

Guidelines for Offering Mountain & Moorland Pony Classes

By Kathryn Rayner Freeman

This document was put together with information gathered from organizing three M&M pony events on the West Coast. It is written specifically to address offering M&M activities in the United States – based on the population of ponies, the variety of breeds, and the type of activities ponies are used for in this country, while still attempting to maintain the traditional style of competition offered to the M&M ponies in the UK.

To successfully offer Mountain & Moorland – “M&M” – classes at a show the M&M class organizers need to:

1. Determine which event will host M&M classes
2. Determine which ponies are eligible to compete
3. Determine which classes are likely to be well supported.
4. Provided qualified judging

For additional information, an attachment is provided along with this document:

1. Sample Premium for Mountain & Moorland Pony Division

Determine which Events will host M&M classes:

The easiest and most logical type of event to host M&M classes is the pony show. These can be Welsh Pony Shows, Connemara Pony Shows, or Open Pony Shows. However, if the local Arabian or 4-H Open show, for example, is willing to host M&M classes – that’s a great and an acceptable alternative!

The person organizing the M&M classes will have to work closely with the event organizer to assure that any necessary requirements are met. Any financial commitments should be understood up front and how the classes are to be run, who pays for what, and similar issues should be discussed.

Determine which ponies are eligible:

All ponies entered in M&M classes must be registered with their respective US, UK, or other approved breed society (for example, a Highland must be registered with an approved Highland Pony Society). Only purebred ponies are eligible for M&M classes, unless specific part bred classes are offered. If part bred classes are offered, these ponies must be registered with the appropriate breed society as a part bred, or present evidence of one parent being a purebred.

Determining which ponies are eligible for entry in M&M classes at a particular event depends upon *what type of event is hosting the classes*. For example:

- A. M&M classes offered at an open show: All nine breeds of M&M ponies are eligible to compete.
- B. M&M classes offered at a Connemara show: All breeds except the Connemara are eligible to compete. Similarly, M&M classes offered at a Welsh show: All breeds except the Welsh are eligible to compete.

The premise is to offer classes to the M&M breeds which do not have a sufficient number of ponies to warrant their own classes. If at the competition, any given breed is offered its own individual classes (Again, as an example, at a Welsh show where only Welsh ponies are eligible to compete) that breed would not be eligible to compete in the M&M classes.

When a breed is not eligible to compete in the M&M classes, it will, however, compete with the M&Ms in a “Best in Show class” which will be illustrated further in Attachment: Sample Premium for Mountain & Moorland Pony Division.

Determine which Classes to offer:

The classes listed below are what are typically offered for M&M Ponies. There are however, endless possibilities, based on the local population of ponies and what type of classes the M&M class organizers believe will be well supported.

It is important to “know your audience” when organizing M&M classes so that the event organizers, the M&M class organizers, and the exhibitors are satisfied. If the local pony population is made up of primarily ponies under 3 years of age who are not being ridden yet – then offering ridden classes that may not gain sufficient entries is not a wise choice. If the local pony population is made up of primarily of driving ponies, then driving classes will be well received. By holding well attended classes the audience, exhibitors, and event organizers will all be happy – and the M&M ponies will most likely be invited back for another year at the event hosting the M&M classes!

INHAND Classes:

- * **M&M in hand, 3 and under:** in hand classes for ponies 3 and under
- * **M&M in hand, 4 and over:** in hand class for ponies 4 and over
- * **M&M in hand, champion and reserve:** first and second place winners from the above noted in hand classes compete to be named Champion and Reserve

- * **Best in Show, in hand:** Champion M&M In Hand to compete against other champion ponies at the event (For example – the Champion Section A, B, C, D ponies at a Welsh show.)

**** Best in Breed Awards **** : *Best in breed awards are often offered and are a nice touch, but not required. All the ponies from the two in hand classes are brought into the arena and divided into their respective breed groupings. The judge then picks the top one*

(or two) ponies to be awarded Champion, Best in Breed and Reserve, Best in Breed if a second pony is to be recognized.

PERFORMANCE Classes:

* **M&M Ridden:** A ridden class to be judged 50% on Riding and Manners, 50% on Conformation and Breed Type. A walk, trot and canter will be required. Each rider will be asked to do an individual show, where their pony should be shown to his best advantage. Lateral movements are not appropriate and a gallop is encouraged but not required.

* **Best in Show, Ridden:** Like the Best in Show, in hand class, this class will put the top two M&M ridden ponies against the top two ridden ponies in any individual breed classes.

* **M&M First Ridden Pony:** A ridden class to be judged 50% on Riding and Manners, 50% on Conformation and Breed Type. Open to ponies not exceeding 12.2 hands with riders who are at least 3 years old but no more than 12 years old. Ponies are to be judged at a walk and trot and can only be cantered in their individual show, not as a group.

* **M&M Leading Rein Pony:** A ridden class to be judged 50% on Riding and Manners, 50% on Conformation and Breed Type. Open to ponies not exceeding 12.2 hands with riders who are at least 3 years old but no more than 9 years old. The leading rein is to be attached to the nose band only. The reins are to go directly from the bit to the rider's hands.

* **M&M Working Hunter Pony:** An over fences and under saddle class to be judged 50% on Jumping, 20% on style of native breed type while jumping, 20% on Breed Type and Conformation and 10 % on individual show manners within breed type. Ponies will be shown over a course of at least seven fences, consisting of at least one change in direction and one oxer. To the extent possible, fences should be "hunting type" with rustic materials and as substantial as possible. The course is to be free flowing and encourage natural paces in native ponies. The jumping phase of the class will be done first, and any pony eliminated will not be required for the flat portion of the class.

