

# *American Haflinger Registry Inspection and Classification Preparation Handbook*

## ***Purpose:***

The goal of this handbook is to insure the most productive and satisfying experience with the American Haflinger Registry's Inspection and Classification (AHR I&C) process for everyone involved. This handbook outlines a variety of topics including horse preparation, policies and breed standards, expectations, communication, participant and site coordinator roles and judge's qualifications.

Additional information and complete program documentation can be found on the AHR's website, [www.haflingerhorse.com](http://www.haflingerhorse.com). Once on the website, click on the "Programs" tab. There you will find the links to both "Inspection and Classification" and "Judges" pages. These pages will provide you with further details about both topics.

From the inspection and classification page you can view various spreadsheets with prior year's inspection data, a participant information sheet, an inspection invitation, the registration form, the policies and procedures document, a sample scorecard and the breeding objectives document. The participant information sheet can also be accessed with a list of what to expect the day of the actual inspection.

From the judges tab you can view or download current accreditation rules and the application forms regarding certification to be a judge. Additionally, clicking on the "forms and documents" tab from the home page of the website and then on the "judges list" tab, will open the list of current AHR carded judges.

For AHR members without internet access, please feel free to contact the AHR office directly to request a hard copy of any of the documents described above.

The 2006 AHR Inspection clinic held in Ashland Ohio was video taped and is available on DVD for \$25. Contact the office to order a copy of this informative DVD on preparation and presentation. It is also very beneficial to attend an I&C pre-inspection clinic first hand if at all possible.

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## ***Introduction:***

Congratulations on making the decision to bring your Haflinger forward for inspection! Making that decision may well seem like the easy part once you begin to think about actually preparing for and participating in an inspection with your horse. The AHR is aware of that and this I&C handbook was written for the purpose of providing answers to some of the most commonly asked questions.

The AHR's program was developed to offer the inspection and classification of Haflingers in North America at their owner's request. The horses are scored according to the Breeding Objectives of the American Haflinger Registry, which were developed in accordance with the Breeding Objectives of the World Haflinger Federation.

Having your Haflinger inspected and classified, provides you and breeders all over North America with invaluable information about heritable traits and conformational characteristics of the Haflinger. Serious, dedicated breeders utilize this vital information to make intelligent decisions on their way to continually improving the Haflinger horse.

## ***Preparing your horse for Inspection:***

Properly preparing a horse for inspection takes time and proper planning. The preparation process must take into consideration the realistic amount of time required for your horse to achieve the optimum conditioning and fitness for what could very well be one of the most important days of its equine life.

Having your horse in excellent physical condition will give your horse every possible opportunity to earn points. People unfamiliar with the inspection program often argue that bone structure is bone structure and therefore conditioning should not have any effect on scores. This is not a realistic statement however, as there are components of the horse that are very much affected by the level of muscular conditioning. For example, it is often seen that a horse carrying too much weight does so in the places you would least like it, such as the neck and shoulder. Thus a horse that might actually have a well defined withers gives the illusion of no withers at all. Or a horse that may actually have a shapely, lean neck with a good connection and taper to the throat latch might have the illusion of a heavy, crested neck with little taper. A horse that is too heavy will also have a very difficult time showing its true athleticism and movement. Any kind of athlete, human or equine, must be at their ideal level of conditioning and weight in order to perform at the highest level of their ability.

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### ***Preparing your horse for Inspection cont'd:***

The amount of time needed for conditioning and the proper diet required are case specific since each individual horse will be at different fitness levels when they start their program. A program that promotes muscle tone and freedom of movement is recommended. It is extremely important to remember that good health starts from the inside. Your nutritional program is as vital to your horses' success as the training and conditioning program you implement.

The horse's feet should be well cared for and trimmed with a balanced, proper angle for the individual. If your surface ground does not enable your horse to keep a sound, even foot while unshod, then light hunter or polo plates are the next best thing to a natural foot. For inspection purposes though, no heavy shoes or artificial building of the hooves is permitted. Regular farrier care is a must and is a staple of any healthy horse, remember no foot no horse.

It is recommended that excessively long facial hair, whiskers and long ear hair be trimmed. In addition, the feathers and long leg hair at the back of the legs and fetlocks should be clipped. Manes and tails should be well groomed and left in a natural length, unbraided. These simple grooming touches performed just prior to the inspection will benefit your horses overall impression.

### ***AHR Breed Standards, Policies and Procedures:***

The Haflinger breed is well known for its unique external appearance that is a combination of color, markings and size. A desirable type appearance is one of elegance and harmony. To this type belongs a lean and expressive head with large eyes, well formed neck and supple mid-section, a good croup not too divided and not too short, a distinct musculature as well as correct, defined limbs with good joints.

