

**FEI**  
**Fédération Equestre Internationale**



**Identification of Horses**  
**with the narrative and the diagram**

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# Introduction

1. This pamphlet is designed to simplify the identification of competition horses and to attempt to standardise the many technical details required for the narrative and the diagram in the horse's passport.
2. The description of the horse must be written in the official passport issued by the National Federation for the Fédération Equestre Internationale, or in a national passport approved by the FEI.
3. It is mandatory that the description is completed in accordance with the instructions contained in this pamphlet by a veterinarian recognised by the National Federation.
4. Owners or riders of horses to be issued with a passport are under no circumstances allowed to complete, deface or alter the diagram or narrative in any way.
5. The objective is an accurate identification of the horse in order to prevent substitution. It is therefore necessary to describe the special features of each individual horse, but not to give excessive detail for horses that are easily recognisable.
6. The horse must be presented in a bridle and examined on a hard surface in daylight. Cleanliness, especially of the extremities below the knees and hocks, is essential.
7. Special attention must be paid to the frequent error of confusing left and right sides when standing in front of the horse; the description refers to the "right side" and "left side" **of the horse.**
8. Be prepared with the following material:
  - clipboard
  - supply of standard forms
  - pencil, eraser and sharpener
  - red and black ballpoint pen (blue ballpoint and red crayons will not photocopy well)
9. The description of a horse comprises two parts with:
  - The **Narrative** which describes the horse and includes a written record of its distinguishing marks.
  - The **Diagram** which demonstrates diagrammatically the distinguishing marks recorded in the narrative. Both parts must be accurately and fully completed.
10. All entries must be in block capitals and must be clearly legible.

## Section I - The Narrative

### I Language

If possible the narrative should be in one of the two official FEI languages, English or French. The sex and colour of the horse must be completed in one of the official FEI languages.

### II Gender/Sex

1. It is necessary to indicate stallion, mare or gelding and not to use abbreviations such as S, M, G.
2. When a horse is castrated after the passport has been issued, it is essential that the operation and the date on which it was carried out are entered in the passport by the veterinarian. Sexual anomalies must be recorded (e.g., if a horse is a known cryptorchid).

### III Colour

1. The definition of colours differs according to the country. Certain countries use the colour of the skin as the criterion; others use the colour of the hair or a combination of the colours of the hair. This presents difficulties in translation.
2. The colours are defined as follows:
  - 2.1 **Black:** Where black pigment is general throughout the coat, limbs, mane and tail, with no pattern factor present other than white markings.
  - 2.2a **Brown:** Where there is a mixture of black and brown pigment in the coat, with black limbs, mane and tail.
  - 2.2b **Bay-brown:** Where the predominating colour is brown, with muzzle bay, black limbs, mane and tail.
  - 2.2c **Bay:** Bay varies considerably in shade from dull red approaching brown, to a yellowish colour approaching chestnut, but it can be distinguished from the chestnut by the fact that the bay has a black mane and tail and almost invariably has black on the limbs and tips of the ears.
  - 2.2d **Dark bay:** Brownish overall appearance, but mahogany bay is not as dark as dark bay. Bay markings appear in some parts of the coat e.g. bay-brown
  - 2.2e. **Light bay:** Paler brownish colour with a light red to yellowish tinge.
  - 2.3 **Chestnut:** A chestnut can be any shade of red with no black points like the bay. There are many variations in the color. Think of the different colors a penny can be--from brand new to very old and tarnished--chestnuts can come in all of these colors. A chestnut with a light colored mane--almost white is said to be a chestnut with a flaxen mane and tail. A very dark chestnut--one the color of a very tarnished penny is called a 'liver chestnut'--they too can have the flaxen manes and tails--a very eye catching combination.
  - 2.3a **Dark chestnut:** Mahogany or copper chestnut (listed in the USA).
  - 2.3b **Light chestnut:** Chestnut of a light red / yellow body colour.
  - 2.3c **Sorrel:** Coat ranging from a yellowish / reddish to a brownish shade, usually uniform. 1) With lighter shades the lower limbs, mane and tail are usually the same or darker than the body.
  - 2.4 **Grey:** Where the body coat is a varying mosaic of black and white hairs, with the skin black. With increasing age the coat grows lighter in colour. The flea-bitten grey may contain three colours or two basic colours and should be so described. A pure white is exceptional.
  - 2.5 **Roan:** Permanent colour with a mixture of white hairs and one or two other colours of hairs in the coat.
  - 2.6 **Strawberry:** Where the body colour is chestnut mixed with white hairs.
  - 2.7 **Piebald:** The body coat consists of large irregular patches of black and white. The line of demarcation between the two colours is generally well defined.

2.8 **Skewbald:** the body consists of large irregular patches of white and of any definite colour except black. The line of demarcation between the colours is generally well-defined.

2.9 **Dun:** The body coat is of a cream colour, with black mane and tail.

N.B: When the term "Isabella" is used in German it usually refers to a body coat of cream and yellow, with mane and tail of the same cream or yellow colour.

2.10 **Cream:** The body coat is of a cream colour, with unpigmented skin. The iris is deficient in pigment and is often devoid of it, giving the eye a pinkish or bluish appearance.

2.11 **Palomino:** The body coat is a newly-minted gold coin colour (lighter or darker shades are permissible) with a white mane and tail.

2.12 **Appaloosa:** Body colour is grey, covered with a mosaic of black or brown spots.

#### **IV Year of birth**

1. If there is no documentary evidence of the year of birth of the horse this must be determined by the veterinarian examining the teeth. It must be stated in the passport if the year of birth is **estimated**. If the exact date of birth is known it is permitted to note it (dd/mm/yy).

