

## = Suffolk Punch =

The Suffolk Punch , also historically known as the Suffolk Horse or Suffolk Sorrel , is an English breed of draught horse . The breed takes the first part of its name from the county of Suffolk in East Anglia , and the name " Punch " from its solid appearance and strength . It is a heavy draught horse which is always chestnut in colour , traditionally spelled " chesnut " by the breed registries . Suffolk Punches are known as good doers , and tend to have energetic gaits .

The breed was developed in the early 16th century , and remains similar in phenotype to its founding stock . The Suffolk Punch was developed for farm work , and gained popularity during the early 20th century . However , as agriculture became increasingly mechanised , the breed fell out of favour , particularly from the middle part of the century , and almost disappeared completely . Although the breed 's status is listed as critical by the UK Rare Breeds Survival Trust and the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy , there has been a resurgence in interest , and population numbers are increasing . As well as being used for farm work , the breed pulled artillery and non @-@ motorised commercial vans and buses . It was also exported to other countries to upgrade local equine stock . Today , they are used for draught work , forestry and advertising .

## = Characteristics =

Suffolk Punches generally stand 16 @. @ 1 to 17 @. @ 2 hands ( 65 to 70 inches , 165 to 178 cm ) , weigh 1 @, @ 980 to 2 @, @ 200 pounds ( 900 to 1 @, @ 000 kg ) , and are always chestnut in colour . The traditional spelling , still used by the Suffolk Horse Society , is " chesnut " ( with no " t " in the middle of the word ) . Horses of the breed come in many different shades of chestnut , ranging from dark to red to light . Suffolk horse breeders in the UK use several different colour terms specific to the breed , including dark liver , dull dark , red and bright . White markings are rare and generally limited to small areas on the face and lower legs . Equestrian author Marguerite Henry described the breed by saying , " His color is bright chestnut ? like a tongue of fire against black field furrows , against green corn blades , against yellow wheat , against blue horizons . Never is he any other color . "

The Suffolk Punch tends to be shorter but more massively built than other British heavy draught breeds , such as the Clydesdale or the Shire , as a result of having been developed for agricultural work rather than road haulage . The breed has a powerful , arching neck ; well @-@ muscled , sloping shoulders ; a short , wide back ; and a muscular , broad croup . Legs are short and strong , with broad joints ; sound , well @-@ formed hooves ; and little or no feathering on the fetlocks . The movement of the Suffolk Punch is said to be energetic , especially at the trot . The breed tends to mature early , be long @-@ lived , and is economical to keep , needing less feed than other horses of similar type and size . They are hard workers , said to be willing to " pull a heavily laden wagon till [ they ] dropped . "

In the past , the Suffolk was often criticised for its poor feet , having hooves that were too small for its body mass . This was corrected by the introduction of classes at major shows in which hoof conformation and structure were judged . This practice , unique among horse breeds , resulted in such an improvement that the Suffolk Punch is now considered to have excellent foot conformation .

## = History =

The Suffolk Punch registry is the oldest English breed society . The first known mention of the Suffolk Punch is in William Camden 's Britannia , published in 1586 , in which he describes a working horse of the eastern counties of England that is easily recognisable as the Suffolk Punch . This description makes them the oldest breed of horse that is recognisable in the same form today . A detailed genetic study shows that the Suffolk Punch is closely genetically grouped not only with the Fell and Dales British ponies , but also with the European Haflinger . They were developed in Norfolk and Suffolk in the east of England , a relatively isolated area . The local farmers developed

the Suffolk Punch for farm work , for which they needed a horse with power , stamina , health , longevity , and docility , and they bred the Suffolk to comply with these needs . Because the farmers used these horses on their land , they seldom had any to sell , which helped to keep the bloodlines pure and unchanged .

The foundation sire of the modern Suffolk Punch breed was a 15 @. @ 2 hands ( 62 inches , 157 cm ) stallion foaled near Woodbridge in 1768 and owned by Thomas Crisp of Ufford . At this time the breed was known as the Suffolk Sorrel . This horse was never named , and is simply known as " Crisp 's horse " . Although it is commonly ( and mistakenly ) thought that this was the first horse of the breed , by the 1760s , all other male lines of the breed had died out , resulting in a genetic bottleneck . Another bottleneck occurred in the late 18th century .

