

Canadian Fjord Horse Association



The Norwegian Fjord horse often reminds people of a horse in a cave painting with its upright mane and compact body. In fact, it is the world's oldest and purest domestic breed. Archaeological evidence shows it was domesticated at least 2000 years ago.

It was the Fjord the Vikings relied on to carry them into battle and its steadfast nature endures to this day.

The Canadian Fjord Horse Association invites you to learn more about this wonderful breed.



Canadian Fjord Horse Association

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The Fjord horse evolved in Western Norway, a land of sheer rock and steep cliffs which drop straight to the ocean.

The Norwegians there survived on small patches of green at the base of huge mountains and relied on their small and sturdy Fjord horses to provide them with draft power and transportation.

They also counted on the horse to survive through the long dark winters on the very little forage available. As a result today's Fjord horse is a versatile, hardy, intelligent, and people-oriented animal.

A relative newcomer to Canada, the Fjord is winning converts across the country for its intelligence, its hardiness and its quiet and reliable nature.

Standing between 13 and 15 hands high, most Fjords are between 13.2 and 14.2 hands and weigh between 900 and 1,100 pounds. But don't let height fool you. There's a lot of power in that compact body. Fjords are typically well-muscled, with strong bones and good feet. They are extremely hardy and known to be easy-keepers.

The Fjord is eye-catching with its characteristic dun colouring, typical of the earliest horses in existence. Like those wild horses, they retain the primitive markings that all such horses used to carry, the dark dorsal stripe that extends from the poll through the tail, horizontal zebra stripes on the legs, and dark outlines on the ear tips.

Fjord horses can be seen in five shades of dun. Ninety percent of them are brown dun, with a golden body, black dorsal stripes and an oatmeal coloured muzzle. The other shades of dun include red dun, white dun, grey dun, and the rarely seen yellow dun whose stripe is darker yellow rather than black.

The careful breeding and evaluation programs of the Norwegian homeland—where only approved individuals which are good representatives of the breed can reproduce—have been emulated in other European countries including Holland, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden and others. Evaluations are held in Canada and the United States as well to give breeders another tool in their goal of breeding quality Norwegian Fjord horses. Today's breeders strive to retain the Fjord horse's trademark calm and intelligent temperament while breeding for a well balanced animal with three good gaits, capable of participating successfully in a number of equine sports. Fjords are now seen training and competing in all levels of dressage, hunter, pleasure, combined driving, eventing, trail, western and draft. The versatility of the Fjord breed allows the same horse that performed successfully in the dressage ring to be seen pulling a carriage down the road for a Sunday pleasure drive, bringing in the family Christmas tree from the woodlot, and giving a pony ride to a small child. This unique horse with the somewhat "prehistoric" look has truly evolved into an all-around partner for today's horse person!