2. In the description the veterinarian is asked to give the **year of birth** and **not** the age.

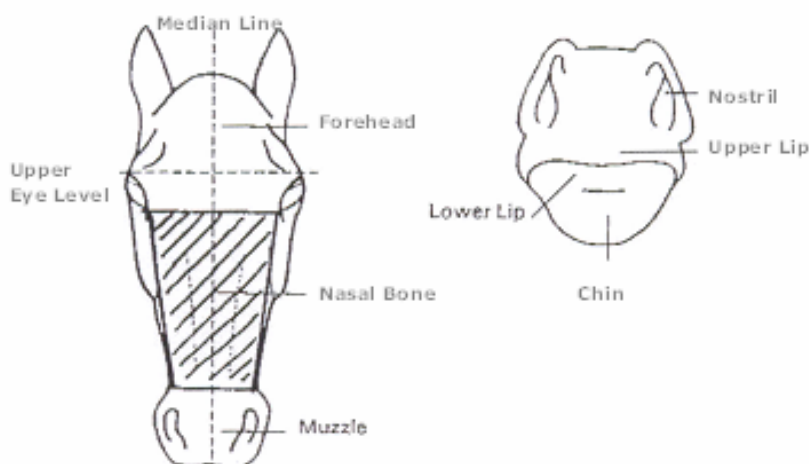
#### **V Height**

The height is the distance measured in centimetres, from the ground to the top of the withers. The exact height of ponies is most important and they must be measured with great care. (See pony regulations)

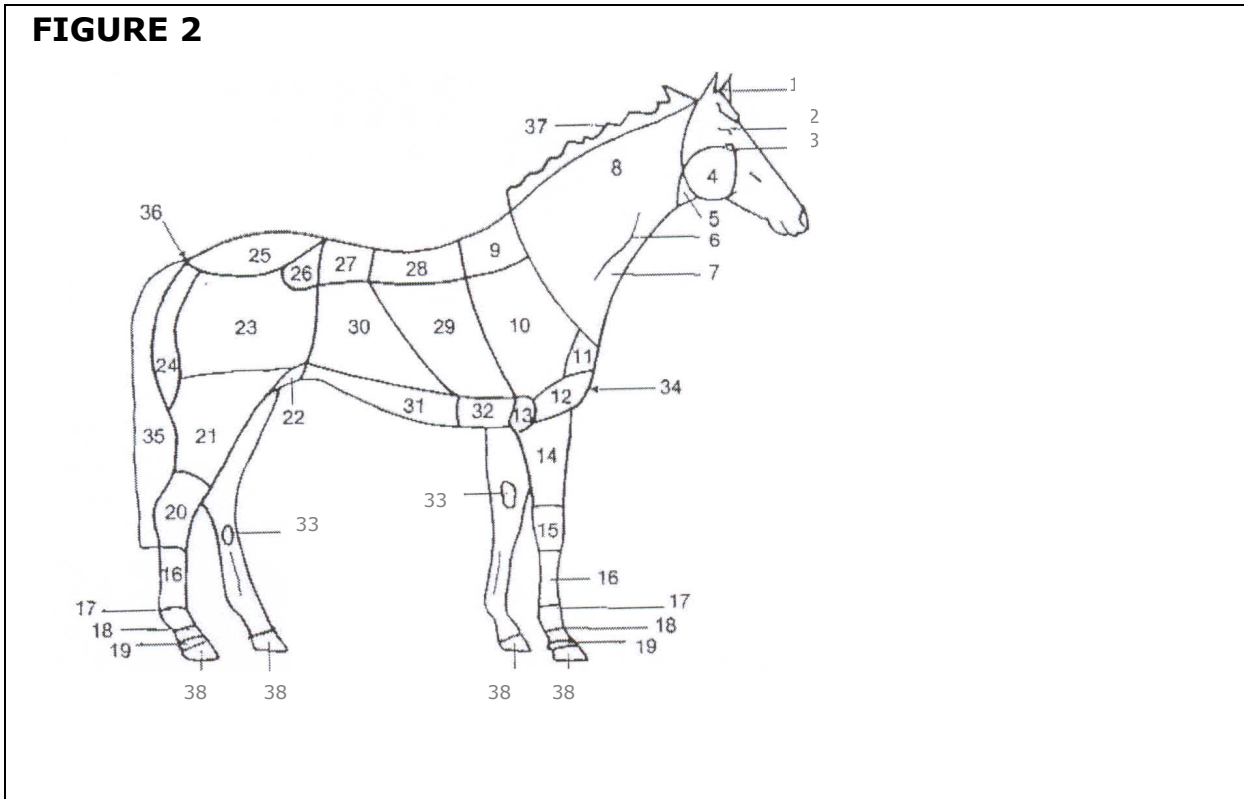
## **Section II - Distinctive Marks**

The distinctive marks are described in relation to their position on the surface anatomy (see Figures 1+2) and must also be shown on the diagram (see Section III).

**Figure 1**



**FIGURE 2**



**Figure 2: Surface anatomy**

- |                                    |                  |                         |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Poll                            | 12. Arm          | 26. Angle of Llium      |
| 2. Supraorbital Fossa              | 13. Elbow        | 27. Loins               |
| 3. Eye                             | 14. Forearm      | 28. Back                |
| 4. Cheek                           | 15. Knee         | 29. Chest               |
| 5. Throat                          | 16. Cannon       | 30. Flank               |
| 6. Jugular furrow (Jugular groove) | 17. Fetlock      | 31. Belly               |
| 7. Windpipe (Trachea)              | 18. Pastern      | 32. Girth               |
| 8. Neck                            | 19. Coronet      | 33. Chestnut            |
| 9. Withers                         | 20. Hock         | 34. Breast              |
| 10. Shoulder                       | 21. Gaskin       | 35. Tail                |
| 11. Point of shoulder              | 22. Stifle       | 36. Dock (Root of tail) |
|                                    | 23. Quarters     | 37. Mane/Crest          |
|                                    | 24. Buttock      | 38. Hoof                |
|                                    | 25. Croup (Rump) |                         |

## **I Whorls (USA - Cowlicks)**

1. Whorls are changes in the hair pattern, and may take various forms-simple, tufted, feathered or sinuous. Their position must be clearly specified.
2. Whorls on the head and crest which are present in all horses must be described in the narrative and shown on the diagram.
3. If there are few or no white markings the whorls on the head, throat, neck (and especially on the crest), cervical trachea, jugular furrow, forearm, the breast, belly, stifle, rump, buttocks and hind legs down to the hocks must be shown.
4. If the horse has few distinctive marks then it is essential to look carefully for the whorls but if it is distinctly marked, and then it is only necessary to note the whorls on the head and crest.

