

= Pony of the Americas =

The Pony of the Americas (POA) is a pony breed developed in the state of Iowa in the United States . The foundation stallion was an Arabian / Appaloosa / Shetland pony cross . A breed registry was founded in 1954 , and within 15 years had registered 12 @, @ 500 ponies . Today , the Pony of the Americas Club is one of the largest and most active youth @-@ oriented horse breed registries in the US . Although called ponies , POAs have the phenotype of a small horse , combining mainly Arabian and American Quarter Horse attributes . The registry is open , allowing blood from many other breeds , but has strict criteria for entry , including Appaloosa coloration , specified height and other physical characteristics . Although mainly bred for Western riding , the breed has been used for many other disciplines , including driving , endurance riding and some English disciplines .

= Breed characteristics =

Ponies are only registered with the Pony of the Americas club if they have Appaloosa coloring visible from 40 feet (12 m) , otherwise known as " loud " Appaloosa coloring . The coloration includes the typical leopard complex characteristics of mottling around the eyes , muzzle and genitalia , as well as visible white sclera of the eyes and striped hooves . Pinto coloration is not allowed , nor is ancestry from a breed noted for pinto coloring , such as the American Paint Horse . The facial profile of the POA is slightly concave . It is a muscular breed , with a deep chest and well @-@ sloped shoulders . The breed averages 11 @. @ 2 to 14 hands (46 to 56 inches , 117 to 142 cm) high . Despite having the size and name " pony " , the breed has the phenotype (physical characteristics) of a small horse of an American Quarter Horse / Arabian type , not a true pony breed .

The Pony of the Americas Club will register the offspring of registered POAs , as well crosses with Connemaras , Galiceno ponies , Australian Stock Horses , Morgans and Thoroughbreds , and the original Appaloosa and Arabian breeds . These crosses are allowed into the registry as full members as long as they meet the physical breed requirements . Crosses with other breeds , including Quarter ponies , Shetland ponies , Anglo @-@ Arabs , Spanish Mustangs and Welsh ponies , are accepted on an individual basis .

= History =

The POA was developed in the United States in the 1950s by Les Boomhower , a Shetland pony breeder in Iowa . The foundation stallion of the breed was an Arabian / Appaloosa / Shetland pony cross with Appaloosa markings named Black Hand . Boomhower appreciated the stallion 's conformation and disposition and decided to use him to develop a new breed of Appaloosa @-@ colored ponies . In 1954 , Boomhower and a group of associations founded the Pony of the Americas Club , with Black Hand receiving the first registration number . A year later , twelve ponies and twenty @-@ three members had been registered . The club 's goal was to develop a medium @-@ sized pony for older children and small adults , with the coloration of the Appaloosa , the refinement of the Arabian and the muscle and bone of an American Quarter Horse . Originally the height requirement called for ponies between 44 and 52 inches (110 and 130 cm) ; in 1963 this was changed to a range of 46 and 54 inches (120 and 140 cm) , and in 1985 a final change was made to height , raising the upper limit to 56 inches (140 cm) .

Over the first 15 years of its existence , the breed club registered 12 @, @ 500 ponies . Between the founding of the breed club and the present , the early Shetland blood has been almost completely bred out , in order to maintain and improve the small stock horse look sought by the breed founders . The Pony of the Americas Club hosted its first national convention in 1988 , and in 1990 , the Club developed a Hall of Fame for its members and ponies . As of 2012 , the Pony of the Americas Club has registered over 50 @, @ 000 ponies . The Club has become one of the equine industry 's largest youth @-@ oriented breed registries , with over 2 @, @ 000 members , and one of the most active , with over 40 affiliated chapters .

Although originally developed mainly for Western riding and stock uses , it has also been seen competing in endurance riding , three @-@ day eventing , show hunter , and driving . It jumps well , and can be used for dressage . Originally , breed club shows did not allow people over the age of 16 to show POAs under saddle ; adults could , however , show them in halter or driving classes . In 1973 , the age limit for riders was raised to 18 , and in 1987 it was decided that adults 19 and over could show horses two to four years old under saddle .