Stallions and mares for breeding should have clearly defined masculine or feminine features. A harmonious body structure that is suitable for all-round pleasure horse is desired. The Haflinger horse has a strong character, a good-nature, and is eager, willing and able to perform in a wide variety of events.

The AHR uses a 100 point scoring system that is similar to the World Haflinger Federations' inspection point system. The 100 point system is used by several other breeds of horses as well. The points are broken down into 10 specific categories with each category having a potential score of 10 points. While the categories are listed and scored individually, there is often a relationship between the categories and how the horse appears and performs overall.

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### ***AHR Breed Standards, Policies and Procedures cont'd:***

The ten categories scored are: Type, Head, Neck, Forehand, Midsection, Hindquarters, Front Legs, Hind legs, Correctness of Movement and Overall Movement. Each judge marks their own worksheet with what they believe to be the correct mark. The final mark, however, is the consensus of the three judges following their discussion.

Unlike other inspection programs, the AHR I&C committee has developed an extremely unique scorecard. The design of the card includes places after each of the ten categories for the judges to indicate both positive and negative details of that particular area. This allows the horse owners to have documentation of specific information about each of the 10 categories being reviewed by the judges during the inspection.

At the end of each horse's inspection, the owner will be told the horse's score. At this time, the judges will communicate privately to the owner the scores on each of the ten sections and give comments. This is an educational step for the owner's benefit.

Mature horses (two and over) are awarded ribbons according to their scores: A gold ribbon is awarded to horses scoring 81 points or above (this is very rare, only 1-2% of Haflingers achieve the "Gold" status), a silver ribbon is awarded to horses scoring 75-80 points, a purple ribbon is given to horses scoring 71-74 points and a white ribbon is given to horses scoring 69 or 70 points. Mares scoring 68 points or less are not recommended for breeding. Stallions scoring 74 points or less are not recommended for breeding.

Due to potential differences in rate of maturity, all horses aged two through five years old may be presented for re-inspection multiple times, at any time up to and including during his/her five year old year. At age 6 and over, as a mature horse, the horse is eligible for re-inspection ONCE ONLY through the appeals process.

Two scores (classification & offspring) are required to complete a stallion's classification record as both "Inspected" and "Proven". For a Stallion to achieve Proven status, his offspring must be presented. Stallions without the second score for offspring will be considered "Unproven".

Inspected stallions and mares may also be awarded distinct honors based on their progeny. "Star", "Elite" or "Supreme" status awards are achieved in direct recognition of the scores of their offspring at AHR inspections. Each award category requires a different number and combination of offspring scores to be achieved. Star, Elite and Supreme status will be announced annually in the official publication of the AHR.

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## ***Inspection Day:***

Prior to arriving for an inspection with your horse, be sure you have the following items with you:

- Negative Coggins and Health Papers (if required)
- Stall fee payment (if required)
- Presentation halter or bridle
- Grooming supplies
- Hay, grain, water bucket
- Proper handler attire - blue jeans are not permitted and there may not be identification of the farm, owner, trainer or horse on the handler's clothing or the horse's equipment.

Upon arrival at the site, and before unloading, locate the site coordinator (or check-in volunteer) and find out where you are stabling. At check in you will need to pay your stall fee and if necessary, provide additional application information. Such application information may include: how many foals has your mare had, how many months pregnant the mare is now, is your horse shod, and will you do the free school first or last? You should determine what time the measurements will start and where your horse is located in the order of go for both the measurement and inspection phases. You will receive two bridle numbers for each horse at check-in, one for each side of your horse's halter or bridle. These numbers must be worn for both measurements and inspection.

At measurements, have your horse properly groomed and ready. Remember, you only have one chance to make a good first impression! Your horse should be trained to stand still while being measured, including stick measured at the withers and croup and tape measured for circumference of the girth and cannon bone. The mouth will be checked for proper bite and hair will also be pulled for a DNA sample at this time.

At some point prior to the actual inspections starting, the judges or site coordinator will give a brief talk about the inspection procedure. Exhibitors will be permitted to walk the triangle and examine the arena where the horses will be inspected. This is your opportunity to ask questions so feel free to ask any you may have at this time. However, once the inspection starts, exhibitors will not be permitted to approach or converse with judges until they have been handed their completed scorecard.

When presenting your horse in hand for inspection, set the horse up along the ground pole in front of the judges. The pole should be between the horse and the judges. Turn the horse so that the mane is on the side opposite the judges. This will allow them to see the shape and length of the neck. The judges will be examining the overall conformation and balance, angles, etc., at this time, so make sure the horse is set up properly.

