

# **Breeding plan**

for the Norwegian

# **fjord horse**



**Valid from 2026**

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## 1. Purpose and scope of the breeding programme

The purpose of the breeding programme for Fjord horses is to preserve genetic variation in the breed, preserve the breed type and character, and monitor and improve health-related traits. The breeding plan describes how breeding work should be carried out to ensure the breeding of Fjord horses is sustainable.

Norway is the internationally recognised stud book for Fjord horses. The breeding programme mainly operates in Norway, but following a decision made at the annual meeting of the Norwegian Fjord Horse Association (NFL) in 2023, breeding organisations for Fjord horses abroad may also choose to affiliate themselves with the Norwegian stud book. In 2024, the area of operation was expanded to include the Netherlands, where one of the country's two Fjord horse breeding organisations has based its breeding work on the Norwegian breeding plan and also wishes to register horses in the NFL's register.

The NFL also works through Fjord Horse International, which brings together Fjord horse organisations and stud books from several countries to update *The Official Handbook for Fjord Horse Judges*, which is based on the Norwegian breeding plan for Fjord horses. In this way, Fjord horses that are conceived and born in other countries will also be covered by the Norwegian breeding plan for Fjord horses to a greater extent.

## 2. Identification and registration

The Norwegian Horse Centre (NHS) documents the pedigree of Fjord horses through DNA testing and registers Fjord horses on behalf of the NFL in accordance with the requirements set out in the Regulations supplementing the Animal Health Regulations with provisions on livestock facilities and hatcheries and the traceability of livestock and hatching eggs (the Land Animal Traceability Regulations)<sup>1</sup> and the Regulations on the Breeding of Cattle, Pigs, Sheep, Goats and Horses (the Livestock Breeding Regulations)<sup>2</sup>.

## 3. Rules for classification of animals in the stud book

The stud book for Fjord horses features a register which categorises all Fjord horses at various levels depending on their pedigree and approved lineage. In addition to the stud book register is the elite stud book for Fjord horses. The elite stud book includes all premium animals. See Appendix 1, Classification of the stud book for Fjord horses.

## 4. Breed description

The Fjord horse should be a strong, hardy, well-built and athletic horse with great charisma and charm. The Fjord horse should be reliable, cooperative and willing to work, while also being balanced and calm. In addition, the aim is for natural and well-balanced movements with good forward motion. The Fjord horse should be a versatile horse that is easy to handle.

### 4.1. Breed type and character

When judging breed type and character, the following traits should be considered:

*Size:* There is no upper or lower limit for size, but the desired height of the horse is between 135 and 150 cm at the withers. If the size deviates from these measurements, this should be noted on the judging card, and points may be deducted for breed type and character if the size means that the horse is not typical of the breed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2022-04-07-637?q=landdyrsporbarhets>

*Hair:* The forelock on adult horses should preferably reach down to the eyes. The Fjord horse should have a mane, trimmed in a convex shape that is adapted to the horse's topline. Horses presented with long manes should not be penalised for breed type and character, but it should be noted on the judging card that the horse has a long mane.

*Head:* The head is an important part of the Fjord horse's distinctive appearance. It should be small and well defined, with a broad, flat forehead. The nasal bridge should be short and may be straight, but preferably slightly concave. A convex nasal bridge is not desirable. The eyes should be large, dark and clear, giving a confident expression. Glassy eyes are not acceptable, see Appendix 2 Disqualifying traits. Large, wide nostrils are desirable, giving the muzzle a more angular shape. The jaws should be well-defined, especially in stallions, but they must not be so powerful that the head appears heavy. There should be good width between the lower jaws (chin). The ears should be wide set and short, parallel in appearance and have a marked tip.

*Gender characteristics:* There should be a clear difference in characteristics between stallions and mares. This can be seen in that the head of a mare will usually be slightly more finely chiselled than that of a stallion. A broad forehead and strong jaws, together with well-defined and large eyes, can give the impression of a more triangular head shape in males. It is also desirable that the neck muscles, especially on the upper side of the neck and throat, are more powerful in stallions than in mares.

#### **4.2. Conformation and musculature**

The following points should be considered when evaluating conformation and muscular development:

*Neck:* The neck should be well set without a pronounced underneck and have a convex topline. Stallions in particular should be well-muscled in the neck. The neck should not be low set. A longer neck and a smooth transition between the head and neck are particularly important. A long, thin neck is not desirable.

*Shoulder and withers:* The shoulder significantly influences the horse's movement. Therefore, well-defined, long and sloping shoulder is desirable. The withers should not be round, but long and sufficiently defined. The withers should form a smooth transition from the neck/throat to the back.

*Top line:* The back and loins should be smooth and well-muscled. The back should not be too long or too short, and the loins short and strong. The transition between the back and the croup should be flexible and at the same time ensure that the mid-section and hindquarters are smooth and strong.

*Hindquarters:* The croup should be long, broad and well-muscled. The croup should not be flat, nor have a sharp slope. The tail set should not be too low or too high. The thighs should be muscular when viewed from the side and from behind.

#### **4.3. Leg quality and leg position**

The Fjord horse should have a straight leg position to ensure the right conditions for good and lasting leg health. A correct leg position encourages a good gait pattern, thus preventing wear and strain injuries. The fetlock, hock and knee joint should be well defined. When assessing leg quality and leg position, the following must be taken into account:

*Forequarters:* Joints and tendons should be dry, and the leg position should be correct when viewed from the front, rear and side. The upper and lower forearms should be sufficiently long, with strong and well-developed musculature. The knees should be well defined and straight when viewed from the front. The cannon bones should be clean and dry and stand correctly in the middle under the knee. The length and angle of the pastern must be such that the horse moves well. Splints can be a symptom of poor anatomical conformation. In such cases, the horse is penalised for the splint together with the undesired conformation. Not too much emphasis should be placed on splints, especially if they are small.