## **II White Marks**

1. The characteristics of all white marks must be described:
  - A white mark can be regular or irregular.
  - It can be **mixed** with the hair of the coat, completely or in part, or at the edge.
  - It can be **bordered**, a band of black skin shows under the white hair at the edge of the mark (the area appears bluish).
  - When pigment of the skin is absent it is called a **flesh mark**.
2. Always begin by describing the white marks on the head, and then continue with the limbs and the rest of the body.

### **A. The head**

The description should begin at the forehead, followed by the nasal bone, the muzzle, lips and chin.

The description of the markings on the head should be clearly specified with reference to the whorls and with reference to the **median line** and to **eye level**

**1. Star:** Any white mark on the forehead. Size, shape, intensity, position and coloured markings (if any) on the white to be specified. Should the markings in the region of the centre of the forehead consist of a few white hairs only it should be so described and not referred to as a star.

**2. Stripe:** The narrow white marking down the face not wider than the flat anterior surface of the nasal bones. In many cases the star and stripe are continuous and should be described as star and stripe combined. Where the stripe is separate and distinct from the star it should be described as interrupted stripe. Where no star is present the point of origin of the stripe should be indicated. The termination of the stripe and any variation in breadth, direction and any markings on the white should be so stated, e.g. broad stripe, narrow stripe, inclined to left, etc.

**3. Blaze:** A white marking covering almost the whole of the forehead between the eyes and extending beyond the width of the nasal bones usually to the muzzle. Any variations in direction, termination and any markings on the white should be stated.

**4. White Face:** Where the white covers the forehead and front of the face, extending laterally towards the mouth. The extension may be unilateral or bilaterat in which case it should be described accordingly.

**5. Snip:** An isolated white marking, independent of those already named and situated between or in the region of the nostrils. Its size, position and intensity should be specified.

**6. Flesh Mark:** Lack of pigmentation. A flesh mark is described as such and not as a white mark. Black spots within the flesh mark are to be indicated. All lip markings, whether flash marks or white marks, should be accurately described.

**7. White Muzzle:** Where the white embraces both lips and extends to the region of the nostrils.

## **B. Limbs**

1. The description of markings on the limbs should follow a logical sequence. Always commence with the **left fore** followed by the right fore and continued by the left hind and the right hind. Absence of marks must also be mentioned.

2. All white markings on the limbs must be accurately defined and the upper limit precisely stated with reference to points of the anatomy, e.g. white to mid-pastern, white to upper third of cannon etc; (see Figure 2). The use of such terms as "sock" or "stocking" is not acceptable.

Some examples are listed below:

- White coronet
- White pastern
- White fetlock
- White half cannon
- White to knee, to hock, to hind quarter etc.
- White patch on coronet. Its location must be specified: anterior, lateral, medial, posterior.
- White ring around limb: does not extend down to the coronet.

3. The presence of coloured spots in white marks should be recorded. Black spots in a white coronet are referred to as Ermine marks.

**4. Hooves:** Any variation in the hoof pigment should be noted, especially if the horse has no other special characteristics.

## **C. The Body**

All white markings and any other markings must be indicated with reference to their anatomical position. For example, permanent marks such as scars, saddle marks, bridle marks, collar marks, girth marks, other harness marks, bandage marks etc..



### III Other Peculiarities

#### 1. Peculiarities of the head

Some examples are listed below:

- Wall-eye: Lack of pigmentation of the eye
- loss of an eye
- Dental irregularities; e.g. the absence of an incisor tooth either from accident or defective dental development.
- Parrot mouth: projection of upper jaw
- Nicked ears
- Fractured nasal bone
- Unusual muzzle colour (e.g. darker or lighter than normal body colour).
- Lop ears

#### 2. Peculiarities of the coat

- **Grey-ticked:** Where white hairs are sparsely distributed through the coat or any part of the body.
- **Flecked:** Where small collections of white hairs occur distributed irregularly in any part of the body. .
- The degrees of flecking may be described by the terms "heavily flecked" or "lightly flecked".
- Black or dark **marks:** this term should be used to describe small areas of black or dark hairs among the basic (lighter) body colour.
- **Spots:** Where small, more or less circular, collections of hairs differing from the general body colour occur, distributed in various parts of the body. The position and colour of the spots must be stated.
- **Leopard:** A horse can be called leopard if it has many more or less circular collections of hairs differing from the general body colour.
- **Patch:** This term should be used to describe any larger well-defined irregular area (not covered by previous definitions) of hairs differing from the general body colour. The colour, shape, position and extent should be described.
- **Zebra Marks:** where there is dark or black striping on the limbs, neck or quarters.
- **Withers stripe:** zebra band across the withers.
- **List:** a dorsal band of black hairs which extends from the withers backwards to the base of the tail.

#### 3. The following should also be mentioned:

- The Prophet's Thumb Mark: a muscular depression commonly seen on the neck, on the breast or on the point of the shoulder.
- Branding marks, freeze markings, tattoos or scars.
- The presence of hairs of different colours in mane and tail should be specified, especially in piebalds and skewbalds.

4. It is important that information detrimental to the horse is not included in the narrative or on the diagram unless it is essential for the identification of the horse.

