



SPSS Information Sheet 6

SPSS Mare Grading - 2020

Due to the COVID-19 virus, 2020 SPSS gradings and evaluations will all be “virtual” events with our judges assessing video clips that cover all the normal aspects of our gradings (except for loose jumping).

Mare eGrading

Mares can be presented for SPSS “eGrading”. This replaces fully the requirement to attend an actual SPSS grading and will give permanent graded status into the appropriate Mare Studbook depending on their score and completeness of pedigree. Note that it is unlikely that SPSS Mare Performance Testing will take place in 2020.

Entry will be anytime before mid October 2020. Please send your video(s) showing conformation and paces (correctness and athleticism), completed entry form, membership application/renewal form (if not a current member) and scans/clear photos of the pedigree & other key pages in the passport to us via WeTransfer (wetransfer.com). The fees due can be paid either by bank transfer (details on forms) or by posting a cheque. Once all the necessary information has been received and the fee has been paid, there are 3 stages to acceptance.

Stage 1. The SPSS judges will review the video(s) and make a decision on whether or not the mare is accepted as SPSS Graded or not and informally notify the owner.

Stage 2. The owners of mares that are accepted will have to:

- (a) either supply a copy of an existing DNA profile for your mare or send us a DNA hair sample (taken by a vet). This sample will be stored by the SPSS in case it is necessary to DNA profile the mare in the future.
- (b) send the mare’s passport into the SPSS Studbook Office.

Stage 3. The mare’s allocated studbook and graded status will be recorded in her passport which will then be returned to the owner along with her rosette. The individual scores will not be released until after the end of year awards have been announced when the scores and scoresheets will be released.

The scores of all mares for whom Stage 3 has been completed will be taken forward to the SPSS end of year awards where, as long as at least 5 mares have been graded, the 2020 Mare Grading Champion and Reserve Champion will be declared (based on scores received). Should 10 or more mares be graded then regional groups (of at least 5 mares) will be formed and Regional Champions & Reserve Champions be declared with the top mare overall being the Supreme Mare Champion.

Mare eGrading Entry Fee

- £80 for mares already SPSS passported or overstamped
- £105 other mares – includes £25 registration fee for overstamping of ungraded mares not already SPSS passported or overstamped

N.B. Owners need to be current SPSS Members.

Eligibility & Requirements – Mare Grading

We accept entries to our grading for any breed of mare provided they are no more (and don't mature above) 158cm and are at least 2.5 years old. Mares on or close to the height limit may have to provide confirmation of height (from a vet) and young mares with horse breeding that look like they may mature over height may have formal confirmation of their grading deferred, so it may be better to leave bringing them until they are older and their mature height is clearer – please contact us to discuss if you are in any doubt. With all sizes of pony/horse, as well as assessing the conformation, paces and temperament, the judges also look at suitability as a dam of sports ponies and the pass mark is

65%. Which Studbook a successful mare is placed in depends on how complete her pedigree is and her score. More information about the SPSS Mare Studbooks can be found in our Rules (www.sportpony.org.uk/docs/2020-SPSSRules.pdf).

If she is accepted at our grading, then the SPSS will issue passports to her progeny, including any foal at foot (whether or not the sire is SPSS graded). However, please note that the SPSS does not issue passports to any foals that are eligible for registration as a pure-bred pony with any Mountain and Moorland (indigenous pony breed) studbook listed with DEFRA. Other than this, the SPSS will issue passports to any progeny of an SPSS graded/licensed mare (including part-bred Mountain & Moorland) and pure-bred Mountain & Moorland progeny can be overstamped by the SPSS once passported by their native breed society.

In the eGrading

In the eGrading, each mare is assessed in hand for confirmation then in hand and loose for paces. For mares with a foal at foot, if the owner is concerned that letting the mare loose may risk the safety of the foal, then that stage too may be omitted – however, it does limit the mare's opportunity to show her paces.

Video Requirements - What do I need to do?

The online entry system will open on 1st July 2020 and run until mid October. This means that if you have several ponies you would like to enter, you can spread them out a bit, making it more manageable for you.

There are links to example videos on our website for you with some useful hints and tips to show you what to watch out for.

Your mare or stallion will not be assessed on the quality of the video footage or your editing skills, so keep it simple, and don't worry, videos taken on a smart phone or tablet are perfectly suitable for this. Equally, you can use any type of arena or other surface you have available. If you don't have an arena, a straight bit of paddock is absolutely fine, as long as the grass is nice and short.

Above all, please ensure you stay safe and adhere to the latest government guidelines including maintaining appropriate social distancing. We have designed this year's approach with that in mind.

The first section of videos will cover the conformation assessment. For this, you need some hard standing, and a straight bit long enough to show as few steps of walk and trot. You will show your pony standing up and then in hand walking and trotting away from and towards the camera. When your pony is stood, please include footage of both sides from side on as well as from the front and back (from the top of the hindquarters all the way down).

The second section of videos will cover the walk, trot and canter assessment. Loose jumping MUST NOT be included. You will need to get some footage of your pony on both reins in all three gaits. Try and get as much footage side on as possible, as this makes it easiest to assess. For this part, you can use a fenced arena if you have one available, but if not, a flat paddock with short grass is equally fine. Think about the practicalities of having to catch your pony in a large field, and choose one that is not too big, with good, safe fencing. Please avoid anywhere with long grass or tall weeds (or get them mowed first!), as this will obscure parts of the movement.

The walk is usually best shown in hand, make sure you take long and active strides, as this will encourage your youngster to do the same. The trot should be shown loose and in hand and the canter shown loose. Ideally, please show at least a 20m circle of walk in hand and 20m circle of trot in hand, then a decent length of video of your mare free in trot and canter on both reins.

Happy Filming! If you have any questions or want some further advice, we are only every a phone call away, so do not hesitate to get in touch - plus we have included links to sample videos on our website www.sportpony.org.uk/grading20

Any questions?

If you have any questions, please email the Grading Tour organiser, our Studbook Manager, Lucy Sheldrake, on studbookmanager@sportpony.org.uk or call the Studbook Office on 07703 566 066