

Equine glossary terms

This list is a significantly edited version of the glossary compiled by Equisearch:

<https://www.equisearch.com/resources/glossary>

– A –

Action: The movement of the horse's legs.

Aging: The process of estimating the age of a horse by examining the appearance and development of the teeth.

Agistment - A landholder allows another person's horse to be kept, or agisted, on his or her property for a fee.

Anthelmintics: Name given to the various deworming medications used to control equine internal parasites.

Appaloosa: Breed of horse exhibiting one of a number of distinct coloration patterns of spots on the body.

Arabian: Ancient and graceful breed of horse, originating in the deserts of the Middle East and having a strong influence on many other breeds, including the *Thoroughbred*.

Ascarids: Equine internal parasite, also known as *roundworms*. Primarily affect horses less than two years of age. Ascarids have the potential to cause liver damage, which is repairable, and lung damage, which is permanent.

– B –

Barrel Racing: A timed event in Western Riding where horse and rider complete a cloverleaf pattern around three barrels.

Bay: Coat color - deep reddish brown with black mane and tail.

Bit: Mouthpiece, of made of metal but may be made of rubber or other man-made material and held in place by the *bridle*, by which the rider conveys instructions to the horse.

Blaze: Elongated white marking down the front of the horse's face. (Also called a *stripe*)

Bloodstock: Thoroughbred horses bred for racing.

Boarding Stable: Equestrian facility where horse owners may keep their horse for a monthly fee. See also *Livery Stable*.

Bots: Equine parasites. The larvae of the botfly is referred to as a bot. The botfly as an adult insect does not actually bite or cause direct pain to the horse, but lays eggs on the outer body of the horse. The eggs are small, round, and yellow-orange in color, and are attached to the hairs of the horse's body by the adult botfly. They are easily identifiable on the legs of a dark-colored horse. The horse then licks or bites the spot where the eggs are and subsequently ingests them.

The larvae are transported to the horse's mouth, where they remain for about four weeks before migrating to the digestive system. The larvae stay specifically in the stomach, where they attach to the gastric lining with hooks in their mouthparts. These larvae then stay in the stomach for approximately eight to ten months until maturity, and then pass in the horse's faeces. Usually only cause disease if there is a heavy burden.

Breaking, or Breaking-In: The early education of the young horse, where it is taught the skills it will need for its future life as a riding or driving horse.

Breed: An equine group bred selectively for consistent characteristics over a long period of time.

Brood Mare: A mare used for breeding purposes.

BZs: benzimidazole anthelmintics

– C –

Clydesdale: Breed of heavy horse originating in Scotland and used for heavy draft work.

Coldblood: The name used to describe the heavy European breeds of horse descended from the prehistoric Forest Horse.

Colic: General term describing abdominal pain in the horse. Ranges in severity from mild to life-threatening. A veterinarian should always be consulted in case of suspected colic.

Colostrum: First milk produced by a mare following foaling. Contains globulins to provide the newborn foal with temporary immunity against disease.

Colt: Uncastrated male horse up to four years of age. Male foals are called "colt foals".

Conformation: The overall way in which a horse is put together and also the relationship of specific parts of the horse with regards to its proportions.

Coronet: the margin between the skin of a horse's pastern and the horn of the hoof

– D –

Dam: A horse's female parent.

Diagonals: The horse's legs move in pairs at the trot, called diagonals. The left diagonal is when the left foreleg and right hindleg move, the right diagonal is when the right foreleg and the left hindleg move. When on a circle, the rider rises as the outside foreleg moves forward.

Draft Horse: A term applied to any horse used for hauling vehicles or loads, but most usually associated with the heavy breeds.