## Section III - The Diagram

### I General

1. The diagram must be filled in using both a **red ballpoint pen** and a **black ballpoint pen**.
2. Blue ink must never be used because it is difficult to photocopy.
3. Inks which run must be avoided (e.g. felt pens, ink pans) because the diagram can be spoilt if it gets wet
4. Coloured pencils which can be erased must not be used.
5. The ballpoint pen used must have a broad-point

### II Procedure

1. The narrative should be completed first using a black ballpoint pen, followed by the diagram indicating all the distinctive marks.
2. Starting with the head, continue with the limbs and then the body. Ensure that the diagram and the narrative agree.  
A careful check must be made to ensure that all reference to left and right in the passport agree and no ambiguity exists.

### III Red ballpoint pen

Everything which appears **in white** on the horse must be shown **in red** on the diagram.

#### 1. White marks

White marks must be clearly outlined, with irregularities indicated, without shading but lightly hatched-in if desired.

#### 2. Bordered marks

A white bordered mark has a definite outline, which is bluish and corresponds to the black skin under the white hairs. Bordered markings are indicated by a **double line**.

#### 3. Mixed marks

Mixed hairs are indicated **by hatching**.

#### 4. Few white hairs

Few white hairs or grey-ticked areas are indicated by **single short lines**.

#### 5. Unpigmented areas

Unpigmented areas such as flesh marks, wall-eyes, or stripes on the hoofs are entirely coloured in red.

## 6. White patches

Large white patches on piebald or skewbald horses should be **hatched-in** or line-shaded to differentiate them from other patches.

## 7. Various

- The presence of white hairs in the mane and tail should be indicated with red lines.
- Permanent white marks, in the coat acquired through trauma, freeze branding, surgery, etc, should be indicated in the diagram as for other white marks and by an arrow pointing at their location.

## IV Black-ballpoint pen

Everything which is not white on the horse must be shown in black on the diagram.

### 1. Whorls

Whorls are indicated **by an "x"**, if the whorl is elongated, it is shown by a **continuous line** from the "x". The exact location of the whorls is very important.

### 2. Black spots and marks

Black spots or marks on the coat, or within a white mark or flesh mark, must be **outlined in black** and left unshaded.

### 3. Scars

Scars due to surgery, treatment or accidents are indicated by **arrows pointing** at their location.

### 4. Brand marks

Brand marks should be **drawn** in black, if the shape is not visible the brand is to be considered as a scar and indicated by an arrow.

### 5. The "Prophet's Thumb Mark"

A "Prophet's Thumb Mark" is indicated by a small triangle.

### 6. Zebra Marks

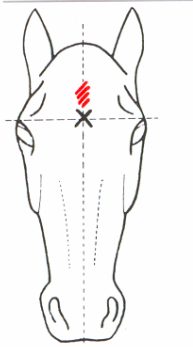
Zebra Marks, withers stripes and lists are indicated by **thick black lines** following the mark(s).

### 7. Chestnuts

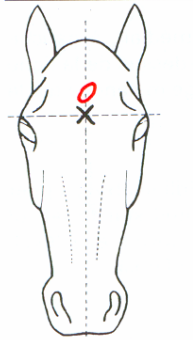
The outline of chestnuts should be drawn for all horses without markings or with only three or less whorls. The shape of a chestnut should be drawn in outline and related to the vertical.

## Examples for Completing the Diagram

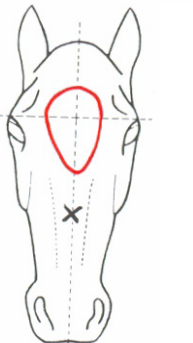
### Section IV



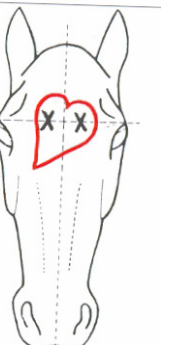
Few white hairs, above a median whorl at upper eye level



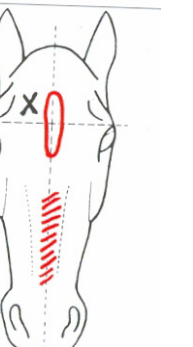
Median whorl at upper eye level. Small oval star above



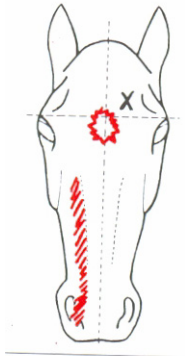
Median whorl on bridge of nose. Large ovoid star above



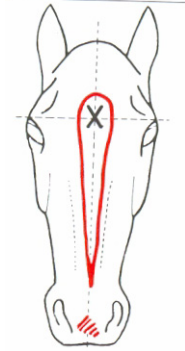
Heart-shaped star, with point to right containing two whorls side by side (one either side of midline) at upper eye level



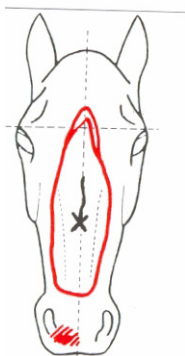
Whorl on right side of median whorl above upper eye level. Central elongated star to left of whorl and extending to lower eye level. Mixed hairs down bridge of nose.



Whorl to left of midline above eye level.  
Central irregular (dentated) star below.  
Large patch of mixed hairs on right side of bridge of nose extending on to wing of right nostril.



Star, containing median whorl at upper eye level,  
stripe to nasal peak. Small mixed snip between  
nostrils.



Elongated bordered star, blaze to nasal peak  
containing median whorl on bridge of nose with  
upward feathering to just below eye level. Snip  
between nostrils continued as flesh mark into right  
nostril.

