

# Conformation of the Horse

Dr. Kate Hepworth  
Iowa State University  
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# Outline

- Basic Anatomy
- Balance
- Muscle
- Specific regions of body
- Breed differences



## Basic Horse Anatomy



# “Vet Words”

## Front Legs

- Knee
  - Carpus
- Front cannon bone
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> metacarpal bone
- Front splint bones
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> metacarpal bones
- Fetlock
  - Metacarpophalangeal joint
- Pastern
  - Proximal interphalangeal joint

## Hind Legs

- Coffin bone
  - Third phalanx
- Stifle
  - Femorotibial joint
- Hock
  - Tarsus
- Hind cannon bone
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> metatarsal bone
- Hind splint bones
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> metatarsal bones



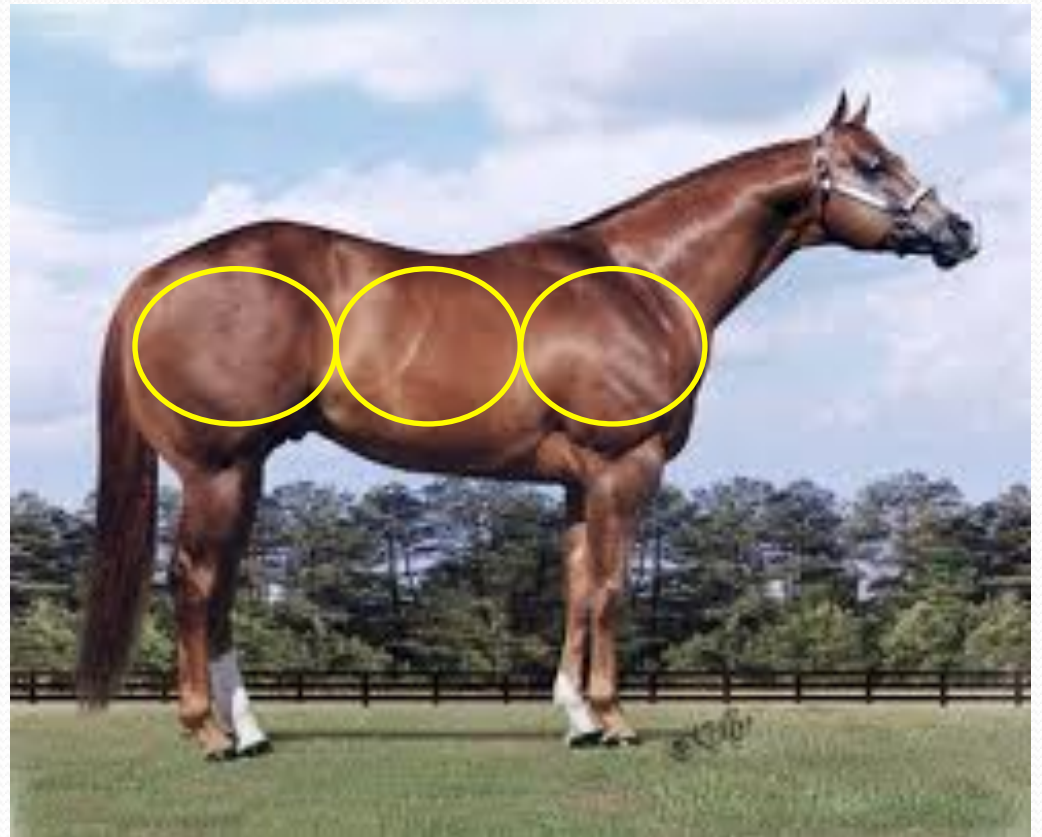


# Ideal Horse

- Balanced
- Refined
- Well muscled

# Balance

- Divide horse in thirds
  - Hindquarters
  - Barrel
  - Forequarters



# Muscling

- Adequate mass
- Definition
- Smoothly blending





# Head

- Wide forehead
- Bright, large eyes
- Refined throat latch
- “Chiseled” features
- Small, alert ears



# Abnormalities of the Head

Roman nose



Wry nose



Parrot mouth

# Neck & Chest

- Long, refined neck
- Neck comes cleanly out of chest
- Good condition
  - “cresty” necks only in stallions
- Well muscled chest
  - Pectoral muscles
- Wide chest



