



SPSS Information Sheet 6

SPSS Mare Grading & Performance Testing Information

When and Where

The 2019 mare grading venues & dates are:

- Saturday 14th September Sidewood Dressage, Sidewood Farm, Forth, Scotland ML11 8ET
- Sunday 15th September AM – North-West - venue to be confirmed
PM – North-Wales - venue TBC
- Monday 16th September AM - Kings EC, Sturts Farm, Winslow, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4SR (TBC)
PM – South Wales – venue TBC
- Friday 27th September Wellow Equestrian, Scott's Farm, Wellow, Newark, Notts NG22 0EQ
- Saturday 28th September AM – Queenholme Bloodstock Stables, Sponge Drove, Willingham, Cambridge CB24 5JN
PM – South East – venue TBC (TBC)
- Sunday 29th September AM - Catherston Stud, Croft Farm, Over Wallop, Stockbridge, Hants SO20 8HX (TBC)
PM – South-West – venue TBC

Mare Performance Testing will also be available at selected venues (yet to be confirmed)

Entries will open late June/early July and close on the 24th August 2019. Early entry is advised as spaces will be allocated in order of receipt of entries and once capacity is reached at each venue further entries will be placed on a waiting list. If there is space, late entries may be taken, please call the office on 07703 566066 to check. Late entry supplement £10 per pony for grading & performance testing entries.

Withdrawals before the closing date will have their entry fee either refunded or the entry can be carried forward to another date/venue (including in another year). Withdrawals after the closing date will only be refunded if the place can be filled from the waiting list but the entry can be carried forward once to another date/venue (including in another year). Note that any registration (overstamping) and membership fees paid will neither be refunded nor carried forward.

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/2018-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.

At the Grading

At the grading, each mare is assessed in hand for confirmation then in hand and loose for paces and loose down a jumping lane (of 2 or 3 fences). If a mare is not being presented for Mare Performance Testing (see below), but the owner wishes the judges to also see her under saddle, then this will be possible and will influence the “Temperament” and “General Impression” marks. Mares in foal or with a foal at foot are not excepted to loose jump or be ridden – but can be if the owner wants. Mares are NOT disadvantaged by not doing these stages. 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. For more information on aspects such as turnout and presentation, please see our website “Information & FAQ” page - www.sportpony.org.uk/info.shtml

As we are also evaluating youngstock at the same event, we will evaluate a foal at foot of a grading mare for free or if the mare has no foal and is aged 2 or 3, then we will evaluate her for free.

Costs

- **Entry Costs.** To summarise entry costs:
 - You need to be a member - £30 annual individual membership, £40 annual family, £250 individual life, £350 family life. Form here www.sportpony.org.uk/membership.shtml
 - She needs to be registered with us, a one-off fee of £25. If you wish to do this ahead of entering the grading, then please use the form here www.sportpony.org.uk/registration.shtml#Forms. Or, if you wish to register her when entering for grading, then just send back the grading entry form with the higher fee of £105 as this includes the £25 registration fee.
 - You need to enter her for grading - £80 (for mares with SPSS passports or who are already SPSS registered/overstamped); £105 for all others (includes the one-off £25 registration fee). An entry form can be downloaded here once entries open - www.sportpony.org.uk/events-entry-forms.shtml
 - You can send all the forms/fees together and we will accept payment by cheque or bank transfer – or you can join as a member and do the registration ahead of entering for the grading.
 - There will be an additional charge for the optional Mare Performance Testing of £50.
- **Post Grading Requirements.** If she passes then you will need to provide a DNA hair sample for us to store in case testing is required (in which case the cost of testing is £50), unless she has already had a DNA profile done that either you can supply or we can access. We intend to take hair samples from all mares at the grading to make it easier for everyone.

Mare Performance Testing

There will also be the opportunity for mares to be performance tested at selected SPSS Tour venues. This is optional and will be open to all SPSS graded mares who are 4 years of age or older and it will be possible for the mare to be graded earlier on the same day. It is the perfect opportunity for those whose young mares were graded before they were backed, or for those with older mares who are presenting them for grading while they are in ridden work, to showcase their mare’s ability under saddle as a sports pony.

We will follow the continental model for this, with the mares initially being ridden by their own rider in small groups (3 or 4) of similarly aged mares. They will be assessed under saddle in walk, trot & canter on both reins for their way of going, their gaits & temperament with jumping as an option (no mare will be disadvantaged for not jumping). Then all mares which pass this initial assessment will be ridden by our test rider who will score their rideability. The overall performance test mark out of 10 for each mare is then calculated by averaging all the judges’ scores given to a mare, with 7 or above being considered a pass. All successful mares will get a certificate and a rosette and, at the end of the year, the highest scoring mares will be announced as the 2019 Mare Performance Test Champion and Reserve Champion.

We very much anticipate that this addition to our Grading & Evaluation schemes will offer a very valuable extra method for breeders to evaluate and promote their breeding programme, whilst also allowing sports pony producers to an opportunity to add a quantified achievement to their ponies and small horses (up to an expected mature height maximum of 158cm).

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