# FEI Description and diagram page of FEI passport

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FEI Sticker  
Étiquette FEI  
Autoadhesivo FEI

# 3

## Description/Signalement descriptif/Señas descriptivas

Use block capitals only / Ecrire en majuscules / Escribir en mayúsculas

Head / Tête / Cabeza

---



---

LF/LF/LF

---

RF/RF/RF

---

LH/LH/LH/

---

RH/RH/RH

---

Body / Corps / Cuerpo

---

Mircochip

Brand / fer rouge / hierro ardiente

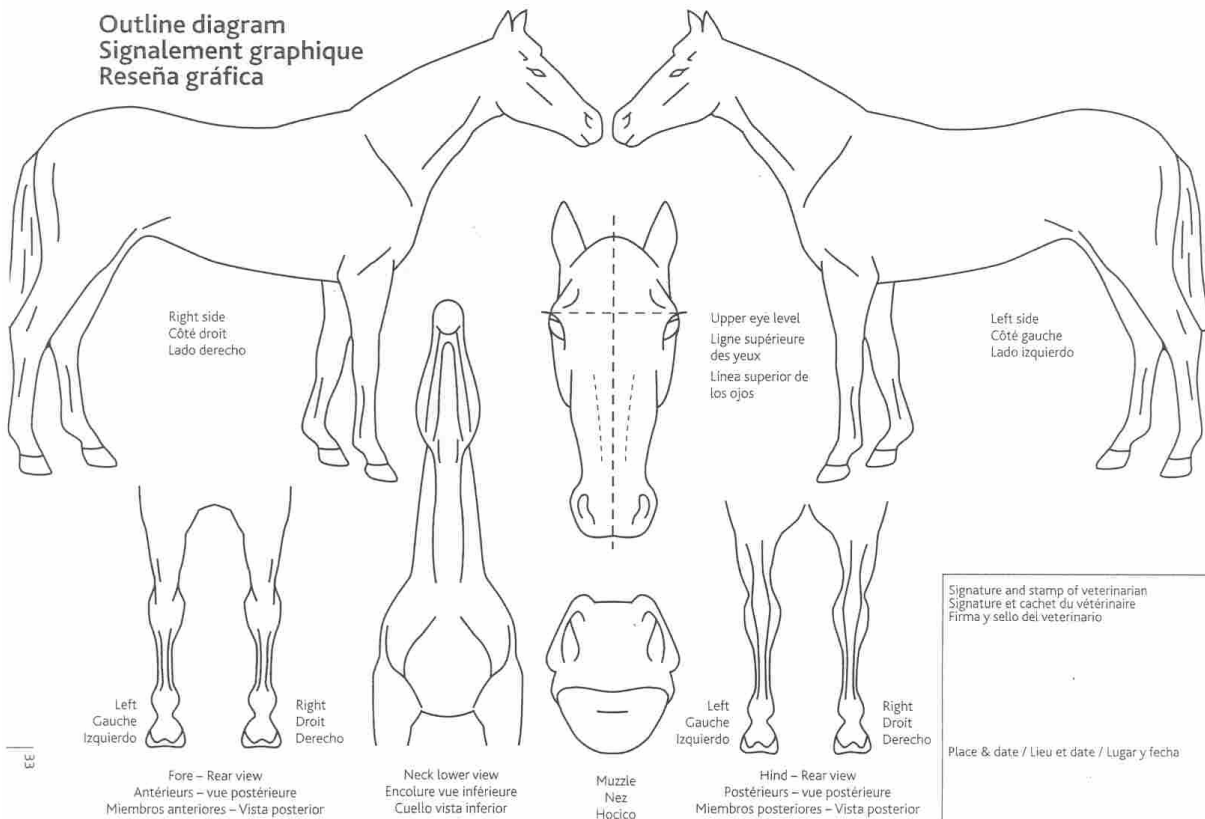
Other / autre / otro

--	--	--

Height of pony: see accompanying certificate / Taille au garrot du poney mentionné sur le certificat ci-joint / Altura al cruz del pony indicada en el certificado adjunto

Signature of Secretary General and stamp of National Federation  
Signature du Secrétaire Général et cachet de la Fédération Nationale  
Firma del Secretario General y sello de la Federación Nacional

## Outline diagram Signalement graphique Reseña gráfica



Signature and stamp of veterinarian  
Signature et cachet du vétérinaire  
Firma y sello del veterinario

Place & date / Lieu et date / Lugar y fecha

33

**Description/Signalement descriptif/Señas descriptivas**

Use block capitals only / Ecrire en majuscules / Escribir en mayúsculas

Head / Tête / Cabeza

**Whorl to left of midline above upper eye level. Second whorl diagonally below to Right of midline at eye-level. Light muzzle.**

LF/LF/LF **Nil**

RF/RF/RF **Nil**

LH/LH/LH/ **Scar on anterior cannon lower third.**

RH/RH/RH **Nil**

Body / Corps / Cuerpo **Whorl:behind poll left side, posterior third crest right side, left throat, right mid-cervical trachea and left pectoral area. Prophet's Thumb mark pont of right shoulder.**