Cresty neck





# Back

- Short
- Strong
- Even, flat topline



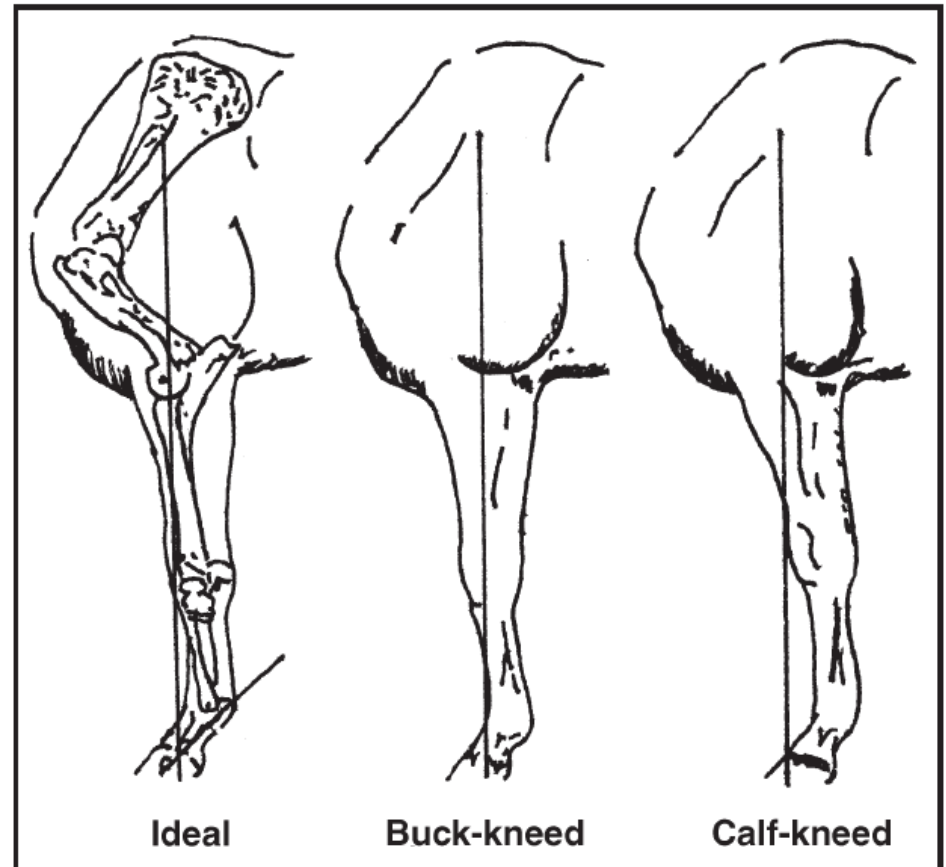
# Barrel

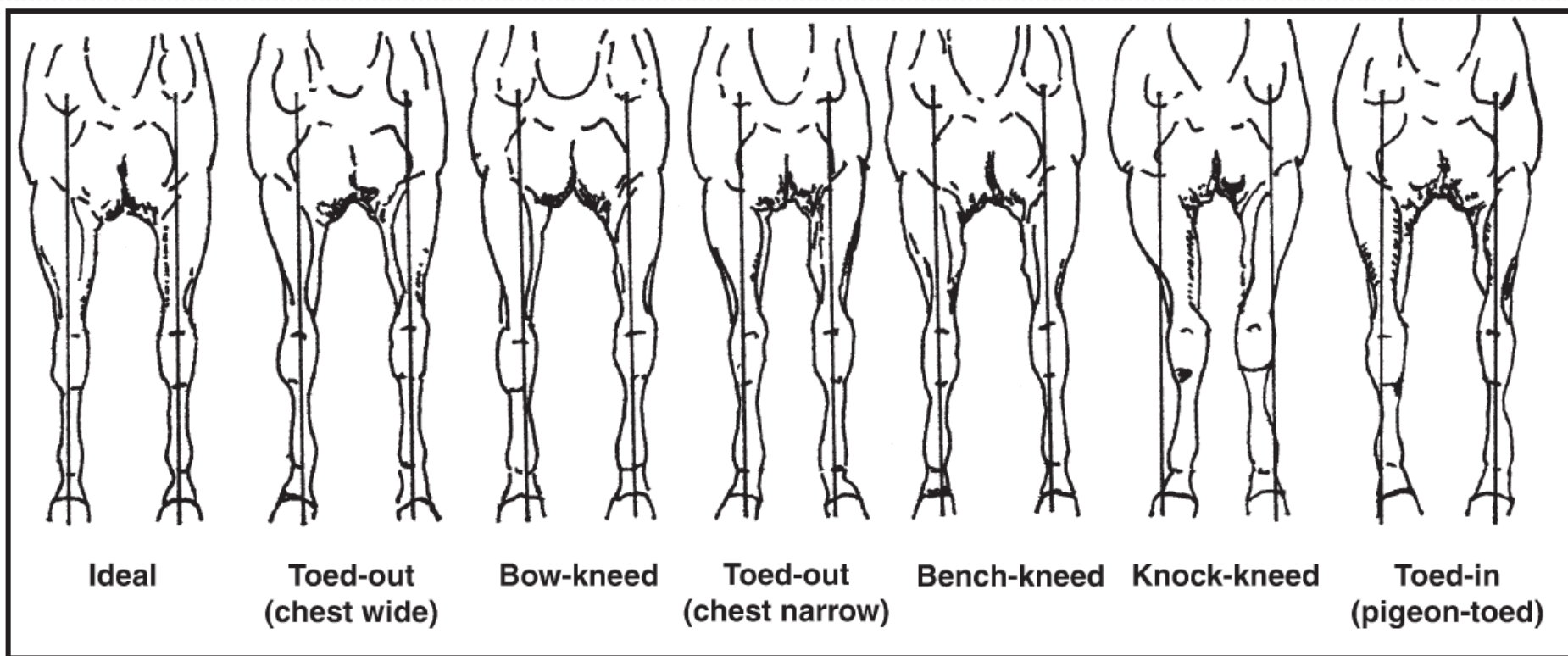
- Good condition
  - Not too fat or too thin
- Short
- Deep heart girth