*Hind legs:* Joints and tendons should be dry, and the bone structure should be correct when viewed from the front, rear and side. The thighs and lower thighs should be sufficiently long, with strong and well-developed muscles. The hocks should be strong and pronounced. Neither straight nor bowed hocks are desirable. The length and angle of the pastern must be such that the horse moves well.

*Hooves:* The hooves should have good horn quality and should be large with suitably sloping hoof walls. The sole should have a large bearing surface and be well arched, with a wide and soft frog. There should be good width between the angles of the hooves, but they should not be flat. Under-trimmed hooves are not desirable.

#### **4.4. Movement**

Movement and gait must be free and natural with a good balance between traction and impulsion. Movements should have depth, meaning that most joints, in addition to the topline, are active. They should also be energetic, with good balance and rhythm. It is desirable for the horse to have good freedom of movement and good hind leg action.

#### **4.5. Health and soundness**

The Fjord horse should be in good health with good conformation and free of genetic disorders and diseases. Any deviations in conformation seen to significantly influence the health of the Fjord horse are subject to special monitoring. The extent of these deviations is documented by linear description in the judging records and handled according to the advice of veterinarians. Health is assessed during a veterinary examination in consultation with the licensing committee in the case of stallions. In classes where there is no veterinary examination, the horse's health, in addition to conformation traits that affect health and soundness, must be assessed by the conformation judges. See Appendix 2, Disqualifying traits, and Appendix 4, Health examination of stallions.

#### **4.6. Behaviour**

Behaviour is an assessment of the horse's conduct at the show. The Fjord horse should be reliable, cooperative and willing to work, while also having an even and calm temper. It should be easy to handle and suitable for the whole family. The assessment of behaviour in connection with the breeding assessment of stallions is described in Appendix 5, Approval instructions for Fjord horses.

#### **4.7. Colour, markings and traits**

The five accepted colours are brown dun, white dun, grey dun, red dun (chestnut dun), and yellow dun. Blue-eyed light cream is not an accepted colour, see Appendix 2 Disqualifying traits. There are different shades within the various colours. It is important that primitive markings are preserved. White markings are not accepted, except for a star measuring up to 5.0 cm at its

largest diameter, which is acceptable on mares and geldings. Light stripes or flecks on hooves and light hooves/limbs that gradually merge into the characteristic colour of red dun or yellow dun horses are not considered be markings but a distinctive feature of these colours. See Appendix 2, Disqualifying traits for a more detailed list of disqualifying markings. When a horse with markings is presented at an official show for the first time and the markings are assessed as being within the regulations, this must continue to apply in the context of shows.

## 5. Breeding goals and selection

The breeding goal is to preserve the distinctive traits and diversity of the Fjord horse and the versatile qualities of the breed through pure breeding, and to breed healthy and functional horses. The original and accepted colours of the breed and the primitive markings, depending on the nuances in body colour, must be preserved. Breeding efforts focus strongly on producing a Fjord horse that is attractive to future users, which must also be the basis for emphasising conformation, movement and performance.

The breeding goal must be achieved through the assessment of conformation traits, performance, health and behaviour. The horse's premium and grading are determined by an overall score for conformation, provided that the other assessment criteria are acceptable. See Appendix 3, Indices, premiums and ranking.

### 5.1. Conformation

The conformation must be assessed and registered at the show. An overview of the traits that are registered is given in Appendix 5, Approval instructions for Fjord horses. The canter is only judged on stallions, while the trot is only judged in the conformation ring for mares and geldings, but also during the at liberty performance for stallions. All traits assessed at the show are registered and stored. Conformation traits must also be registered linearly each time a horse is entered in an official show. Conformation traits included in the overall score for conformation are shown in Table 1 with the respective weighting of each trait given as a percentage.

**Table1** Weighting of conformation traits

Trait	Weighting, canter not shown	Weighting, canter shown
Breed type and character	40%	40%
Conformation (body) and muscular development	20%	20%
Forelegs	10%	10%
Hind legs	10%	10%
Walk <sup>3</sup>	10%	20%*1/3
Trot <sup>3</sup>	10%	20%*1/3
Canter <sup>3</sup>	-	20%*1/3

### 5.2. Performance traits

The performance traits, including behaviour during use, that are emphasised in breeding work are versatility, willingness to cooperate, driving traits, riding traits and movements. See also the performance test regulations for shows<sup>4</sup> and Appendix 6, Performance tests for Fjord horses, for more detailed information about the applicable performance tests for mares and stallions.

<sup>3</sup> If canter is assessed, the movements will be weighted a total of 20%, with equal weighting for the gaits walk, trot and canter, see Appendix 3 - Indices, premiums and ranking

Performance tests are graded and judged as pass or fail in accordance with the applicable performance test regulations <sup>4)</sup>.

### **5.3. Health**

Stallions presented for licensing must undergo a veterinary examination. See Appendix 4, Health examination of stallions, for a detailed description of the health examination, and Appendix 2, Disqualifying traits, for a description of traits. Health is judged as pass or fail.

There is no specific health examination for mares, geldings and young horses beyond what is specified in the current show regulations <sup>5)</sup>.

#### **5.3.1. Undesirable hereditary diseases in breeding animals**

For animal welfare and reputation reasons, horses with hereditary conditions such as sweet itch or other allergies should not be used for breeding. Everyone has a responsibility for not using horses with genetic disorders for breeding, cf. Animal Welfare Act Sec.25<sup>2</sup>.

### **5.4. Behaviour**

Horses that display dangerous behaviour and/or behaviour that risks causing a dangerous situation must be removed from the showground. Rejected stallions are ineligible for approval or premium at the current show. The rule applies to all aspects of the show, but behaviour must be given special emphasis during the veterinary examination and performance test(s). Behaviour is judged as a pass or fail. See also Appendix 5, Approval instructions for Fjord horses.

## **6. Selection of stallions**

The selection of stallions for breeding is based on assessment (approval). Assessment must provide the basis for selecting breeding animals with the best possible traits in line with the breeding goal, while at the same time making it possible to identify defects in the animal that disqualify it from use in breeding. There may be deviations from the ordinary requirements for breeding approval, see 8.1 Emphasis on lineage in selection decisions.