Mircochip

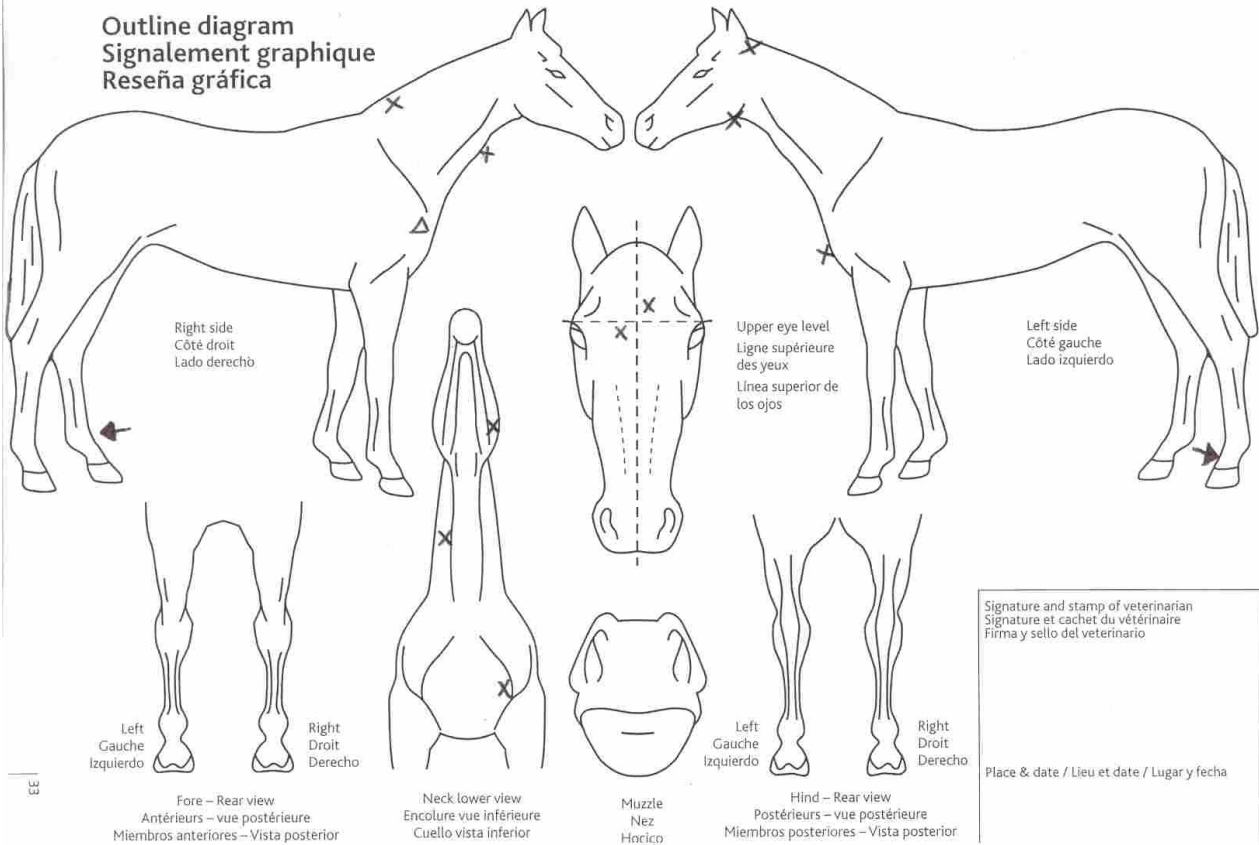
Brand / fer rouge / hierro ardiente

Other / autre / otro

Height of pony: see accompanying certificate / Taille au garrot du poney mentionné sur le certificat ci-joint / Altura al cruz del pony indicada en el certificado adjunto

Signature of Secretary General and stamp of National Federation  
Signature du Secrétaire Général et cachet de la Fédération Nationale  
Firma del Secretario General y sello de la Federación Nacional

**Outline diagram  
Signalement graphique  
Reseña gráfica**



## Description/Signalement descriptif/Señas descriptivas

Use block capitals only / Ecrire en majuscules / Escribir en mayúsculas

Head / Tête / Cabeza

White forehead with one median whorl upper eye level, conjoined blaze more to left mixed on right edge terminating in

Large black-spotted flesh mark including muzzle, nostrils, upper and lower lips. Wall-eye left.

White to knee. Striated hoof.

LF/LF/LF

RF/RF/RF White to knee.

LH/LH/LH/

White to above fetlock. Striated hoof.

RH/RH/RH White to upper third cannon dentated medially. Striated hoof.

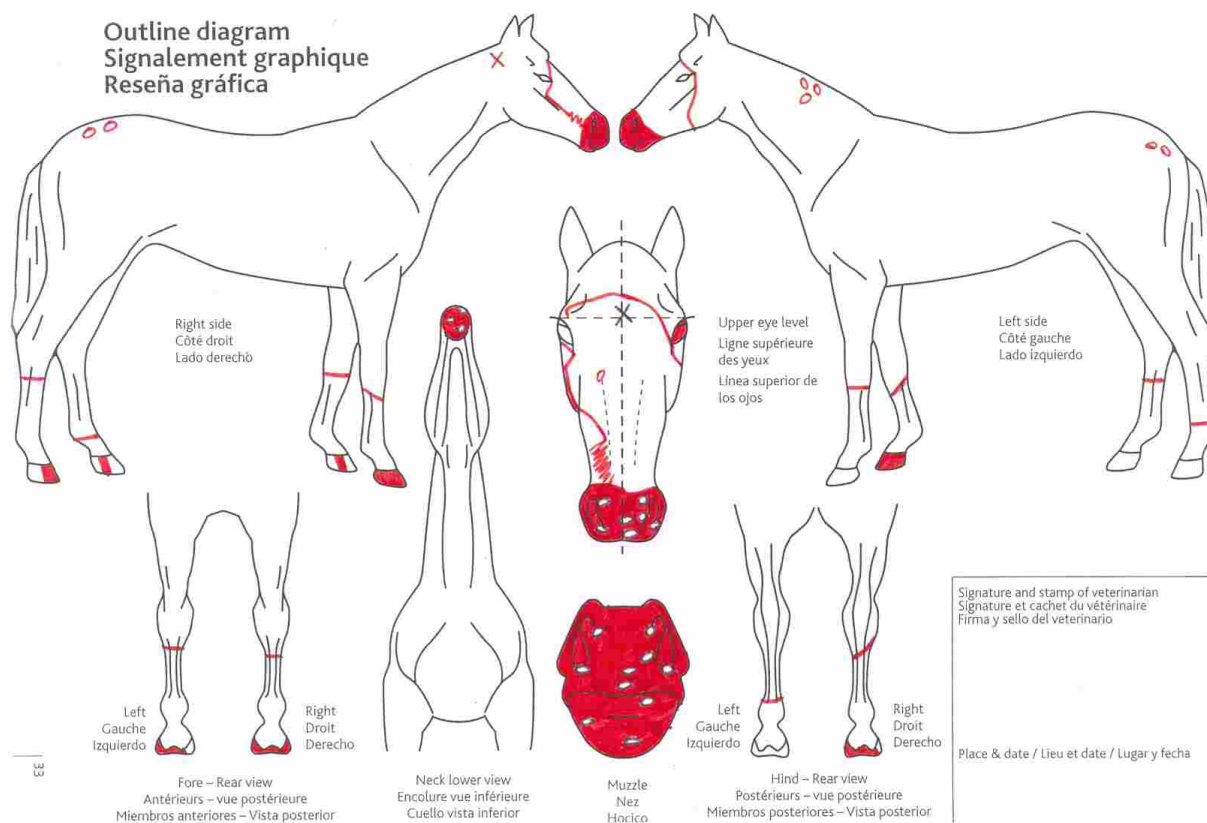
Few small white spots on the neck and rump. Whorls: posterior third crest left side; anterior third crest right side.