# Front Legs

- Strong, angular shoulder
- Knees
  - Straight
  - Centered on bones
- Cannon bones
  - Free of blemishes
  - Straight





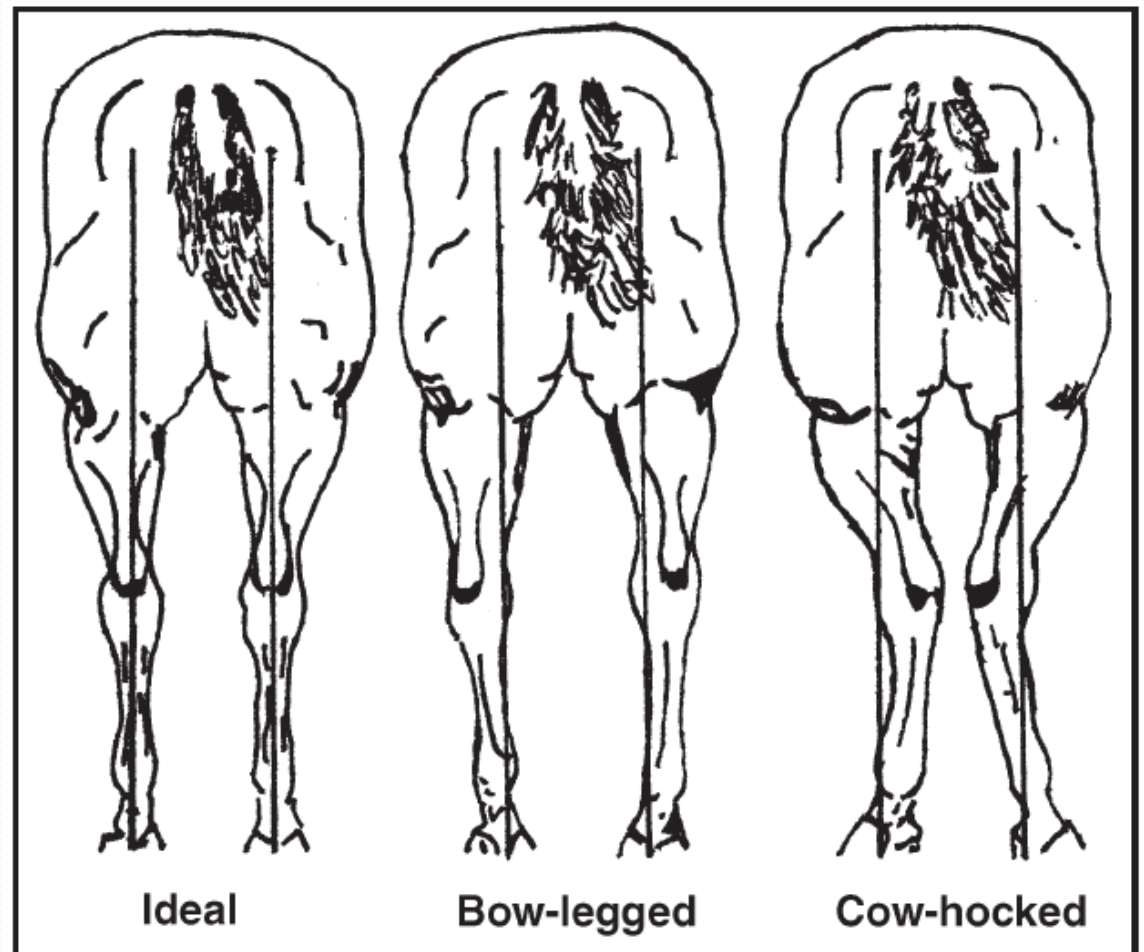


# Front Legs



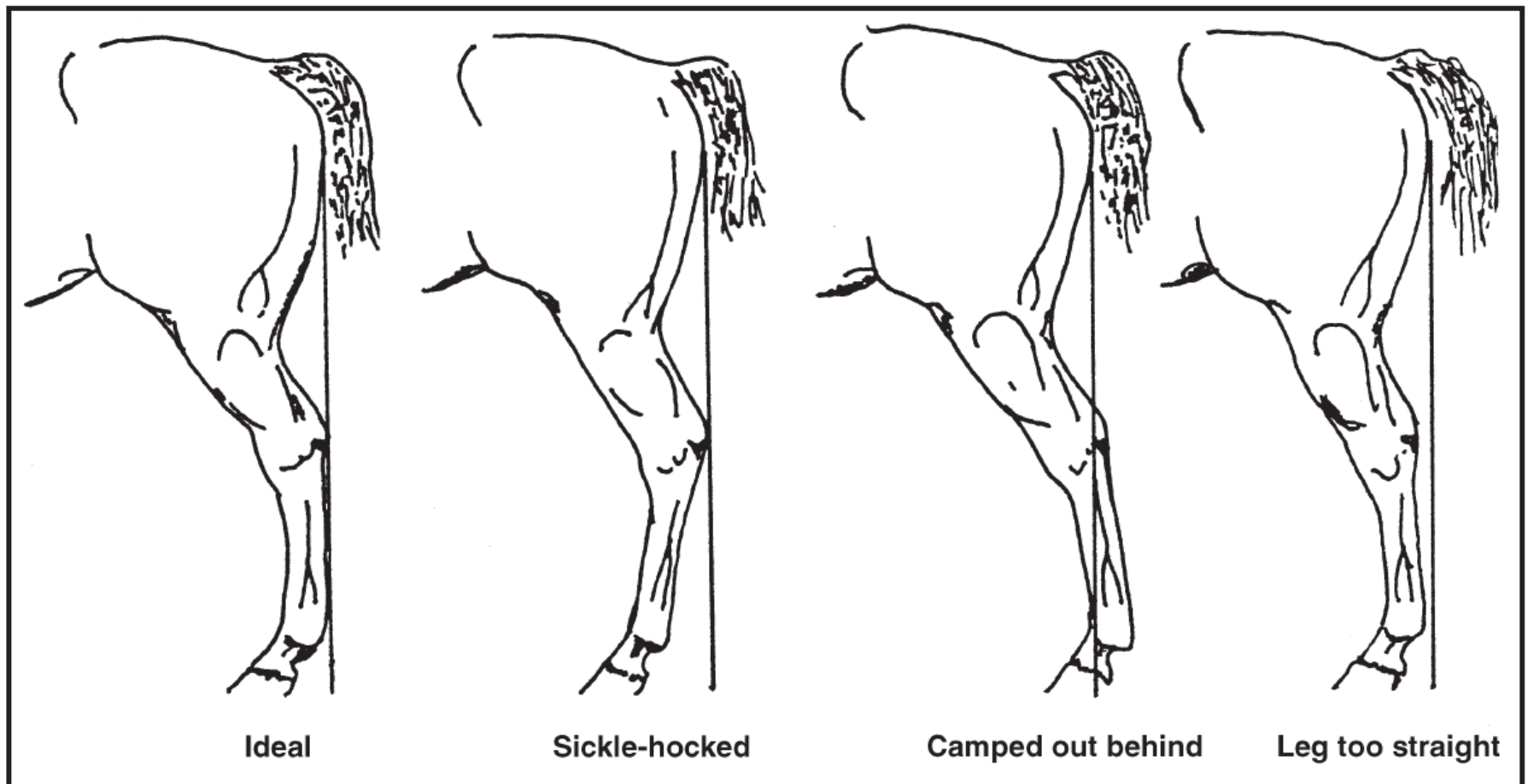
# Hind Legs

- Straight line from point of hock to ground





# Hind Legs





# Breed Differences

- Arabians
- Morgans
- Quarter Horses
- Draft Horses
- Tennessee Walking Horses

# Arabians



# Arabians

- Dished face
- Small ears
- Fine bones
- Typically smaller than many horses
- Short back
  - One less vertebrae than other horses!



