

**AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES COUNCIL of NSW Ltd.**  
**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HORSE JUDGES**

1. A judge should reply promptly to an invitation to judge at a show and, having made the commitment, honour it. If a judge is, at short notice, unable to officiate, he/she should inform the show secretary immediately.
2. A judge must not solicit judging appointments and should not accept too many appointments during any one show season unless it is in different sections.
3. Because judges are representing themselves and the particular Show Society, they should always be punctual and look their best, being correctly and neatly dressed. Gentlemen should wear a coat and tie and ladies should dress to a similar standard. Both ladies and gentlemen should wear hats when judging outdoors and suitable footwear. Jeans, tee shirts, windcheaters, sports shoes and thongs are not considered as suitable standards of dress.
4. A judge's conduct and behaviour should be beyond reproach and a judge must exhibit propriety and integrity when judging events, and be unbiased and fair. He/she must at all times be polite and act in a respectful manner to competitors, spectators and show officials.
5. While conducting a ring, the safety of the competitors, spectators, stewards/marshalls must be the judge's first consideration.
6. A judge must not accept hospitality from an exhibitor immediately before or during a show and must not visit any owner or exhibitor or inspect or discuss any horse entered in the show except in the ring until judging at the show has been completed.
7. A judge cannot judge - and exhibit at the same show.
  - the same section within 100kms radius within a 90 day period.
  - in any section in which immediate members of his/her family are competing.
  - an exhibit, which the judge or his/her immediate family has bred.
  - a progeny group sired by a stallion or out of a mare owned by the judge.
  - an exhibit where the judge or his/her immediate family have been rewarded in cash or kind for tuition of either part of the combination (horse or driver/ rider/handler) in the previous six months.
  - an exhibit where the competitor/exhibitor has been employed by or has employed the judge in the previous six months.
  - an exhibit owned, produced or driven by a person whom the judge or his/her immediate family have or had a business partnership (excluding stud fees) within the previous six months.
  - an exhibit which the judge or a member of his/her immediate family sold to the exhibitor in the 12 months preceding the show or event.
  - an exhibit which the judge or a member of his/her immediate family have or have had a financial interest in during the previous twelve months.
  - an exhibit produced, ridden or driven by a person who has carried out those duties for the judge in the previous twelve months.
  - an exhibit owned by an exhibitor for whom he/she has produced exhibits in the previous twelve months.
8. A judge must not refer to a show catalogue or steward's list either before or during judging, nor can a judge be in possession of a show catalogue whilst in the ring.
9. A judge should not discuss any exhibitor's animal's faults with stewards or other competitors.
10. A judge may direct his/her steward to order any person from the ring for improper conduct or any other proper cause, including any act of unreasonable discipline or cruelty towards a horse.

11. A judge has the discretion to ask that a led or performance exhibit and handler / rider / driver be asked to leave the ring if he/she considers the animal is unruly and/or likely to cause an accident.
12. Where a judge is aware the judging of an exhibit is an infringement of any rule, then the judge must refrain from judging that exhibit and draw the attention of the steward and Ringmaster to the issue.
13. A judge may request an exhibit to be measured. This is nearly impossible unless there is a surveyor certified measuring bock on the showground and they are in possession of a properly calibrated measuring stick. This is why the ASC recommends accepting SHC or EA Official Measurement Certificates.
14. A judge may refuse to judge any exhibit he/she considers to be unsound. This is again very difficult – the competitor might argue that the Judge is not a Vet, therefore comment on the soundness or otherwise of an exhibit. If the horse is very uneven then that is a different matter.
15. A judge may withhold an award if, in his/her opinion, no animal is worthy of the award.
16. A judge has the discretion to agree or to refuse to discuss his/her opinion of an exhibit with an exhibitor but should only agree to enter such discussion if the request comes through the steward or Ringmaster.
17. A judge should ensure that a steward or other show official is present during any discussion with an exhibitor and should give his or her opinion courteously and sincerely while refraining from engaging in debate.
18. Once a judge has judged a class, he/she should not re-judge it even if placings are affected by ineligibility and require official alteration.
19. A judge's decision representing his/her individual preference is final and cannot be the subject of a protest, except where ineligibility is officially determined.
20. A judge may lodge a written complaint concerning the behaviour, demeanour, dress, condition and the like (in respect of the exhibitor or exhibit) to the relevant show secretary but should inform the secretary of the impending complaint before leaving the show and submit the written complaint within 10 days.

### **SOME STANDARD PROCEDURES**

1. Once judging has commenced, a competing horse shall not be led, ridden or driven into or out of the judging ring without the permission of the judge and/or the Ringmaster.
2. If a led horse should drag or escape its handler and leave the ring it is usually disqualified from the class.
3. A fall of exhibit or rider/driver in any ridden or harness class will result in disqualification from that class. The rider must not remount or the driver get back into the harness vehicle in the ring.
4. The awarding of equal placings is customarily avoided because of the difficulties it can cause in Championships. The exception is that some Show Societies encourage the awarding of multiple third or fourth ribbons to all remaining competitors in the more junior children's riding classes.
5. The Champion in a group of classes is selected from the First Place winners from each of the eligible classes. Equal Champions are never awarded.
6. The Reserve Champion is selected from the remaining First Place winners after the Champion is selected PLUS the Second placegetter/s from the class/s from which the Champion came.
7. The traditional ribbon colours are:
 

First – blue	Fourth – gold/yellow
Second – red	Fifth - green
Third – white	Sixth - brown.
8. Competitors are expected to maintain and support the same ethical standards as judges. This means, for example, that a competitor who wished to speak to a judge would be expected to make his/her approach through the Ringmaster or steward and, if a competitor found that his/her appearance in a class would create an infringement of the Judge's Code of Conduct, he/she would be expected to withdraw or risk being declared ineligible.

9. Because country shows are very much reliant on voluntary workers in most or all roles for their financial survival, they can only offer reasonable travel reimbursement and accommodation to visiting officials.

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