The divisions of ponies and fence height recommendations are noted below:

Class 1: Ponies not exceeding 12.0 hands

Minimum fence height 1'9", Maximum Height 2'0", Maximum spread 1'9"

Class 2: Ponies between 12.0 and 13.2 hands

Minimum fence height 2'3", Maximum Height 2'6", Maximum spread 2'3"

Class 3: Ponies exceeding 13.2 hands

Minimum fence height 2'6", Maximum Height 3'0", Maximum spread 2'6"

ADDITIONAL/MODIFIED Classes:

As noted, it is best to "know your audience" when offering M&M Classes. If there are a large number of Leading Rein type ponies that are over the traditional 12.2 hands – modify or add a class to address that fact. If there are a number of ponies being ridden in Dressage, offer a Dressage Suitability Class or individual Dressage Tests (if time warrants). In addition, based on experience, the following classes may also be popular:

M&M Novice Ridden: to be shown at the walk and trot only. Individual show to be at the direction/discretion of the judge. To be judged 50% on riding and manners and 50% on conformation and type.

M&M Driving: ponies to be put to any type of vehicle and to be judged 50% on manners, cleanliness, suitability of pony to vehicle and correct harnessing and 50% for conformation and breed characteristics.

M&M Trail: A ridden class to test the pony's ability and attitude over a variety of obstacles and challenges.

M&M Baby Obedience: Similar to a trail class. To test the pony's ability and attitude over a variety of obstacles and challenges while being led. This class is specifically designed for young ponies not yet started under saddle.

M&M ponies excel in all most all - if not all - equestrian disciplines and classes may be offered in any discipline that show organizers believe will be well received.

DIVIDING AN M&M CLASS:

Any M&M class can be divided *at the request of the judge*. Judges traditionally divide classes in one of two ways:

* Large Breed vs. Small Breed:

Small breeds: Shetland, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Welsh A&B

Large Breeds: Highland, Dales, Fell, New Forest, Connemara, Welsh C & D

* Separating Individual Breeds: For example, if there is a large attendance of Fell ponies, the judge can pull out all the Fell ponies and have them comprise their own class while leaving the remaining ponies, of varying breeds, to be judged together.

Finding Qualified Judging:

Finding qualified judging is crucial. Not only does this allow for fair competition, it presents an educational and comfortable experience for all. No one wants their Dales pony mistaken for a Connemara pony by an inexperienced or uninformed judge.

The NPS provides a comprehensive listing of qualified judges in both individual breeds and the Mixed Mountain and Moorland panel. It is recommended at this time, that experienced NPS judges be utilized, as most US judges are unfamiliar with the range of the Mountain & Moorland breeds.

Attachment

Sample Premium, Mountain & Moorland Pony Division

2008 Anytown Welsh Pony Show
Mountain & Moorland Pony Division
Judge: Sam Johnson, NPS, Mixed Mountain & Moorland panel

Mountain & Moorland (M&M) classes at this event are open to all registered M&M Ponies except Welsh ponies/cobs (as Welsh ponies/cobs have their own breed specific classes at this event). M&M breeds for this event will consist of: British Shetland, Connemara, Dales, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Fell, Highland, and New Forest. Ponies may be registered with a UK or US breed registry. Partbreds are eligible for classes C, F, G, I, and J. A Partbred is considered a pony either registered with an M&M breed society as a partbred OR a pony having one parent who is a purebred registered with an M&M breed society.

Best of Breed Awards (champion & reserve) will be awarded to those breeds with 2 or more representatives. Best of Breed Awards are graciously sponsored by ABC Tack & Feed

Champion & Reserve M&M (Class D) is graciously sponsored by NPS America, the first international chapter of the UK's National Pony Society.

Champion & Reserve M&M, Performance Pony (class K) is graciously sponsored by The Smith Family

2008 Mountain & Moorland Class Offerings:

- A. M&M pony inhand, 3 and under
- B. M&M pony inhand, 4 and over
- C. Part breed M&M inhand, all ages
- D. Champion/Reserve M&M (first and second place winners of classes A, B, C)
- E. Best in show: Champion M&M pony (winner class D) to compete against Welsh champions.
- F. Novice M&M Ridden Pony: to be shown at the walk and trot only. Individual show to be at the direction/discretion of the judge. To be

- judged 50% on riding and manners and 50% on conformation and type.
- G. Open M&M Ridden Pony: to be shown at the walk, trot and canter. Individual show to be at the direction/discretion of the judge. To be judged 50% on riding and manners and 50% on conformation and type
 - H. Best in Show Ridden: Winner of classes F and G to compete against the Welsh champions
 - I. M&M Working Hunter Pony: Over fences class to be judged 50% on jumping, 20% on style of native breed while jumping, 20% on breed type and confirmation and 10% on manners. Fence heights will be determined by pony height as follows: Ponies under 12.0 hands - fences to be set at 18 inches. Ponies between 12.0 and 13.2 hands - fences to be set at 2 feet. Ponies over 13.2 hands - fences to be set at 2 feet 3 inches.
 - J. M&M Driving: ponies to be put to any type of vehicle and to be judged 50% on manners, cleanliness, suitability of pony to vehicle and correct harnessing and 50% for conformation and breed characteristics.
 - K. Champion/Reserve M&M Performance (first & second place winners F, G, H, I)