### **6.1. Full top-level competition rights**

A stallion has the right to compete at top level and may be licensed if it is listed in the A-register in the Fjord horse stud book. Foreign stallions that are shown must meet the pedigree requirements for registration that apply to Norwegian-bred stallions, and they must undergo the same tests as Norwegian-bred horses in terms of the assessment of conformation and performance traits.

### **6.2. Approval/awarding of premiums**

Approval/awarding of premiums is carried out by an appointed judge's panel at an officially recognised show. Approval/awarding is made in relation to the current breeding plan. See Appendix 3, Indices, premiums and rankings, Appendix 4, Health examination of stallions, Appendix 5, Approval instructions for Fjord horses and Appendix 6, Performance tests for Fjord horses. The owner is responsible for registering the stallion for the show and following the breeding approval process.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nhest.no/reglement.612540.no.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nhest.no/reglement.612540.no.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2009-06-19-97>

## **6.4. Breeding approval process**

### **6.4.1. First assessment**

The first time a stallion can be presented for grading is in the spring when it is 3 years old. During the grading, an assessment is carried out. The traits defined in the breeding goal are assessed, the stallion undergoes a driving test and is presented at liberty in the indoor arena. The first time a stallion is presented for grading, it can be approved for a licence and be ranked according to quality. The licence grants breeding approval for two years and the stallion is allocated a mare quota for those two years, in addition to the right to be presented for an extended performance test. Older unlicensed stallions must follow the same process for testing performance traits as three-year-olds.

### **6.4.2. Second assessment of approved stallions**

An approved stallion must undergo a new assessment and extended performance test in order to retain its breeding approval. The stallion can take the extended performance test at the earliest one year after approval, and there is no deadline for completing the extended performance test. If the stallion has not undergone an extended performance test before the two-year breeding approval expires, it cannot be used for breeding until the extended performance test and second assessment have been completed. The stallion is assessed according to the current breeding plan and can achieve 1st, 2nd or 3rd premium, and it can also be assessed for quality. Stallions that do not meet the current requirements for conformation, health, behaviour or performance will not be approved and will not be awarded a premium.

### **6.4.3. Third assessment of premium stallions**

All premium stallions must be registered for re-evaluation by their owners when they are 8 years old. All premium stallions that are registered for show when they are 8 years old or older will receive a progeny evaluation, see Appendix 8, Progeny evaluation. Stallions that meet for the third assessment cannot fail or be downgraded in premium on the basis of the overall health score, but can be ranked behind stallions with a lower premium in the quality ranking for the current show. Veterinary findings must be recorded on the judging card. If the stallion has disqualifying traits (see Appendix 2, Disqualifying traits) or serious health findings, it will be denied breeding approval, but will not lose its premium. Stallions that do not attend a new judging without a valid reason will automatically lose their breeding approval. Applications for postponement of the third assessment must be sent to the NFL before the current year's stallion show has started, and the stallion cannot be used for breeding until the third assessment has been completed.

## **6.5. Fertility**

If there is suspicion that a breeding-approved stallion has low fertility, the NFL may, in consultation with a veterinarian, require that a semen sample be taken at the owner's expense as part of a health assessment. This will be assessed by a veterinarian with expertise in reproduction. Low fertility may result in the stallion losing its breeding approval (but not its premium grade), and it will not be able to renew this until its fertility has been assessed as satisfactory.

## **7. Selection of mares**

There is no requirement for mares to be approved for breeding, but it is recommended that mares be shown at shows for assessment and evaluation of their performance traits. Mare shows with performance tests are therefore an important measure for the selection of breeding

animals. For judging, reference is made to the current rules for official horse shows <sup>7</sup>, the performance test regulations and Appendix 3, Indices, premiums and rankings.

### **7.1. Fertility of mares**

The NFL recommends that mare owners have their mares examined by a veterinarian before the breeding season. This is particularly important if the mare has been bred previously without producing a live foal, or if it has been a long time since she last foaled.

## **8. Preservation of genetic variation**

In order to monitor the development of the inbreeding coefficient in the breed, statistics with updated inbreeding development must be published every quarter. In consultation with relevant professional circles, the NFL may implement measures that it deems necessary from time to time to limit inbreeding. Measures cannot be implemented without a decision by the NFL board. See Appendix 9, Controlling the development of inbreeding in Fjord horses, for more details on the strategy for preserving genetic variation.

### **8.1. Emphasis on pedigree in licensing decisions**

Stallions that, following a professional assessment, have a favourable pedigree in relation to the rest of the population may be approved/awarded a premium on this basis. The general requirements in Appendix 3 for obtaining breeding approval may be waived for such stallions if they have approved behaviour, performance and health. It must be clearly stated in the judging records that pedigree has been taken into account in the selection. The criteria used for assessing pedigree can be found in Appendix 5, Approval instructions for Fjord horses.

### **8.2. Mating quotas**

All premium stallions are allocated a lifetime quota of 70 coverings. At the first selection, the stallion is allocated half of the lifetime quota (35 coverings). The NFL may grant additional quotas upon application in special cases (e.g. documented illness during the covering season with a subsequent low foal percentage). Individual mare quotas may be used to the extent necessary to limit inbreeding in the population. Individual mare quotas must be determined before 1 March of the current year.

### **8.3. Other measures**

The NFL Board must, to the greatest extent possible, work actively to preserve genetic variation in the breed, including, but not limited to, the points mentioned above and below:

- Freezing of genetic material such as semen.
- Collection and shipment of semen to encourage breeding where there are long distances to studs.
- Encouraging the use of as many stallions as possible in breeding and ensuring that they all contribute equally.

## **9. Reproduction methods**

The following forms of reproduction are permitted for Fjord horses:

- Natural mating
- Semen (fresh, chilled and frozen semen).

