of the nasal bones. In many cases the star and stripe are continuous and should be described as star and stripe combined. Where the stripe is separate and distinct from the star it should be described as

interrupted stripe. Where no star is present the point of origin of the stripe should be indicated. The termination of the stripe and any variation in

breadth, direction and any markings on the white should be so stated, e.g. broad stripe, narrow stripe, inclined to left, etc.

3. Blaze: A white marking covering almost the whole of the forehead between the eyes and extending beyond the width of the nasal bones usually to the muzzle. Any variations in direction, termination and any markings on the white should be stated.

4. White Face: Where the white covers the forehead and front of the face, extending laterally towards the mouth. The extension may be unilateral or bilaterat in which case it should be described accordingly.

5. Snip: An isolated white marking, independent of those already named and situated between or in the region of the nostrils. Its size, position and intensity should be specified.

6. Flesh Mark: Lack of pigmentation. A flesh mark is described as such and not as a white mark. Black spots within the flesh mark are to be indicated. All lip markings, whether flash marks or white marks, should be accurately described.

7. White Muzzle: Where the white embraces both lips and extends to the region of the nostrils.



Star



Star and Stripe



Star and Snip



Narrow Stripe
connected star,
strip and snip



Blaze



Connected star
and connected
strip and a snip



Bald

Identification Using Leg Markings in Horses:

Leg markings include any white markings that are visible on the legs of the horse. Each leg can have a different marking description, and it is important that the owner describe these markings, because it gives the horse more individuality and makes it easier to identify. Here are some examples of leg markings:

B- Limbs

1. The description of markings on the limbs should follow a logical sequence. Always commence with the left fore followed by the right fore and continued by the left hind and the right hind. Absence of marks must also be mentioned.

2. All white markings on the limbs must be accurately defined and the upper limit precisely stated with reference to points of the anatomy, e.g. white to midpastern, white to upper third of cannon etc; (see Figure 2). The use of such terms as "sock" or "stocking" is not acceptable. Some examples are listed below:

- White coronet
- White pastern
- White fetlock
- White half cannon
- White to knee, to hock, to hind quarter etc.
- White patch on coronet. Its location must be specified: anterior, lateral, medial, posterior.
- White ring around limb: does not extend down to the coronet.

3. The presence of coloured spots in white marks should be recorded. Black spots in a white coronet are referred to as Ermine marks.

4. Hooves: Any variation in the hoof pigment should be noted, especially if the horse has no other special characteristics.

C. The Body: All white markings and any other markings must be indicated with reference to their anatomical position. For example, permanent marks such as scars, saddle marks, bridle marks, collar marks, girth marks, other harness marks, bandage marks etc...