Microchip

Brand / fer rouge / hierro ardiente

Other / autre / otro

Height of pony: see accompanying certificate / Taille au garrot du poney mentionné sur le certificat ci-joint / Altura al cruz del pony indicada en el certificado adjunto

Signature of Secretary General and stamp of  
National Federation  
Signature du Secrétaire Général et cachet de  
la Fédération Nationale  
Firma del Secretario General y sello de la  
Federación NacionalOutline diagram  
Signalement graphique  
Reseña gráfica



## Description/Signalement descriptif/Señas descriptivas

Use block capitals only / Ecrire en majuscules / Escribir en mayúsculas

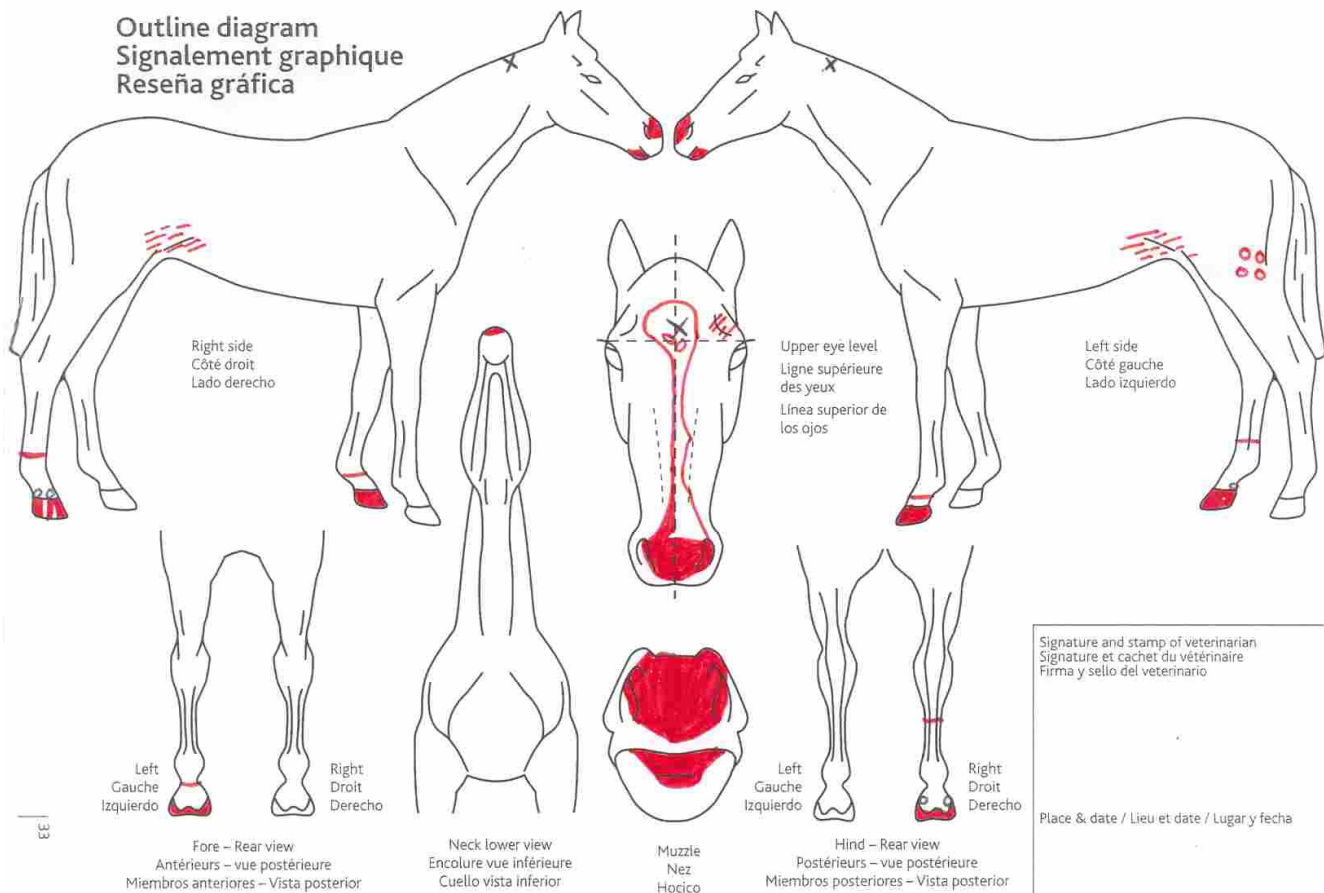
Head / Tête / Cabeza **Few white hairs above left eye. Median whorl at upper eye level in large round star, conjoined narrow****Stripe to left broadening at nasal peak and terminating as a large fleshmark between and into both nostrils. Big fleshmark lower lip and chin. Two chestnut spots in star near lower border to right and centre of midline.**LF/LF/LF **White to mid pastern.**RF/RF/RF **Nil**LH/LH/LH/ **Nil**RH/RH/RH **White to mid cannon. Ermine marks coronet. Striated hoof.**Body / Corps / Cuerpo **Grey ticked on flanks. White spots left hind quarter. Whorl anterior third crest both sides.**