### **9.2. Use of semen from dead or castrated stallions**

Semen from a dead breeding-approved stallion or castrated stallion that was breeding-approved

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nhest.no/reglement.612540.no.html>

at the time of castration may be used after the stallion has died/been castrated if the use is deemed necessary to limit inbreeding. The use of semen from a dead/castrated stallion must be approved by the NFL board.

### **9.3. Stallions approved and stationed abroad**

Mares may be covered abroad or inseminated with imported semen. The stallion must meet the pedigree requirements that apply to Norwegian-born horses and be approved for breeding in the country where the covering/semen production takes place in order for the offspring to be registered in the A-register. This does not apply if the stallion has a 0 premium from a stallion show in Norway; Norwegian-born offspring of these will be entered in the B register. If the stallion has or has had breeding approval in Norway, the quota allocated for Norwegian-registered foals still applies even if the stallion has been exported. In addition, general import regulations for the import of genetic material apply<sup>8</sup>.

## **10. Follow-up of the breeding plan**

### **10.1. Revision of the breeding plan**

The breeding plan for Fjord horses must be revised every four years. In special cases, individual changes may be made outside of the ordinary revision. All changes to the breeding plan must be announced by the NFL.

### **10.2. Proposed changes to the breeding plan**

The Norwegian Fjord Horse Association must send any proposed changes to the Norwegian Food Safety Authority before 1 October of the year before the changes are intended to be implemented.

## **11. Information about third parties**

Norsk Hestesenter, Starumsvegen 71, 2850 Lena performs the following technical tasks related to the breeding programme:

- Registration and stud book keeping
- Display and storage of individual data
- Training of judges

Traits registered at official shows are recorded in the NHS database linked to horses through a unique database code. Inbreeding and genetic parameters are calculated using specialised software for this purpose.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2022-04-06-630/\\*##x2a;](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2022-04-06-630/*##x2a;)

## **Appendix**

- Appendix 1: Classification of the Fjord Horse stud book
- Appendix 2: Disqualifying traits
- Appendix 3: Indices, premiums and ranking
- Appendix 4: Health examination of stallions
- Appendix 5: Approval instructions for Fjord horses
- Appendix 6: Performance tests for Fjord horses
- Appendix 7: Rules for breeding-approved stallions
- Appendix 8: Progeny evaluation
- Appendix 9: Controlling the development of inbreeding in Fjord horses

## Appendix 1 Classification of the stud book for Fjord horses

### Norwegian stud book for Fjord horses

The Norwegian stud book for Fjord horses is based on a pure-breeding system. The stud book is divided into registers, where foals are entered in the A, B or C register depending on the status of their parents. The registration rules determine which register each horse is entered in. Horses in the A register receive red passports, while horses in the B and C registers receive blue passports. As of 2015, it is not illegal to use unlicensed stallions for breeding, but offspring of licensed and unlicensed stallions are recorded in separate registers.

#### *Definitions in the stud book*

- *A register:* Selected/premium sire. Dam in the A register or B register with four generations of documented and approved pedigree. Offspring of mares that are in the B register because there is no DNA available for their dam (see below) are entered in the A register. Horses in the A register have full top-level competition rights.
- *B register:* The B register is for horses that for various reasons are not eligible for the A register. Offspring of mares can earn an approved pedigree and thus be entered in the A register. Horses in the B register do not have top-level competition rights.  
Example:
  - Selected sire. Not fully registered dam. (Documented dam line, but dam has too few approved generations in its pedigree.)
  - Horse with approved pedigree, but where the DNA profile of the dam cannot be obtained. This makes complete pedigree control impossible.
  - Purebred horse, but with an unregistered sire.
  - Selected sire. Type-approved dam.
- *C register:* The C register is for horses that, for various reasons, are not eligible for the A or B register. Horses in the C register do not have top-level competition rights.  
Example:
  - Unregistered sire. Not fully registered dam.
  - Fjord horses that have been created through embryo transfer.
- Imported horses that are registered in the equivalent Norwegian A register in their home country are placed in the A register if they have at least four generations of documented and approved pedigree. Imported horses that do not meet these requirements are placed in the B register.

#### *Type approval of mares*

Type approval of mares can take place according to criteria set by NFL. For a mare to be eligible for type approval, one of the following criteria must be met:

- DNA testing against the declared sire/award-winning sire that cannot exclude it and information about the dam that appears to be comparable to the information found in the breed's archive. The sire will then be declared in the pedigree.
- DNA check against the registered mother, which cannot rule it out, and information about the father that appears to be comparable to the information found in the breed's archive.

If neither parent is DNA-typed, information about the mother's ancestry is likely to be with information in the breed's archive.

## Appendix 2 Disqualifying traits

The traits listed in this appendix are disqualifying and mean that stallions, mares and geldings cannot be graded or awarded a premium at shows. Note that not being eligible for a premium does not affect a mare's suitability for breeding.

### Colours and markings

If markings on a horse are accepted at an official show, the same markings cannot subsequently be disqualifying. Disqualifying colours or markings mean that breed type and character is graded a fail.

- Blue-eyed light cream horses
- White and flesh-coloured markings on the head. The exception is a star measuring less than 5.0 cm at its largest diameter on mares and geldings.
- Wall eye
- Congenital light cream markings on the body.
- White markings on the legs. Light-coloured legs that gradually transition to the characteristic colour of red dun or yellow dun horses are not considered markings.
- Completely white hooves

### Health and soundness

Disqualifying health traits mean that health is graded a fail.