Dressage: Competitive sport which, by a series of set tests, seeks to judge the horse's natural movement and level of training against an ideal

– E –

Endotoxemia: The presence of endotoxins in the blood, which, if derived from gram-negative rod-shaped bacteria, can cause systemic illness. Some types of gram-negative bacteria are naturally in the gut flora and don't cause any harm unless the horse is sick for some other reason and these bacteria begin to excessively proliferate and then breach the intestinal wall, thus entering the bloodstream. When these bacteria die, their cell walls rupture, releasing a toxin into the bloodstream, causing endotoxemia. Common causes include damage to the mucous barrier in the intestines, inflammation of the small intestine, acute metritis (severe inflammation of the uterus due to infection, usually from a retained placenta), infection of the umbilicus in foals.

Entire: Uncastrated male horse. (Also called *stallion*).

Eventing: Equestrian competition held over one or three days and including the disciplines of dressage, cross country and show jumping.

Exercise-Induced Pulmonary Hemorrhage (EIPH): also known as "**bleeding**", refers to the presence of blood in the airways of the lung in association with exercise.

– F –

Farrier: Skilled craftsman who shoes horses.

Feathering: Long hair on the lower legs and fetlocks. Abundant on heavy horse breeds.

Fetlock (Joint): Lowest joint on the horse's leg.

Filly: Female horse under four years old. A female foal is called a "filly foal".

Foal: Colt, filly or gelding up to one year of age.

Forelock: The mane between the ears, which hangs forward over the forehead,

Founder: Term used to describe the detachment and rotation of the coffin bone which happens in severe cases of *laminitis*. If this happens, the horse is said to have foundered. Causes severe lameness.

Full Mouth: A six-year-old horse, with all his permanent teeth is said to have a "full mouth".

– G –

Gait: The paces at which horses move, usually the walk, trot, canter and gallop.

Gaited Horse: Horses which move at paces other than the walk, trot and canter - such as the Saddlebred, the Paso Fino and the Icelandic.

Gallop: Four-beated gait of the horse, in which each foot touches the ground separately, as opposed to the *canter*, which is a three-beat gait.

Galvayne's Groove: Dark line which appears on the upper corner incisor of horses between 8 and 10 years of age. Since it extends downward gradually, it can be used to estimate the age of a horse.

Gelding: Castrated male horse.

Girth: The circumference of the body measured from behind the withers around the barrel.

Grey: Coat color ranging from pure white to dark grey. Further described by terms such as "dappled" (small iron-grey circles on a lighter background) and "flea-bitten" (flecks of dark grey on a white background).

– H –

Hand: Unit of measure used to describe a horse. One hand equals 4 inches, partial measurements being described as 14.1, 14.2, 14.3.

Hanoverian: Popular sport horse derived from the breeding of German horses with Thoroughbred horses. Bred originally to refine the quality of cavalry and farm horses, but has evolved into a versatile horse which excels at many equestrian sports, including *dressage*, *showjumping* and *eventing*. See also *Warmblood*.

Harness: Term for the equipment of a horse that is driven, as opposed to being ridden.

Heavy Horse: Any large draft horse, such as the Shire, the Clydsdale, the Belgian Draft.

Hindgut fermenter: Hindgut fermenters have an enlarged hindgut as opposed to foregut, which is enlarged in ruminants, for microbial fermentation to take place

Hypsodont: a pattern of dentition with high-crowned teeth and enamel extending past the gum line, providing extra material for wear and tear. Have open tooth roots permitting continuous eruption

Hock: Joint midway up the hind leg, responsible for providing most of the forward energy of the horse.

Hotblood: Term describing horses of Arabian or Thoroughbred blood.

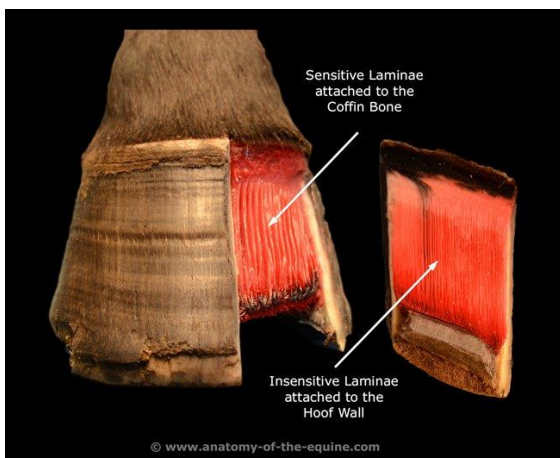
– I –

– J –

– K –

– L –

Laminae: The insensitive laminae and the sensitive laminae intermesh together to hold the hoof wall to the coffin bone.