Microchip

Brand / fer rouge / hierro ardiente

Other / autre / otro

Height of pony: see accompanying certificate / Taille au garrot du poney mentionné sur le certificat ci-joint / Altura al cruz del poney indicada en el certificado adjunto

Signature of Secretary General and stamp of  
National Federation  
Signature du Secrétaire Général et cachet de  
la Fédération Nationale  
Firma del Secretario General y sello de la  
Federación NacionalOutline diagram  
Signalement graphique  
Reseña gráfica

**Description/Signalement descriptif/Señas descriptivas**

Use block capitals only / Ecrire en majuscules / Escribir en mayúsculas

Head / Tête / Cabeza

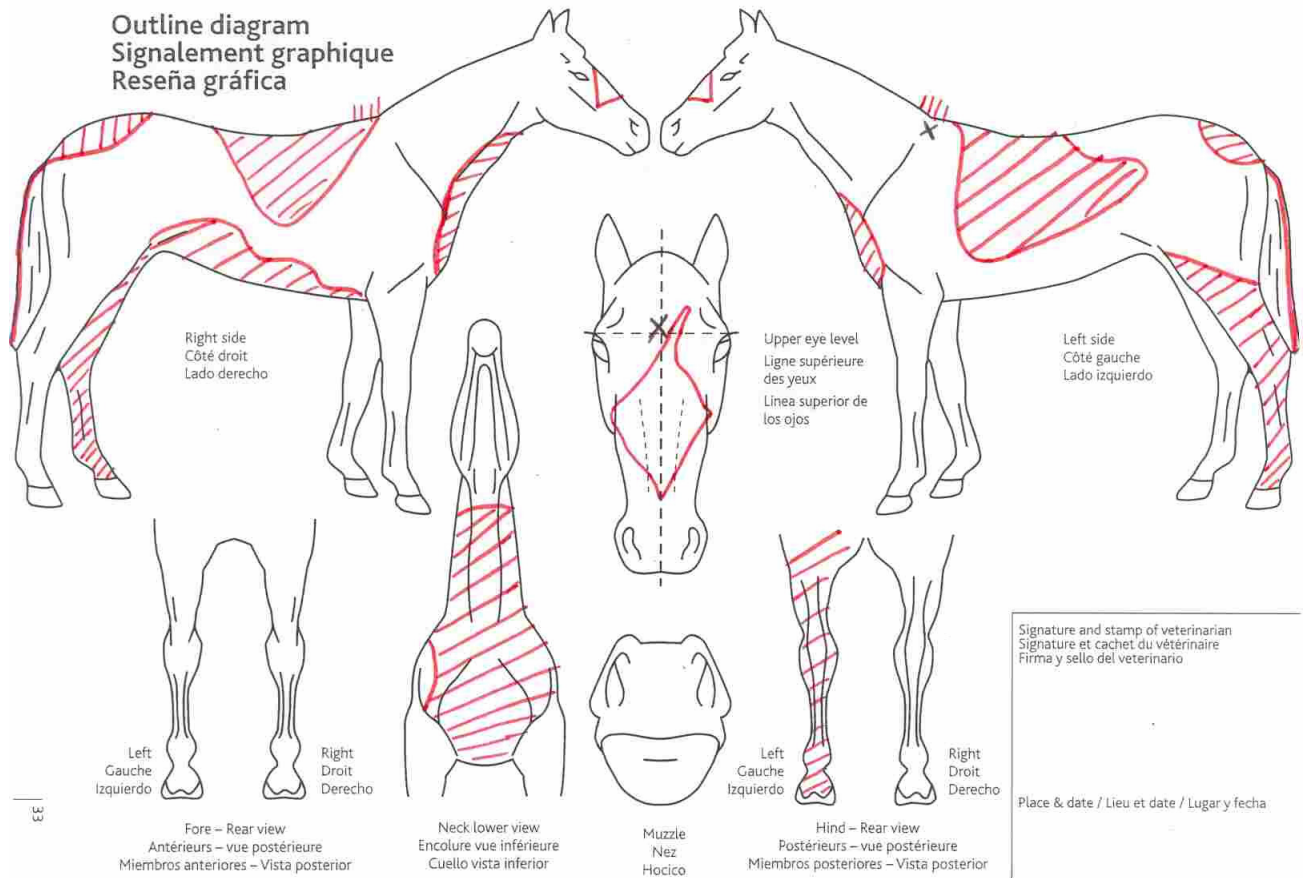
**Median whorl at upper eye level outside an elongated star extending to left supraorbital fossa, conjoined white face****terminating in a point at nasal peak.**LF/LF/LF **Nil**RF/RF/RF **Nil**LH/LH/LH/ **White to hind quarter.**RH/RH/RH **Nil**Body / Corps / Cuerpo **White patch on croup conjoined with white hairs in tail; white belly and breast;  
White saddle patch; white mane posterior quarter; one whorl each side of withers.**

Microchip

Brand / fer rouge / hierro ardiente

Other / autre / otro

Height of pony: see accompanying certificate / Taille au garrot du poney mentionné sur le certificat ci-joint / Altura al cruz del poney indicada en el certificado adjunto

Signature of Secretary General and stamp of  
National Federation  
Signature du Secrétaire Général et cachet de  
la Fédération Nationale  
Firma del Secretario General y sello de la  
Federación Nacional**Outline diagram  
Signalement graphique  
Reseña gráfica**

## **Bibliography**

- International Glossary (Jockey Clubs)
- Colours and Markings of Horses (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, London/GB)
- Farbe und Abzeichen bei pferden (Schaper, Hannover, Deutschland)
- Proceedings 2nd International Horse Identification Seminar (University of Arizona, USA)
- Les particularités du cheval (Cereopa, Paris, Ministère de l'agriculture, France)
- Signalement des chevaux et poneys (service des Haras Paris, Ministère de l'Agriculture, France)
- Notre d'instruction pour l'identification des chevaux et poneys.