- Testicles and fertility
  - Cryptorchidism, a condition in which one (colt) or both (stallion) testicles have not descended into the scrotum.
  - Significant differences in testicle size and consistency.
  - Scrotal hernia, a condition in which the small intestine descends into the scrotum via the inguinal canal (usually on one side), is not acceptable in stallions 10 years of age or younger. Owners of approved stallions are obliged to notify the Norwegian Fjord Horse Association if the stallion develops a scrotal hernia. This must be made clear to stallion owners when the licensing certificate is issued.
- Movement problems
  - Patella locking or patella out of position is disqualifying. Slight hooking, also called *catching*, may lead to disqualification. The severity of the finding will be decisive in determining whether approval/a licence is granted.
  - Abnormal leg position (e.g. sabre-shaped forelegs, flat front knees) and splints must be described, but the severity of the defect will determine whether a certificate of approval or licence is granted.
- Other disqualifying traits
  - Sweet itch<sup>9</sup>
- Malocclusions
  - Overbite or underbite where the front teeth in the upper and lower jaws or canines are not in contact and this is not due to injury are disqualifying traits. If a serious malocclusion is suspected, an extended oral examination must be carried out, including examination of misaligned biting on the canines and chewing surfaces.

## Appendix 3 Indices, premiums and ranking

For all classes, the following formula must be used to calculate the overall score for conformation. Two decimal places must be used.

When the canter is not shown:

$$\frac{(\text{Type} \times 40 + \text{body} \times 20 + \text{forelegs} \times 10 + \text{hind legs} \times 10 + \text{walk} \times 10 + \text{trot} \times 10)}{100}$$

When the canter is shown:

$$\frac{\left( \text{Type} \times 40 + \text{body} \times 20 + \text{forelegs} \times 10 + \text{hind legs} \times 10 + (\text{walk} \times \left(20 \times \frac{1}{3}\right)) + \text{trot} \times \left(20 \times \frac{1}{3}\right) + \text{canter} \times \left(20 \times \frac{1}{3}\right) \right)}{100}$$

Selection, awarding and ribbon:

The following applies to adult mares, stallions and geldings at official shows:

- Selection/premium grade is awarded on the basis of the overall score for conformation, as well as successful completion of the behaviour, health and performance tests for the relevant class. For stallions, an approved health examination is also required.
- Previously shown mares and geldings cannot lose their previously achieved premium grade, but will be ranked according to their overall score for conformation at the current show.
- Stallions undergoing a third evaluation cannot lose their previously awarded premium grade or be awarded a lower premium grade than previously achieved, but will be ranked according to their overall conformation score at the current show.
- Mares and geldings that do not show or who fail the driving test are awarded a ribbon in the same way as young horses on the basis of their overall conformation score and successful completion of the behaviour test.

The following applies to awarding premiums to young horses at official shows:

- Young horses are awarded ribbons based on their overall conformation score.
- Two- and three-year-old mares can be awarded an extra ribbon. The awarding of extra ribbons follows the criteria for 2nd premium.

Table 2 provides an overview of the minimum limits for the awarding of ribbons, licensing and premium grades, having passed the behaviour test, any performance test and health examination. Please note that the following also applies:

Young horses:	No sub-score included in the overall score may be below 5.00.
Mares and geldings:	No sub-score included in the overall score may be below 6.00.
Stallions, first presentation:	No sub-score included in the overall score may be below 6.00.
Stallions, later presentation:	No sub-score included in the overall score may be below 6.50.

**Table2** Minimum limits for overall scores for conformation at selection and award shows. Lowest accepted score for breed type and character in brackets.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Ribbon</b>	<b>Selection grade</b>	<b>3rd premium</b>	<b>2nd premium</b>	<b>1st premium</b>
Young horse	6.50 (7.00)	-	-	-	-
Mares and geldings	7.00 (7.00)	-	7.00 (7.00)	8.00 (8.00)	8.80 (9.00)
Stallions	-	7.30 (7.00)	7.50 (7.50)	8.00 (8.00)	8.80 (9.00)
Selection weighted on pedigree	-	7.00 (7.00)	7.20 (7.00)	-	-

### **Rank**

- Mares, geldings and stallions aged 3 years and older that achieve 8.00 or higher and young horses that achieve 7.80 or higher in the overall score must be assessed for quality and ranked according to the overall score achieved. Exception: Horses with sub-scores included in the overall score below 6.5 must not be ranked in terms of quality, even if the overall score is above the requirement.
- In the event of a tie in overall scores, horses must be separated according to the judges' discretion.

## **Appendix 4 Health examination of stallions**

The health examination of stallions is carried out as a clinical health examination. The veterinarian must also carry out a description check against the horse passport, including a microchip check. Conditions that disqualify from grading and awarding premiums are given in Appendix 2, Disqualifying traits.

If the veterinarian or judges require further examination, additional examinations may be carried out before any breeding approval is granted. Regardless of the outcome, the results of additional examinations must be archived and entered on the stallion's judging card.

### **Clinical health examination**

The stallion must undergo a veterinary examination during the show. For stallions undergoing an extended performance test, the veterinary examination must be carried out before the performance test takes place. The following procedures must be carried out when examining Fjord stallions:

- Circulatory and respiratory examination
- Check of bite
- Examination of genitals
- Orthopaedic examination, including inspection of gait and trot. Flexion tests must only be performed if findings are made during palpation.
- Special examination of locking in the kneecap during the second assessment. The horse must then be led both ways in a circle at a walk, turned around and led slowly downhill at least four times (where the veterinarian observes the horse twice from each side).
- The veterinarian must also assess the stallion's behaviour.

## Appendix 5 Approval instructions for Fjord horses

The results of the assessment of conformation, health, working ability and behaviour must be evaluated in accordance with the weighting of the various traits and form the basis for the licensing decision. Stallions with defects are assessed in accordance with Appendix 2, Disqualifying traits. The requirements for the traits in the breeding goal must be satisfied individually.

### Conformation

The individual sub-scores are weighted into an overall score for conformation as described in Appendix 3, Indices, premiums and ranking. The following applies to the scoring of traits observed during the various stages, where traits included in the overall score for conformation are highlighted:

- **Breed type and character** are assessed in the conformation ring.
- **Body and musculature** are assessed in the conformation ring.
- **Foreleg traits** are assessed based on inspection on hard ground and in the conformation ring.
- **Hind leg character** is assessed based on inspection on hard ground and in the conformation ring.
- Hooves are not to be graded, but any deviations or particularly good hooves are to be described in writing.
- The correctness of movement is judged as part of the movement grade during inspection on hard ground and in the conformation ring.
- **The gait** is assessed in the conformation ring.
- **The trot** is assessed separately during the inspection at liberty and in the conformation ring, and the highest grade of these is considered the final grade for the trot.
- **The canter grade** is assessed during the inspection at liberty.

