

Breed Standards for the Eriskay Pony Breed

GENERAL

Since the Eriskay Pony is a native breed, owing more of its characteristics to natural selection than to human influence, it is the policy of the Eriskay Pony mother society not to be too rigid about standardisation. From a long term point of view, a little normal biological variation is quite good.

TEMPERAMENT

The excellent temperament of Eriskay Ponies is one of their most distinctive and valuable features. All Eriskay Ponies should be placid and amenable with no signs of viciousness or aggression.

COLOUR

Nearly all born black, most turn grey in later life: other colours acceptable. In dark coloured animals there should be a light coloured muzzle and a light coloured ring round the eye; there should not be a pronounced eel stripe.

CONFORMATION

A certain amount of flexibility is allowed. Generally, however, ponies must have the conformation of a good horse and, in addition, have those specific points which distinguish Eriskay Ponies:-

Withers Height: 12.0hh to 13.2hh

Body: generous in all dimensions, relative to the height of the legs.

Chest: very large, deep, well sprung: ideally having a gentle but pronounced slope from the spine downwards towards the full width of the ribcage.

Abdomen: very roomy.

Head: large, wide and deep to the extent of being considered large by the standards of most horse breeds; not coarse; straight profile; large nasal cavity allowing for cold air to be warmed before reaching the lungs.

Teeth: incisor teeth should meet evenly and there should only be a very slight angle; this angle will naturally increase with age.

Neck: shorter and thicker than in 'specialised riding horses'.

Dock: low, but not excessively so; the ideal animal should show a gentle graceful curve from the croup to the pin bone with the dock situated in the middle third of this curve; the tail should be well set in, i.e. tucked in close to the hindquarters to provide adequate protection for the perineum and groin; short "thatch" hairs at root of tail.

Legs: fine, with only a tuft behind the fetlock; viewed from the front, knees and fetlock wide and flat, viewed from the side, leg almost straight from elbow to fetlock.

Shoulders: well-muscled, can be more upright than those of 'specialised riding horses'.

Pasterns: short and sloping; more upright than those found in Arabs and thoroughbreds, though not quite so short and upright as in heavy draught horses.

Feet: small and neat with hard horn; a little more upright and 'blocky' and with slightly higher heels than those of 'specialised riding horses'; soles rather flat; frogs small; slow growing.

Hair: forelock, mane and tail well developed and generous in quantity; ideally this hair should be wavy to shed rain efficiently; caudal fringe should always be discernible; vortices anterior to the stifle region well developed. There should not be much feather, only a tuft.

The following measurements can be regarded as a guide:-

Withers height	120cm-137cm
Body length (point of shoulder to pin bone)	105% -125% of withers height
Length of head (commissure of lips to nuchal crest)	35%-45% of withers height
Point of hock to ground	28%-35% of withers height
Girth (pulled on spring balance to 10kgms)	108%-130% of withers height (to attempt to obviate the confusing factor of fat cover)
Circumference of fore cannons	16cm min
Circumference of hind cannons	17cm min

ACTION

Legs are not lifted high and steps are short. This allows economy of energy and leads to increased endurance.

Copyright Robert Beck MRCVS 2006