# Morgans

- Short, stocky
- Wide forehead
- Thicker throatlatch
- Wide barrel
- High tail set





# Quarter Horses & Paints







# Quarter Horses & Paints

- “Stock” type horses
- Wide based
- Very muscular
- Different types
  - Halter
  - Western performance
  - Hunter under saddle

# Draft Horses



# Draft Horses

- Short, strong neck and back
- “Closer behind”
  - Appear cow hocked
- High set neck





# Tennessee Walking Horses

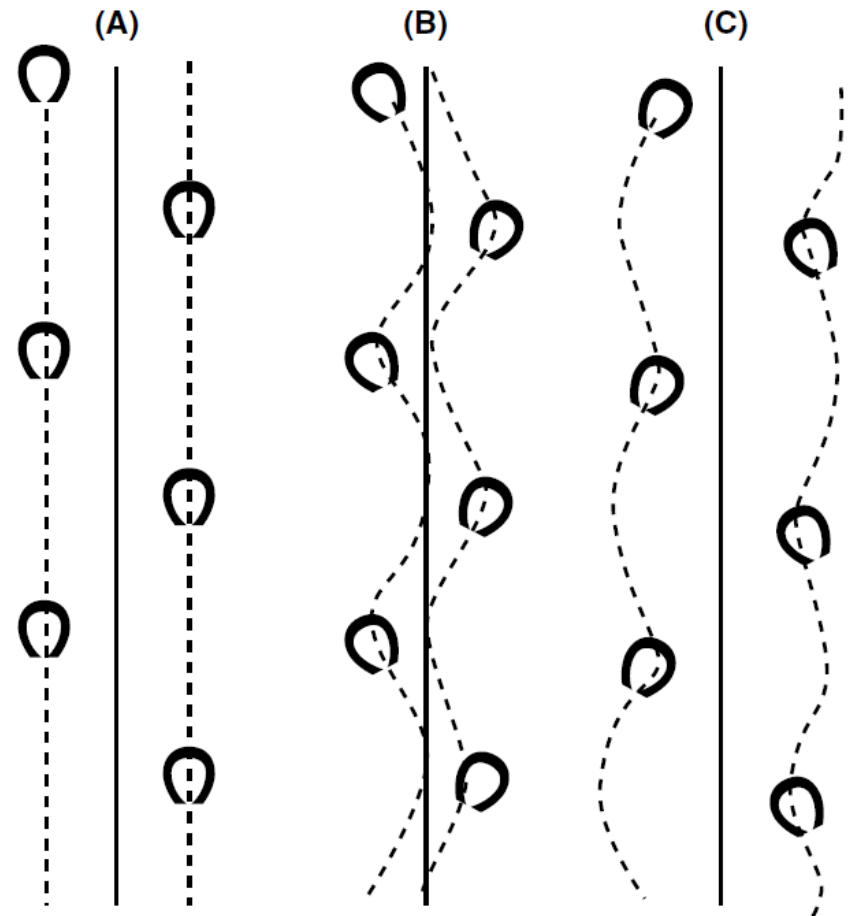
- High set neck
- Short strong back
- Longer face



provided by Stuart Vesty Photography

# Tracking

- Straight lines
- Consistent stride



- (A) Normal feet move in a straight line.
- (B) Base wide or toed out feet move forward in inward arcs, called "winging."
- (C) Base narrow or pigeon-toed feet move forward in wide outward arcs, called "padding."

# Questions????







# References

- University of Kentucky: Horse Judging Manual
- Arabian Horse Association
  - [www.arabianhorses.org](http://www.arabianhorses.org)
- The American Morgan Horse Association
  - [www.morganhorse.com](http://www.morganhorse.com)
- American Quarter Horse Association
  - [www.aqha.com](http://www.aqha.com)
- Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association
  - [www.twhbea.com](http://www.twhbea.com)
- Belgian Draft Horse Corporation of America
  - [www.begliancorp.com](http://www.begliancorp.com)
- Clydesdale Breeders of the USA
  - [Clydeusa.com](http://Clydeusa.com)