### Performance tests

Performance tests are graded, and deviations are described in accordance with the applicable performance test regulations. Performance tests must be graded but are assessed as a pass or fail in the licensing decision. The performance test must be passed in order for the stallion to achieve a licensing or premium grade.

### Behaviour

Stallions that display dangerous behaviour and/or behaviour that may create dangerous situations during the show must be rejected and behavioural deviations must be described on the judging card (see rules of procedure for stallion shows below). Undesirable behaviour during veterinary examination or performance tests must be given special weight. Behaviour is assessed as a pass or fail in the licensing decision.

Stallions for first-time licensing that are rejected from the stallion show due to behaviour do not lose their competition rights. Stallions that are rejected due to behaviour for the second time do not have the right to compete at top level as stallions in the future.

### Health

Health is assessed during a veterinary examination in the case of stallions. See section 4.5 Health and Appendix 2, Disqualifying traits. Health is assessed as a pass or fail in the licensing decision.

### Markings

Stallions with colours or markings that are not accepted must be rejected, see Appendix 2 Disqualifying traits.

### **Pedigree and colour**

Norwegian-bred stallions may be approved for breeding based on their pedigree or colour even if they do not meet the applicable minimum requirements for licensing. In special cases, imported stallions may be assessed according to the same criteria as Norwegian-bred stallions. The stallion's pedigree and colour must only be weighted positively. A deviation of up to 0.30 points in the overall score may be accepted if the performance test, health and behaviour are approved, see Appendix 3, Indices, premiums and ranking.

The assessment of whether to approve a stallion based on pedigree or colour must always be made after all other factors have been assessed and described, and grades have been awarded. Representatives from the NFL must, if it is relevant to include a stallion based on pedigree or colour, inform the licensing committee which stallions this applies to.

The pedigree of registered stallions is assessed on a professional basis by the NFL in consultation with relevant experts once the deadline for registering for the stallion show has passed. The points below are examples of criteria that may be used as a basis for breeding approval based on pedigree, but are not limited to these:

- The stallion belongs to a stallion line with limited presence
- The stallion has a sire that has not been widely used and has no selected male offspring
- The stallion belongs to a dam line that has not produced any breeding stallions in recent times, or which is generally underrepresented
- The stallion has a lower than average kinship to the rest of the population
- The stallion has a low degree of kinship to other approved breeding stallions
- The stallion has a colour that is not well represented, or is a carrier of genes for this colour

## **Rules of procedure for the stallion show at Nordfjordeid**

### **Highest responsible authority**

NHS is responsible for the selection of stallions of national breeds, cf. the allocation letter from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (LMD). NHS and the board of NFL are responsible for ensuring that this is done in accordance with the current breeding plan.

The board and breeding committee of the NFL must at all times be represented at the stallion show by at least two eligible representatives. At least one of the representatives must be from the breeding committee. If all ordinary members of the breeding committee are disqualified (exhibitors, owners or breeders of stallions presented for breeding approval, or close relatives of owners or breeders of stallions), both representatives must come from the board. The representatives cannot make their own decisions, but must inform the board, which can make decisions on matters concerning the stallion show or the breeding plan. If Fjord horses are exhibited at stallion shows in other parts of the country than Nordfjordeid and a situation arises where it is necessary to consult with the NFL, the chair of the board, or secondarily the chair of the breeding committee, must be contacted.

If any deficiencies or errors are discovered in the breeding plan and/or appendices, these must be archived and, if necessary, incorporated into the breeding plan and/or appendices at the first

possible revision.

The board of the stallion show is responsible for ensuring that the show regulations are followed and that animal welfare is maintained. Officials have a duty to report to the board if they observe conditions that are not in line with this.

#### **Behaviour at the show**

If judges or veterinarians observe undesirable behaviour from a stallion during conformation assessment, performance tests, health examinations or measurements, they are responsible for stopping the assessment of the stallion. Officials have an immediate duty to report to the judge/veterinarian/board who has the authority to stop the assessment of the stallion.

If undesirable behaviour is observed between assessments, the official who observes this must request that the stallion be placed in the stable until an assessment has been made as to whether the stallion can continue with its breeding assessment. Judges, veterinarians or other officials must then immediately report undesirable behaviour to the board. The board must then, as soon as practically possible, call in a representative from the NFL and the judges/officials who reported the incident to clarify whether the stallion should be allowed to resume its assessment or be rejected from the stallion show.

If the stallion is allowed to resume its assessment, representatives from the NFL and the board must be present to help decide whether the stallion must be rejected or allowed to continue. There must always be at least three people in the group considering rejecting a stallion (representatives from the NFL, the board and the relevant judge/veterinarian). There is no right to appeal a rejection due to undesirable behaviour, but the exhibitor has the right to meet with the relevant judge(s) and the NFL representative as soon as possible after the rejection for an explanation. The reasons for the rejection must be given to the exhibitor in writing and verbally.

#### **Meeting between the veterinarian, performance test judges and conformation judges after assessment**

The veterinarian, performance test judges and conformation judges must hold a meeting after all stallions have undergone health examinations, performance tests and conformation assessments. The purpose is not to review all tests in detail, but to give veterinarians, performance test judges and conformation judges the opportunity to discuss stallions that for various reasons have deviations in their tests/examinations. No changes must be made to the grades that have been given.

#### **Stallion show**

At the stallion show, the stallions must undergo a veterinary examination, be presented for judging in walk, trot and canter, perform a performance test and be inspected by the conformation judges. The stallions are assessed for conformation both in classes and individually. Once these elements have been completed, the stallion has been fully assessed.

