



Baileys Horse Feeds/British Breeding/BEF Futurity 2017

Factsheet 6

How to present your horse

Please see Factsheet 3 for what to wear for you, your assistant and your horse.

Evaluators will follow the guidelines in this Factsheet when assessing horses so that they are asking to see what the handler has prepared their horse to do. The order below may vary so that each horse is given the opportunity to present him/herself at their best. There will be one or more members of a panel of specialist evaluators at any venue.

Entering the arena

The horse is walked energetically on a straight line. The handler walks at the horse's left shoulder carrying the rein(s) in the right hand and whip in the left hand if required. The handler's assistant should be a short way behind, encouraging the horse forward. In the case of foals, one handler each for mare and for foal will be needed.

Entry

The horse is walked to the evaluators at the point of the (approx) 18m x 18m x 18m triangle where the evaluators will check your name and number and ask you to walk on the triangle.

Presentation at walk

When the evaluators say, the handler moves back to the left shoulder and the horse is walked off using the triangle as a guideline. There is no need to stop and turn at each angle of the triangle, the idea is to maintain rhythm and forward motions so use the triangle as a guide only and go wide enabling your horse's pace to be fluid and rhythmical. Your assistant may walk slightly behind your horse, with a whip if required, to encourage your horse to move forward but must not block the line of sight of the evaluators. Please walk foals to the inside or behind the dam.

Presentation at trot

When presenting the horse at trot the handler should gather the rein(s) into the right hand so that they can run freely with the horse just on a contact but without hanging on to the reins, as this will bend the horse to the outside, shorten its stride and disturb its natural movement. The handler should run in line with the horse's shoulder, concentrating solely on the horse. The horse should move freely and energetically into the bridle, and willingly obey the voice aid. Again, just use the triangle as a guide, travel wide around the corners, and ensure that your horse moves forward and shows itself to the best of its ability. Use your assistant if you need to, to encourage the horse forward. If you cannot run to match your horse's ability, you can ask someone else to trot your horse for you. In the case of foals they will be loose at this point to follow their dams who will be led as above. Why not practice this at home and have someone video you? Then you can have a discussion session to see what you need to do to improve your horse's presentation. Be self critical, watch

others present horses in hand on YouTube and in our own Futurity videos . Please focus on the degree of athleticism shown by a horse which is run out well and that of a horse which is restricted by it handler. Make sure the latter is not you! Foals can be trotted in hand instead of loose if they have been prepared in this way and if the handler wishes.

Conformation assessment

Because the horses will stand still more easily after walking and trotting, and sometimes showing loose, we often leave this assessment until later on. The evaluators will let you know when. After halting, the handler stands in front of the horse with a rein in each hand if in a snaffle bridle and the reins should be held about 20 cm from the rings of the bit and the ends should be gathered up neatly. In the case of a single rein, it should be held so that the horse stands still.

The horse should be presented to the evaluators with the left fore slightly in front and the left hind slightly behind. The body weight should be evenly placed. The head is held in a natural position and the handler's attention should be solely on the horse, seeking to keep the horse standing still for fair evaluation. Please practice this at home. All horses will stand still if taught. In the case of foals, they should stand still next to their dams.

If the evaluators move to examine the horse from in front, the handler should move to the side so that the front legs can be seen. The evaluators may ask for the horse to step forward or back up one step so that it is standing completely square. Evaluators may ask you to turn the horse around to see the other side. Please practice at home.

Loose assessment

The evaluators will let you know when they would like you to turn your horse loose and what they would like to see in horses of each age group. They would like to see some trot and canter, as well as gallop in eventers. Your helpers may need to help keep your horse moving and show turns and changes of direction. On the other hand, if your horse is tense and hurried, you may be advised to stand quietly until he/she settles.

In the case of foals, this section will involve catching the foal, trotting the dam away and then releasing the foal to follow its dam so that its movement can be fully assessed. You may need a bucket with food in to catch your horse, even if they are easy to catch at home, horses often react differently in new environment.

Loose jumping

Three year old show jumpers and eventers will also be loose jumped down a lane of three fences as will sports ponies destined for a showjumping or eventing career. During this stage they may wear front boots only, so please bring them with you into the arena but do not put them on until the loose jumping phase. Horses must have been prepared for this phase. Please enlist the help of a knowledgeable person to help you introduce your horse to a jumping lane. Please use the information below to prepare.