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### ***Inspection Day cont'd:***

Next, you will be asked to walk your horse on the small triangle. As the horse walks away and towards the judges, they will observe correctness and tracking patterns. Across the back of the triangle, they will be looking at impulsion, engagement and elasticity. Your horse needs to be relaxed to show the best walk. It is important for the horse's head to point straight ahead. If you pull or push the horse's head to the side it can make correct movement difficult, if not impossible.

Once you have completed the walk, you will be asked to have the horse trot the large triangle. Going away and towards the judges, you will again want to keep the horse moving straight. Across the back of the triangle, the judges will be looking for engagement and impulsion from behind.

During the free school portion of the inspection you will be asked to turn the horse loose in the arena. The judges will be evaluating the horse's natural way of moving, expression, presence, and the quality of the trot and canter at liberty.

The judges will mark their individual worksheets during both the in hand and at liberty presentation of your horse. The final score will be the consensus of the three judges following a private discussion amongst them. Once the score has been determined, you will receive a copy of the scorecard. The judges will communicate privately to the owner the scores on each of the ten sections and give comments.

The discussion held with the horse's owner immediately following the scoring is an attempt to help explain the scorecard documentation and is done for the owner's benefit. However, owners must remember that the judge's decisions are final, and that no arguing or questioning of any decision will be tolerated. Limited questions from the owner will be permitted only for the sake of clarification, however in the interest of time, no two-way discussions will be permitted. The judges will also ask for permission to announce the horses score to the audience.

After all of the horses at the site have been inspected, horses scoring 75 points or better will be encouraged to return to the arena for the final parade and line-up according to score. This is a very educational part of the day and well worth staying for. The judges line the horses up in a final order as they parade and will point out some of the things that they liked best about them.

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### ***AHR I&C Judges:***

In order for a judge to be eligible to classify horses at an AHR inspection they must obtain “C” (classification) card status. The AHR I&C and AHR Judges committees work together in the certification process that is required for a judge to obtain his or her C card status. The additional requirements for an AHR Senior judge to obtain a C card (which can be found in detail on the AHR website) are extensive and time consuming. Additionally, once the C card is obtained, the judges must complete annual C card maintenance requirements. All expenses associated with obtaining and maintaining the C card are at the expense of the person desiring the card.

The current AHR Senior C carded judges have broad and diverse equine backgrounds. They have collectively spent a substantial amount of time in Austria (at their own expense) both participating in and observing the Haflinger inspections, visiting the Fohlenhof to view the breeding stock and traveling to numerous other Haflinger breeding farms in Austria and neighboring European countries. The judges have all either classified or stood in on the classification of hundreds of Haflingers. They have a combined total of over one hundred years experience in the breeding, showing and classifying quality Haflingers. Additionally, each of these individuals has also bred, raised, and presented a highly classified animal and/or an AHR National Show Champion horse or horses.

Years of personal dedication to both the Haflinger breed and the classification program is what keeps the judges returning each year. As the AHR Senior C carded judges have accumulated more time and expertise, the intent has been to migrate away from the additional expense, language barriers and scheduling constraints associated with using judges from foreign countries. The inspection judges are aware of the voluntary nature of the AHR inspection program. Both its success and continuation depend upon the acceptance and value it provides to the horse owners.

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### ***Inspection Site Coordinator's Role:***

The AHR inspections would not be possible but for the generous donations and personal commitments made by the volunteer site coordinators. The inspection site coordinator has responsibility for site procurement, stabling, recruitment and oversight of volunteer workers, food availability, event photographer, site materials, paper work, and a variety of other associated duties that arise. As such they are the “go to” person for information about times, accommodations, fees, or any information in general about the proceedings at a particular site.

On the day of inspection, the site coordinator must manage volunteers and workers to ensure the efficient flow of the inspection event. They are also the liaison between inspection participants and the judges. Any additional information about the horse such as health issues, injuries, etc. should be submitted in writing to the site coordinator prior to the inspection. The site coordinator will then ensure that the information is received by the judges. And last, but not least, any concerns regarding the inspection process shall be submitted in writing to the inspection site coordinator within 30 days following the inspection. The site coordinator will then submit the complaint directly to the I&C committee.

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(cut here and submit lower half of page with acknowledgment signature(s) when sending in your I&C Application)

### ***Acknowledgment and Confirmation:***

In an attempt to ensure that all AHR Inspection & Classification participants are familiar with the I&C program, acknowledgment of reading this “American Haflinger Registry Inspection and Classification Preparation Handbook” is a prerequisite of having your horse inspected.

I (we), the undersigned, confirm that I (we) have read the information in the above handbook and agree to abide by the current policies governing the AHR Inspection & Classification process.

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Owner(s) name(s) - please print clearly here

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Owner(s) signature and date