



## BREED SPOTLIGHT



### JUDGING SPECIFICS FOR GAITED MORGAN HORSE

Gary Seibert - Jellico Farms <http://www.gaitedmorgans.com> [Jellico@gaitedmorgans.com](mailto:Jellico@gaitedmorgans.com)

The only current organization with Gaited Morgan Specific class is Friends of Sound Horses, FOSH. These rules were written in late 2005 for the Independent Judges Association Rule Book, IJA, in

concert with the FOSH principles to promote natural and sound gaited horses.

I as the author had initially made contact with the FOSH in 2004 in an effort to assist with a FOSH demonstration in Missouri in conjunction with a training seminar for IJA Certified Judges and understudies. Our farm could not provide the demonstration horse, but a fellow Gaited Morgan owner, Jennifer Conditto, did attend and the attendees were duly impressed with the natural gait of the Gaited Morgan observed.

The following year the POC for the 2004 FOSH event contacted me to write a chapter in the IJA Rule Book to be effective 2006 for Gaited Morgan classes at FOSH Shows. There were several concepts which were foremost in my consideration based on showing as a youth, having horses shown professionally and based on the relative new acceptance of Gaited Morgans within the Morgan Registry, AMHA.

First and foremost was the safety of both rider/handler and horse. Safety decision meant a section on protective head gear for youth 11 and younger. No horse younger than three could be shown other than in hand classes. Then the decision of the toe being a max length of 4.5 inches meant no padded horses, horses with keg shoes on all four or barefoot. This emphasized some of the main principles of the FOSH: Presentation of sound horses; shoeing intended only for the protection of the foot and its structure; and would lead to training techniques and equipment which conform to the highest humane standards.

Most Gaited Morgan owners were not professional trainers and would not send their horses to professional trainers. This was addressed as follows: First, the tack which was normally used on a daily basis was acceptable as long as clean and in serviceable condition. Additionally the attire other than the Saddle Seat Riding attire could be normal jeans and colored long sleeve shirts for western attire and the saddle could be a cut back, plantation or trooper type with stirrups, fenders and could or could not have a horn.

Other considerations included the fact the Gaited Morgans currently do not have a set gait as a breed. The gaits range from the pace, stepping pace, saddle rack, rack, running walk and foxtrot. Each of the classes allows the individual horse to perform any of the intermediate four beat gaits. The horse is judged on its ability to

demonstrate the characteristics of the gait and be consistent. They must not be mix gaited.

The first world championship classes held for Gaited Morgans was September 2006 in Lexington, VA at the North American Championship Pleasure Gaited Horse, FOSH. The first two Gaited Morgans entered are shown in the pictures of Jellico Southern Fortune and Jellico Bliss.

Jellico Bliss (WNS Virginian x Virginia Morning Belle)



Jellico Southern Moon ( Mary Mels Maestro x WNS Southern Moon)



If anyone is interested in showing their Gaited Morgans there are four venues currently: Enter open classes in any gaited horse show;

register your horse with another open book gaited breed registry and show in their classes; go to any USEF AMHA show and enter any class as long as not performing a detailed gait is not a disqualifier—understand there will be points deducted for not doing a called for gait such as the trot or canter; and finally find some friends with Gaited Morgans and sponsor and enter a FOSH Gaited Morgan Class.