

= Italian Heavy Draft =

The Italian Heavy Draft , or Rapid Heavy Draft , is a breed of draft horse from Italy . The full Italian name of the breed is Cavallo Agricolo Italiano da Tiro Pesante Rapido , " Italian Rapid Heavy Draft Farm Horse " , and the abbreviation TPR ( Italian pronunciation : [ tipi?erre ] ) is often used .

Generally chestnut in color , the breed is known for its combination of strength and speed . Its development traces to 1860 and continued through the late 19th and early 20th centuries as breeders utilized a mix of foundation bloodstock that included native Italian stock and imported horses , all mainly of draft type . Its versatility has led to its use in both agricultural and military capacities , as well as for the production of mules . In 1926 , a stud book was formed , and population numbers continued to rise until the beginning of World War II . Breeding programs suffered during the war , and despite care afterward , population numbers continued to dwindle as increasing mechanization decreased the need for draft horses . In the 1970s , selective breeding goals were changed to produce a horse suitable for meat production , which today remains the primary use of the Italian Heavy Draft .

= = Breed characteristics = =

The Italian Heavy Draft generally stands between 14 @. @ 2 and 15 @. @ 3 hands ( 58 and 63 inches , 147 and 160 cm ) high , and weighs between 1 @ , @ 320 and 1 @ , @ 540 pounds ( 600 and 700 kg ) . They are generally chestnut ( usually with flaxen mane and tail ) , although they may be red roan , or bay . The head is light for a draft breed , with a straight or slightly convex profile , and it is set on a short , broad and muscular neck . The withers are fairly pronounced and muscular , the chest broad and deep , and the shoulders sloping . The back is straight and short , the flanks short and rounded , with a sloping croup . The legs are short , with broad joints and smallish , though well @ - @ formed , hooves . It closely resembles the Breton breed , which was used heavily in the creation of the Italian Heavy Draft . Although larger , it also bears a resemblance to the Haflinger , also developed in northern Italy . Horses that meet the breed conformation standards set by the breed registry are branded with a design of a ladder with five pegs enclosed by a shield . Foals are examined twice , at between two and seven months and again two and a half years . Horses passing the first evaluation are branded on the left hindquarter ; those that pass the second are marked again on the left side of the neck .

= = History = =

Selection for what eventually became the Italian Heavy Draft was begun in 1860 at the Deposito Cavalli Stalloni ( military stud ) of Ferrara , Italy . The breed was originally developed by crossing native stock with large Brabant horses . While the resulting horses were strong , they were not light or fast enough for the farm work required of them by the Italians . To make the breed lighter and faster , Percheron and Boulonnais blood were added . However , the resulting horse was still not exactly what its creators were looking for , and in the 19th century they added more Breton blood to the mix , bringing the breed to its current conformation and gaits . In 1926 , a stud book was begun , and selection processes were developed to select horses for use in draft capacities . The breeding programs suffered during World War II , but a careful crossbreeding program with Ardennes , Percheron and Breton horses after the war brought the Italian Heavy Draft to its current state .

Despite the Italian Heavy Draft 's early popularity as a strong but fast draft horse , increasing mechanization in the farming and military sectors reduced the need for all draft horses , and population numbers declined . In the 1970s , selection processes were changed to focus on the production of animals for horse meat , and that has continued to be the primary focus through the present time . In 1976 , a breed association was formed in Italy to preserve and promote the Italian Heavy Draft . The association is charged with maintaining the stud book , evaluating breeding stock , granting equine passports , maintaining genetic databases , and exhibiting the breed . The main breeding areas for the Italian Heavy Draft are in the plains and hills around Verona , Padova ,

Vicenza , Venice , Treviso and Udine . In 2005 , it was estimated that there were just under 6 @, @ 500 Italian Heavy Drafts , about half of which were mares . The registered population at the end of 2010 was 6304 , with the largest numbers in Lazio and Umbria ; the number of unregistered Heavy Drafts is not reported .

No modern trace remains of the slower Italian Slow Heavy Draft Horse , the Cavallo Italiano da Tiro Pesante Lento , subject of a biometric and morphological study in 1939 .

= = Uses = =

The Italian Heavy Draft was originally bred to be a versatile horse used in agriculture , urban settings , and military capacities , as well as for the production of large mules for the military . The breed 's docility , size , strength , and speed made it extremely useful for Italian farmers before the introduction of mechanization . It is still used for farming in a few areas where mechanization is impractical . The mares are also still used for the production of mules , although most horses today are bred for meat . Italy is one of the top global consumers of horse meat ; consumption jumped by 31 percent between 2001 and 2006 . Eleven- to eighteen @-@ month @-@ old foals are preferred for slaughter .