



Baileys Horse Feeds/BEF Futurity 2011

Factsheet 8 - The veterinary assessment

The veterinary surgeon will ascertain that the horse is sound and safe to participate (i.e. shows no signs of lameness or symptoms of infectious disease). The horse will be assessed statically (standing) and in motion in walk and trot. The vet's opinion is final in such matters.

The vet or the vet's assistant will give you clear instructions as to what they would like to see during this stage, and actions you are advised to follow. If you do not understand, please ask again now because it is difficult to revisit any concerns later.

The Veterinary Score (out of 10)

This gives a score for the horse's feet, limbs, musculo-skeletal build and condition score on the day. This means that the vet assesses the overall orthopaedic health state of the young horse at this early stage of its development with particular emphasis on identifying signs that certain tissues such as joints, growth plates etc are developing in an appropriate way. The vet's findings are communicated to the handler as the assessment happens and the handler is expected to take note of the vet's observations and take into account any advice offered by the vet.

The mark you will be given consists not only of what the vet sees on the day but also of the vet's experienced judgement on the horse's potential to stay sound under the rigours of modern competition PROVIDED any warnings given, as outlined above, are adhered to and that any issues which have been identified are properly managed. This element of the mark therefore gives a reflection of whether the conformation and physical structure of the horse is such that the horse is likely to REMAIN SOUND and still be competing at the peak of its ability. It must be remembered that some conformational features may not necessarily compromise a horse's ability to perform long term, and a vet's judgement as to the severity and likely impact of any feature or condition is crucial.

Veterinary conformation assessment vs evaluator frame assessment

The difference between this veterinary assessment and the “frame” assessment undertaken by the panel of evaluators is that the panel of evaluators are looking at the build required for potential success in the chosen discipline. They are looking for build, **related to discipline**, which will make a horse stand out and the criteria they will assess are broadly as follows: Head proportional, throatlatch clean, neck muscled over top line and neck length proportional, body direction, shoulder sloping, withers defined and sloping gradually to back, good saddle position, back and leg length proportional, croup length and shape of back and loins appropriate.

The veterinary surgeons conducting the veterinary assessments are members of BEVA and have been drawn from an approved panel of properly briefed specialist sport horse vets, led by the Futurity’s Chief Veterinary Surgeon – Jane Nixon, of Nixon Equine Vets in Buckingham.

The vet will provide written feedback as well as verbal feedback. Please listen to what the vet says. Futurity vets are highly experienced and will offer you constructive advice as to how to deal with any conditions they may identify. This is intended to help you. If you have any questions please ask now. It becomes very difficult to deal fairly with misunderstandings after the event and we cannot undertake to be able to do so.

The handler/owner should ensure that the horse is used to having its ears, eyes, teeth and hooves examined by unfamiliar people. The horse must also accept examination of its skeletal frame, tendons and ligaments by a veterinary surgeon using both visual methods and palpation if required. The horse should be used to walking and trotting in a straight line away from and towards the vet and, if it is wearing a bridle, should have been introduced to the bit in plenty of time to become accustomed to it.

Please note that it is your responsibility to present a horse in a suitable state to be assessed. Low scores attributable, for example, to poor hoof care, obesity or under nourishment or a horse insufficiently well prepared to present themselves adequately for the vet are your own responsibility. The vet can only assess what they see before them, please make sure your horse will walk and trot in hand and stand still. Please see Factsheet 3 for pre Futurity hoof trimming recommendations.

A Baileys Horse Feeds nutritionist and an Intelligent Worming adviser will be on hand in the vet section to provide you with advice on recommended feed and worming regimes for the stage of development of your horse.

What does your vet score mean?	Remarks
10 Excellent features	A horse or pony that shows no performance potential inhibiting issues on the day and no changes in care/routine are seen to be required today in order to fulfill the horse's potential in terms of future soundness.
9 Good/very good features	A horse or pony that shows minimal performance potential inhibiting issues on the day and minor additional care may be required in order to fulfill the horse's potential in terms of future soundness.
8 Mostly good features	A horse or pony that shows some minor performance potential inhibiting issue/s on the day and possibly some additional care is required in order to fulfill the horse's potential in terms of future soundness.
7 Some compromising features	A horse or pony that shows some minor performance potential inhibiting issues on the day and further important additional care may be required in order to fulfill the horse's potential in terms of future soundness. Some features may not be rectifiable, and may limit the level of competition a horse will be able to perform at.
6 – 4 Moderate compromising feature or features. Score between 4 and 6 will signify the relative influence of any features.	A horse or pony that shows some features that are highly likely to affect the level it will be able to perform at. This could be one major or several minor features or a combination. Further care may be required in order to fulfill the horse's potential for future soundness. Some features may not be rectifiable.

4 or below. Significant compromising feature or features

A horse or pony that shows a significant performance potential inhibiting issues or issues which may or may not be rectifiable and long term soundness may not be achievable

Your score is an indicator for the day of assessment. It is not a guarantee of future potential nor does it replace a full five stage vetting or any other form of specialist veterinary assessment. It is not a guarantee that any stallion may be a suitable candidate for stallion grading where a specialist assessment and X rays may be required.

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