The jumping lane

If you are planning to enter a three year old showjumper or eventer, you are advised to watch the video linked to www.britishbreeding.org homepage. You will need to ensure that you can fulfil all the requirements set out in both this Factsheet and the Futurity video.

Preparation at home

This is essential. We will not be able to evaluate any 3 year old that has not been fully prepared before the Futurity assessment day. Preparation is critical for the safety and welfare of the horse and its handlers. All preparation must be done at home –not at the event. Short sessions at home, or in a hired arena, in a safe environment over low jumps offer best results making jumping into a fun, positive, confidence-giving exercise. It must always be remembered that you can teach your horse and assess their basic style over a small fence and it is not advisable to see "how high" your young horse can jump in the early stages -quickly putting the jumps up higher and higher will not make a better jumper out of your horse in the long term and may instead result in refusing and loss of confidence. You may find it easier to start with one jump and then build up to 3 using the distances and heights below.

After a few loose jumping sessions most horses will start to enjoy the exercise and probably will not need much encouragement to keep moving forward down the lane. The horse should calmly and happily lower his head and lengthen his neck as he approaches the fence, take off correctly and round his back with his knees up, with the withers being the highest point of the horse when over the top of the jump (not the head). The objective is a calm, consistent, steady approach to the jumping lane and confident tackling of the fences – just like the horse in the Futurity video.

Distances and layout

The lane will consist of a cross pole, a vertical and an oxer. The distance from the wall/corner to the first fence (cross pole) will vary slightly depending on the layout of the arena. From the cross pole to the second fence (vertical) will be 6.6m. From the vertical to the third fence (oxer) will be 7.10m for ponies and 7.65m for horses. These dimensions are taken from the KWPN studbook which uses these distances to evaluate over 1000 loose jumping horses per year in Holland. It doesn't matter whether a horse is intended for show jumping or eventing, these distances are appropriate provided the horse tackles the lane calmly in trot or a steady canter. A horse jumping these distances comfortably can be seen on our BEF Futurity video. Between 3 and 10 passes down the lane are allowed. The evaluators will give your horse every opportunity to present itself to the best of its ability, within reason. This includes the use of placing poles if the evaluators feel this will help the horse's presentation down the lane. The threshold at which the evaluators determine that they are not likely to see any improvement in performance on assessment day, is entirely at their discretion. The evaluators will confirm when they have seen enough. There is a maximum time limit of 8 minutes for all of these passes in total. In the event that you cannot catch your horse or they persistently decline to go down the lane, regrettably we will not be able to score the loose jumping assessment. Please practice catching and representing your horse down the jumping lane at home.

On the Day

When the evaluators have seen your horse loose and in hand, they will ask you if you are ready to go to go down the jumping lane. Please put the horse's front boots on at this point, you will need one or two assistants with lunge whips (if necessary) who can judge the horses' pace and help you keep him moving calmly down the lane.

Whilst free - jumping each assistant should remain quiet and still so the horse can concentrate and focus, and only send the horse on from behind with a flick of the whip if the horse loses momentum, while also being ready to help slow and settle the horse if he becomes too fast. The idea is for the

assistants to keep the horse moving with good rhythm and plenty of forward impulsion without distracting the horse or making sudden moves that alarm them at the last minute before the jump. A good trot and calm yet forward-going canter are your aim, you don't want the horse to become hurried, unbalanced and fast as they will then jump flat rather than develop a proper rounded bascule over the fences.

Fence heights will start with one pass down the lane with all the poles on the ground.

On the second pass the cross pole will be approx. 60cm in the centre, the vertical will be approx. 60cm and the parallel will be approx. 60cm high and 60cm wide. Some horses may be sufficiently confident and capable for the fences to be a little higher to start with.

On the third pass the cross pole will remain at 60cm, the upright may be raised to 80cm or may stay at 60cm, depending on how the horse progresses, and the oxer will be at approx 80cm high and 80cm wide.

On the fourth pass the cross pole will be 60cm, the vertical will be approx. 80cm and the oxer will be up to 1m high and 80cm wide. These heights may be reduced for ponies but often there is no need because a talented pony is every bit as athletic as a talented horse.

Placing poles may be inserted into the lane to help steady the horse.

Please remember: Boots are allowed on forelimbs but not on hindlimbs.

Both you and your helper must wear helmets of BSEN 1384, EN 1384, PAS 015 or ASTM F1163 standard or higher for loose jumping.

Three year old mares with foals at foot may not loose jump.

Reading all our Factsheets should answer any remaining questions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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