Laminitis: Condition, caused by systemic upset, in which the laminae inside the hoof become inflamed and painful to the horse. Severe conditions can lead to *founder*.

Lunge: The act of training a horse by working it in the various paces on a circle using a long lunge rein.

– M –

MLs: macrocyclic lactone anthelmintics e.g. ivermectin

Mare: Female horse aged four and over.

Meconium: Firm, dark brown or black faecal matter passed by the foal shortly after birth.

Metabolic Syndrome (also called equine metabolic syndrome or EMS):

EMS is caused when fat cells or adipose tissue produce high levels of adipokines, a protein hormone that leads to an increase in cortisol. As a result of the abnormal hormone production, a horse's normal response to the hormone insulin is disrupted, resulting in high insulin and glucose blood concentrations. The horse cannot properly metabolize carbohydrates, including starches and sugars. This mechanism can trigger the onset of laminitis. Equine Metabolic Syndrome is usually first recognized when chronic recurrent laminitis is seen in fat horses that lack other laminitis triggers.

Mucking Out: Daily stable chore which involves the removal of wet and soiled bedding and general tidying of the stable.

– N –

Nearside: The left-hand side of the horse.

NSAIDs: Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs e.g. phenylbutazone ('bute')

– O –

OCD: osteochondritis dissecans: a common developmental disease that affects the cartilage and bone in the joints of horses. Cartilage in joints with OCD doesn't form normally; this causes the cartilage and bone underneath it to become irregular which can cause the development of cartilage and bone flaps that can either remain partially attached to the bone or break off and float around in the joint.

Offside: The right-hand side of the horse.

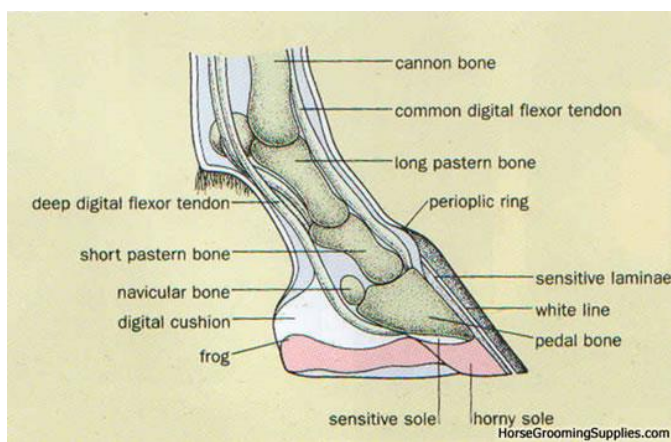
– P –

Pacer: A horse which moves its legs in lateral pairs, rather than the conventional diagonal pairs.

Palomino: Coat color in which the body can be varying shades of gold, with a silver or white mane and tail.

Pastern: The sloping bone in the lower leg which connect the *hoof* to the *fetlock*.

Pedal bone: (also known as the coffin bone, PIII or the distal phalanx). The most distal bone of the horse.



Percheron: Breed of draft horse, originally bred in the Normandy region of France, but popular throughout the world.

Piebald: English term for body colour of white with black patches.

Pinworms: live in the lumen of the intestine. Female pinworms crawl out of the horse's rectum, deposit eggs and a sticky substance on the perianal region of the horse, and crawl back into the rectum. Main symptom is itchiness of tail head and around anus, causing the horse to rub its bottom against fences etc

Points: (i) External features of the horse making up its conformation. (ii) in relations to coat colour, the points are the lower legs, mane and tail. For example, bay with black points is a bay with black lower legs as well as the customary black mane and tail.