#### **Rules**

The licensing of stallions is carried out in accordance with the current breeding plan and the regulations for shows and performance tests. The licensing committee and judges are appointed by the NHS based on guidelines from the NFL. The NFL has considerable responsibility when it comes to assessing suitability and must be the appeal body in any cases of unsuitability. The assessments must be based on the Public Administration Act.

**Training of judges**

The training and authorisation of conformation and performance test judges is carried out by the NHS in accordance with more detailed training plans.

**Follow-up of judges**

Separate meetings must be held for Fjord horse judges every quarter in order to keep them informed on professional issues and any changes to the breeding plan and regulations. The NFL must, in collaboration with other breed organisations (or an organisation representing/authorised by such organisations), establish more detailed rules in this respect.

## **Appendix 6 Performance tests for Fjord horses**

### **Adult mares and stallions**

The first time adult mares and geldings are shown, they must undergo a driving test in accordance with the current performance test regulations for official horse shows<sup>10</sup>.

### **Performance tests for stallions**

#### ***Stallion inspection at liberty in the indoor arena***

The inspection at liberty in the indoor arena involves individual assessment of the stallions. Free presentation aims to reinforce the judges' assessments of the stallions' movements. The stallions must be presented at a walk by inspectors on the square track before they leave the arena.

#### ***Driving test***

The performance test (driving test) is mandatory the first time an adult stallion is presented for assessment, or at a later date if an unregistered stallion is presented again. Otherwise, reference is made to the current performance test regulations for mares and stallions<sup>15</sup>.

### **Extended performance test**

To obtain further breeding approval and premiums, all first-time approved stallions must pass an approved extended performance test. The purpose of the extended performance test for Fjord horses is to assess the stallions' performance traits under relatively similar conditions. The exercises in the performance test are selected to reflect the versatility and range of uses of the Fjord horse. An external rider and external driver are used to assess the rideability and drivability of the stallions. Health and behaviour will also be assessed.

The extended performance test takes place over three days prior to the stallion show. The stallions will undergo a veterinary check on day one, while on days two and three riding and driving tests will be carried out. For the awarding of premiums after the extended performance test, the stallions are ranked against their age group.

Imported/leased stallions from abroad that have achieved first-time approval in Norway can register for the extended performance test on the same basis as Norwegian-registered stallions. Performance tests from abroad will be approved if they are of the same quality and can be directly compared with the Norwegian tests.

The stallion owners must cover the costs of the extended performance test themselves. Stallions can be entered for an extended performance test from the year after their first licensing.

The elements included in the test are as follows:

- driving
- riding in the indoor arena and in the field
- movements and forward motion
- observation of behaviour in the stable
- health assessment
- overall impression

The stallion must be examined by a veterinarian at the start of the test period. The veterinarian will evaluate the stallion's health status and grant or deny and approval.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nhest.no/bruksproever.490052.no.html>

### ***General information about the practical tests***

The practical tests will be judged with numerical scores (1-10) and a written comment. The riding test and driving test will each be weighted 50% in the overall result.

Both the riding test and the driving test must be performed with both the owner's rider/driver and an external rider/driver, with the owner's rider/driver presenting the stallion first. The owner's rider/driver may be the owner themselves or the person the owner wishes to perform the test. The owner's rider and driver do not have to be the same person. The external rider and driver are appointed by the NHS in consultation with the NFL.

If the owner of the stallion is not satisfied with the first test, they have the right to retake the test on the afternoon of the day the test is taken. In the case of a retake, no external rider/driver will be used, only the owner/driver. It is the best riding/driving test with the owner's own rider/driver that counts. A new, voluntary riding or driving test requires that the judges find this justifiable for safety and animal welfare reasons. If lameness is suspected, the stallion must be assessed by a qualified veterinarian before a new attempt is made. If the judges have to reject a stallion on a second attempt at the riding or driving test, the extended performance test is considered to have been failed.

### ***Behaviour in the stable***

Behaviour in the stable is recorded twice a day (Wednesday – Friday) in terms of stereotypical behaviour. This will take place during breaks/feeding times. All stallions must remain in their stalls during this time. Stereotypical behaviour alone does not disqualify a stallion from receiving a premium, but the observations will be included in the overall assessment of whether the stallion's behaviour is acceptable.

### ***Day 1: Arrival and veterinary inspection***

Arrival day and veterinary inspection.

In the afternoon, there will be an information meeting for entrants.

### ***Day 2: Riding test***

The stallions are presented one by one, normally in catalogue order. The test is held in the riding arena, with a separate warm-up elsewhere. 20-30 minutes is allocated per stallion. The stallions must be presented in the equipment defined for riding tests for Fjord horses in the general performance test regulations.

The stallions must be presented with rein contact consistent with their age and training. The judges look for good willingness to work, drive and cooperation, suppleness, movement and balance.

The stallions must be presented in walk, trot and canter. All gaits must be presented on both sides. The stallions do not need to follow a specific riding pattern, but during the presentation they must perform voltes of approx. 20 metres in trot. The stallions must also halt for at least 5 seconds.

After the test rider has ridden, the test is concluded with the owner's rider walking a course outdoors field. Here, the judges assess the stallion's movements and balance on the field.

The riding test must be weighted as follows:

Element	Weighting	
Walk	20%	
Trot	20%	
Canter	20%	
Riding element	10%	Sub-element weighted equally
Willingness to work/rideability	30%	Sub-element weighted equally

**Day 3: Driving test**

The stallions must be presented one by one, normally in catalogue order. The test must commence in the riding arena after warming up in the designated area. 20-30 minutes must be allocated per stallion.

The driving test can be performed with a working harness or marathon harness, and a 2- or 4-wheel carriage that fits the selected harness. The organiser will provide the carriages. It is possible to use your own carriage for the driving test. Headgear with blinders is not permitted. The stallions must be pre-harnessed. Before the stallions start the driving test, an inspector appointed by the organiser must check that the harness and carriage are correctly fitted to the horse.