In 1784 , the breed was described as " 15 hands ( 60 inches , 152 cm ) high , short and compact with bony legs , often light sorrel in color , gentle , tractable , strong " and with " shoulders loaded with flesh " . During its development , the breed was influenced by the Norfolk Trotter , Norfolk Cob , and later the Thoroughbred . The uniform colouring derives in part from a small trotting stallion named Blakes Farmer , foaled in 1760 . Other breeds were cross bred in an attempt to increase the size and stature of the Suffolk Punch , as well as to improve the shoulders , but they had little lasting influence , and the breed remains much as it was before any crossbreeding took place . The Suffolk Horse Society , formed in Britain in 1877 to promote the Suffolk Punch , published its first stud book in 1880 . The first official exports of Suffolks to Canada took place in 1865 . In 1880 , the first Suffolks were imported into the United States , with more following in 1888 and 1903 to begin the breeding of Suffolk Punches in the US . The American Suffolk Horse Association was established and published its first stud book in 1907 . By 1908 , the Suffolk had also been exported from England to Spain , France , Germany , Austria , Russia , Sweden , various parts of Africa , New Zealand , Australia , Argentina and other countries .

By the time of the First World War , the Suffolk Punch had become a popular work horse on large farms in East Anglia due to its good temperament and excellent work ethic . It remained popular until the Second World War , when a combination of the need for increased wartime food production ( which resulted in many horses being sent to the slaughterhouse ) , and increased farm mechanisation which followed the war decimated population numbers . Only nine foals were registered with the Suffolk Horse Society in 1966 , but there has been a revival of interest in the breed since the late 1960s and numbers have risen continuously . The breed did remain rare , and in 1998 there were only 80 breeding mares in Britain , producing around 40 foals per year . In the United States , the American Suffolk Horse Association became inactive after the war and remained so for 15 years , but restarted in May 1961 as the draught horse market began to recover . In the 1970s and early 1980s , the American registry allowed some Belgians to be bred to Suffolk Punches , but only the fillies from these crosses were permitted registry with the American Suffolk Horse Association .

As of 2001 , horses bred with American bloodlines were not allowed to be registered with the British Association , and the breed was considered the rarest horse breed in Britain . Although the Suffolk Punch population has continued to increase , the Rare Breeds Survival Trust of the UK considers their survival status critical , with between 800 and 1 @, @ 200 horses in the United States and around 150 in England . The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy also lists the breed as critical . The Suffolk Horse Society recorded the births of 36 pure @- @ bred foals in 2007 , and a further 33 foals as of March 2008 .

= = Uses = =

The Suffolk Punch was used mainly for draught work on farms , but was also often used to pull heavy artillery in wartime . Like other heavy horses , they were also used to pull non @- @ motorised vans and other commercial vehicles . Today , they are used for commercial forestry operations , for other draught work , and in advertising . They are also used for crossbreeding , to produce heavy sport horses for use in hunter and show jumping competition . As a symbol of the county in which they are based , Ipswich Town F.C. incorporate a Suffolk Punch as a dominant part of their team

crest .

The Suffolk Punch contributed significantly to the creation of the Jutland breed in Denmark . Oppenheimer LXII , a Suffolk Punch imported to Denmark in the 1860s by noted Suffolk dealer Oppenheimer of Hamburg , was one of the founding stallions of the Jutland . Oppenheimer specialised in selling Suffolk Punches , importing them to the Mecklenburg Stud in Germany . The stallion Oppenheimer founded the Jutland breed 's most important bloodline , through his descendant Oldrup Munkedal . Suffolks were also exported to Pakistan in the 20th century , to be used in upgrading native breeds , and they have been crossed with Pakistani horses and donkeys to create army remounts and mules . Suffolks have adapted well to the Pakistani climate , despite their large size , and the programme has been successful . The Vladimir Heavy Draft , a draught breed from the former USSR , is another which has been influenced by the Suffolk .