Poll: The highest point on the top of the horse's head.

Pony: A small horse, standing 14.2 or less.

– Q –

Quarter Horse: Breed of horse, originating in the United States and popular for ranch work, racing and riding in all equestrian disciplines.

Queensland Itch: an insect bite allergy caused by midges (*Culicoides* sp).

– R –

Racehorse: Horse bred for racing. Can be Thoroughbred, Quarter Horse, Arabian, Standardbred.

Rig: cryptorchid horse

Roan: Coat colour in which white hairs are mixed with the base coat colour. A strawberry roan is where chestnut and white hairs are mixed to give an overall reddish effect. A blue roan refers to a coat in which black and white hairs are mixed, giving an overall blue effect.

Roaring: Characteristic abnormal noise on inhalation, heard in horses with *Laryngeal Hemiplegia*.

Roundworm: Common name for *ascarids*, an internal equine parasite.

– S –

Shire Horse: Breed of draft horse, originating in northern England. Once used as a war horse and later as farm and draft animals.

Shuttle stallion: Stallion which moves between northern and southern hemispheres to enable him to serve mares in the breeding season in both hemispheres.

Sire: A horse's male parent.

Stallion: Uncastrated male horse. (See also *Entire*)

Standardbred: Breed of horse popular as a harness racer.

Star: Name given to any white marking on the horse's forehead. (Small markings are called a *snip*)

Stock Horse: Name given to horses that are used in cattle work, driving and cutting cattle etc.

Strangles: Highly contagious disease caused by Streptococcus Equi.

Strongyles (small and large): Equine internal parasites.

Small: Multiple species. Larval stages develop in the intestinal wall and emerge into the intestine, where they develop into adults and mostly feed on superficial mucosa.

Large: Larval stages can migrate extensively throughout the body. Adults develop to maturity in large intestine. Heads penetrate into intestinal wall – blood feeders.

Stud: Breeding establishment - stud farm. The term is also used to describe a stallion or a colt.

Studbook: A book kept by a breed society or registry in which the pedigrees of horses eligible for registration are recorded.

Syndication: process of selling shares in a racehorse such that ownership of the horse is split between two or more part-owners.

– T –

Tapeworms: Internal equine parasites. Anoplocephala perfoliata is the most common in Australia. Commonly live in clusters in the ileo-caecal junction, where they anchor themselves to the bowel lining using 4 suckers and then absorb nutrients from the bowel. The attachment of the worms to this area of the bowel lining causes thickening, inflammation and ulceration of the intestinal wall.

Teaser: Substitute stallion used to test the mare's readiness for breeding with the breeding stallion.

Tetanus: Serious bacterial infection caused by Clostridium tetani, which enters the body through puncture wounds. Also called lockjaw.

Thoroughbred: Breed of horse, originating in England, used as a race horse and also to add refinement to other breeds of horse.

Thumps: (Synchronous diaphragmatic flutter). A horse with thumps will typically present with muscle twitching in their flanks, which are caused by abnormal contractions of the diaphragm. Caused by the phrenic nerve becoming hypersensitive, which is most commonly from dehydration, and electrolyte and mineral disturbances. The main culprit is normally low calcium, but can also occur with low magnesium, potassium, chloride and sodium.

– U –

– V –

– W –

Warmblood: In general terms, a half-bred, or part-bred horse, the result of an Arabian or Thoroughbred cross with other breeds. Also one of a number of specific breeds of horse which were developed by crossing hotblood and coldblood horses to produce a more refined, but athletically strong and capable horse, such as the Swedish Warmblood, the Dutch Warmblood

Weanling: a foal after it has been weaned (usually around 6 months) before it becomes a yearling

– X –

– Y –

Yearling: A horse which has had its first birthday but not reached its second birthday i.e. in its second year of life

– Z –