

Missouri Fox Trotters

The Perfect Gaited Horse



Missouri Fox Trotters are one of the best kept secrets in the Equine Industry. Developed in the Ozark region of the United States and drawn from the saddle stock of the Southeast and seasoned with Arabians and other stock breeds, these horses consistently demonstrate even temperaments, beautiful conformations, and a truly natural, smooth saddle gait. These horses embody the term "versatile" as they can be found in backyards with three young children mounted bareback with just a halter for steering, found in Endurance and Competitive Trail competitions, on working ranches out West, and on trails throughout the United States and abroad. You will find them at All-Breed shows, FOSH events, and even at Stock Horse events, as well as the MFTHBA breed shows held by affiliates across the country. The US Forestry Department uses foxtrotters as their breed of choice, and you will often find that those volunteering for search and rescue missions choose this fantastic breed as well. If you find yourself involved with horses in any way, chances are you have seen a fox trotter and may not even know it.

The most notable characteristic of the Missouri Fox Trotter is the gait. The fox trot is a four beat diagonal gait that leaves two feet on the ground at all times on opposite sides of the horse's body (left front and right rear.) Because of this, foxtrotters are very sure footed, even in rocky and steep terrain. Most other gaited breeds are lateral, which means the two feet on the ground at the same time are on the same side of the body (left front and left rear) so the horse is slightly off balance and not as sure footed on uneven terrain. The gait movement is often referred to as "trotting in the back and walking in the front." The head bobs in rhythm with the feet and the rhythmic movement is followed through to the tail. In the saddle, the rider experiences a very smooth ride with a slight rocking from front to back in the saddle, much like the motion experienced in a rocking chair. Fox Trotters also perform other soft gaits, but the foxtrot is the signature gait of the breed.

Fox Trotters come in a variety of body shapes – from the slender elegant look of Saddlebreds to the stocky build of Stock Horse breeds and everything in between. Fox Trotters come in all sizes as well – even ponies. The breed standard on conformation:

The Missouri Fox Trotting Horse should stand 14 to 16 hands in height, be of good conformation, and able to carry weight. The animal should stand well on its feet, be erect, wide awake and alert. The neck should be graceful, in proportion to length of body, and well-joined to body. The Fox Trotting Horse should have a neat, clean, intelligently-shaped head; pointed ears that are well-shaped; good, large, bright eyes; and a tapered muzzle. The back should be reasonably short and strong; the body deep and well-ribbed. The flank should be full; and the chest deep and full. The shoulders should be properly sloped and well-muscled. The legs should be muscular and well-tapered. The foot should be well-made, strong and in proper proportion to size a horse. The hair should be soft and silky. (taken from the www.MFTHBA.com website)

The combination of the comfortable gait, beautiful body build, and gentle disposition makes the Missouri Fox Trotting horse a winning companion for any discipline for beginners and experienced horse owners alike.