In the riding arena, the stallions must be shown at a walk and trot on both sides, as well as standing still for at least 10 seconds. The stallions do not have to follow a specific driving pattern, but during the show they must perform voltes of approximately 20 metres at a trot. The test is concluded with a hill test, figure-eight turns and backing up outside.

The judges assess the stallion's gaits, willingness to cooperate, forward movement and whether the stallion is relaxed and confident in the carriage.

The driving test will be weighted as follows:

Element	Weighting	
Walk	20%	
Trot	20%	
Driving element	20%	Sub-element weighted equally
Willingness to work/driveability	40%	

## **Appendix 7 Rules for breeding-approved stallions**

Stallion owners are obliged to follow the current breeding plan and the requirements set out in the plan by the breeding organisation, including but not limited to the points below.

### **Quotas**

Owners of breeding-approved stallions undertake to comply with the current mare quotas for Fjord horses.

### **Reporting obligation**

If a selected or premium stallion develops a disqualifying condition, such as a scrotal hernia or sweet itch, this must be reported immediately to the NHS and NFL. A premium stallion loses its breeding approval, but not its premium grade, if it develops a disqualifying condition.

If a selected stallion is sold, exported, euthanised or castrated, the NHS and NFL must be notified.

At the request of the NHS and/or NFL, stallion owners must provide additional information about the breeding season.

### **Duty to provide information**

In breeding work, both mare owners and stallion owners/keepers are responsible for ensuring that all coverings and the results of the coverings are registered with the stud book and passport issuing body (NHS) before the set deadlines. Mare owners are responsible for registering the results of the coverings. All results must be registered, regardless of whether the mare is empty, has aborted, had a live foal, or other result.

### **Mating list**

The stallion owner/keeper is responsible for submitting lists of all mares covered by the stallion during the current season to the NHS and NFL.

### **Stud fee form**

A stud fee form must be completed for each mare and delivered to the mare owner as a receipt for payment of the stud fee. By printing out the stud certificate, the stallion owner confirms that the offspring can be registered.

## Appendix 8 Progeny evaluation

### ***Offspring assessment of stallions***

Offspring assessment of stallions must be carried out in accordance with the applicable rules for official horse shows. In addition to meeting the minimum criteria described below, a comprehensive assessment of the offspring group is made, e.g. whether the offspring are of better quality than their half-siblings. Stallions are offspring assessed when they attend their third assessment and may be registered for a new offspring assessment at a later date by the owner. Mares must be registered for offspring assessment by the owner.

### ***Criteria for assessing offspring groups***

#### **Minimum requirements for stallions**

In addition to meeting the minimum requirements described below, an overall assessment of the offspring group is made, which includes, among other things, how uniform the offspring group is and whether the stallion's offspring are of better quality than half-siblings with another dam.

**Progeny rating Elite:** At least 2 selected or premium stallions, of which at least 1 has a 1st or 2nd premium. At least 8 mares with premium grade, of which at least 1 has a 1st premium and at least 4 have a 2nd premium.

**Offspring grade A:** At least 2 selected or premium stallions and at least 5 mares with premium grade, where at least 3 must have 1st or 2nd premium.

**Progeny rating B:** At least 1 selected or premium stallion. At least 5 mares with premium grade.

Geldings with first and second premium may replace mares in the offspring assessment.

#### **Minimum requirements for mares**

In addition to meeting the minimum requirements described below, a comprehensive assessment of the offspring group is made, which includes, among other things, how uniform the offspring group is and whether the mare's offspring are of better quality than half-siblings with another sire. There is no requirement to have offspring of both sexes.

**Progeny rating Elite:** At least 4 offspring by at least 3 stallions. At least 4 selected or premium offspring, where at least 1 offspring has a 1st premium and at least 3 have a 2nd premium.

**Offspring grade A:** At least 4 offspring by at least 3 stallions. At least 3 offspring with 1st or 2nd premium.

**Offspring rating B:** At least 4 offspring, where at least 4 must be premium status.

Premium stallions with 1st and 2nd premium count in the offspring assessment.

The awarding of offspring premiums is assessed by the NHS and NFL prior to the show.

## Appendix 9 Controlling the development of inbreeding

The Fjord horse has had a relatively stable inbreeding development in recent years. This can be attributed to, among other things, a focus on the use of young stallions, the use of stallions from different lines, and the import of breeding animals. In a small population with few foals born each year, there is nevertheless a need to monitor the situation and maintain measures to limit inbreeding.

**Goal: Inbreeding in the breed should not exceed the FAO's<sup>11</sup> recommendation of a maximum inbreeding rate per generation of 0.5–1%.**

### Measures and tools in practice

**Several stallions are shown as three-year-olds, approved for breeding and used.**

- Use kinship information in selection decisions and select as many stallions as possible
- Encourage the even use of stallions
- Actively use stallions with advantageous pedigrees in various projects
- Encourage mare owners to choose stallions with favourable pedigrees

**More mare owners should take kinship into account when assessing a stallion, and the majority of coverings should be around or below the average for the breed.**

- Provide information to mare owners about the importance of relationships between stallions and mares, as well as the importance of good combinations for producing offspring that can contribute to breeding
- Access to pedigree checks for horse owners
- Lectures and articles in the member magazine and other forums
- Breeding advice from the breeding committee, including on kinship

### Stallion owners contribute to limiting inbreeding

- The NFL urges all stallion owners not to accept mares that are too closely related to the stallion<sup>12</sup>
- General restriction on kinship for release under the auspices of the Norwegian Fjord Horse Association (e.g. in Sikkilsdalen)<sup>12</sup>
- Restriction on kinship between stallions and mares when paying breeding subsidies to local associations/members<sup>12</sup>

**Reduce the contribution of single stallions/stallion lines to the population.**

- Use EvA or other relevant tools in the preparation of lifetime quotas, individual quotas or other quotas as needed

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<sup>11</sup> FAO = Food and Agriculture Organisation, the UN organisation for nutrition and agriculture

<sup>12</sup> Mating that results in offspring with an inbreeding coefficient >12.5% is not recommended.