

# Friesian Conformation 101

## The Neck

**Breeding Goal:** The poll and the long neck are set in a light upward arch. A nice, vertically arched neck.

### Functional Use

Once the hindquarters are sufficiently developed, the neck is the lever with which it is possible to load the weight bearing onto the hindquarters and lighten the forehand. A horse with a well-set neck has less physical resistance to becoming round and stretching into a correct contact frame and his shoulders will not be inhibited when he is ridden into an uphill connection. An open throat latch area allows the horse to flex his poll properly. If he has a heavy head-neck connection and his throat latch area is too thick, he cannot yield easily and may have difficulty breathing. If the connection between the head and neck is too thin, he might have a tendency to collapse his neck at the poll, coming behind the vertical and making evasion easier.

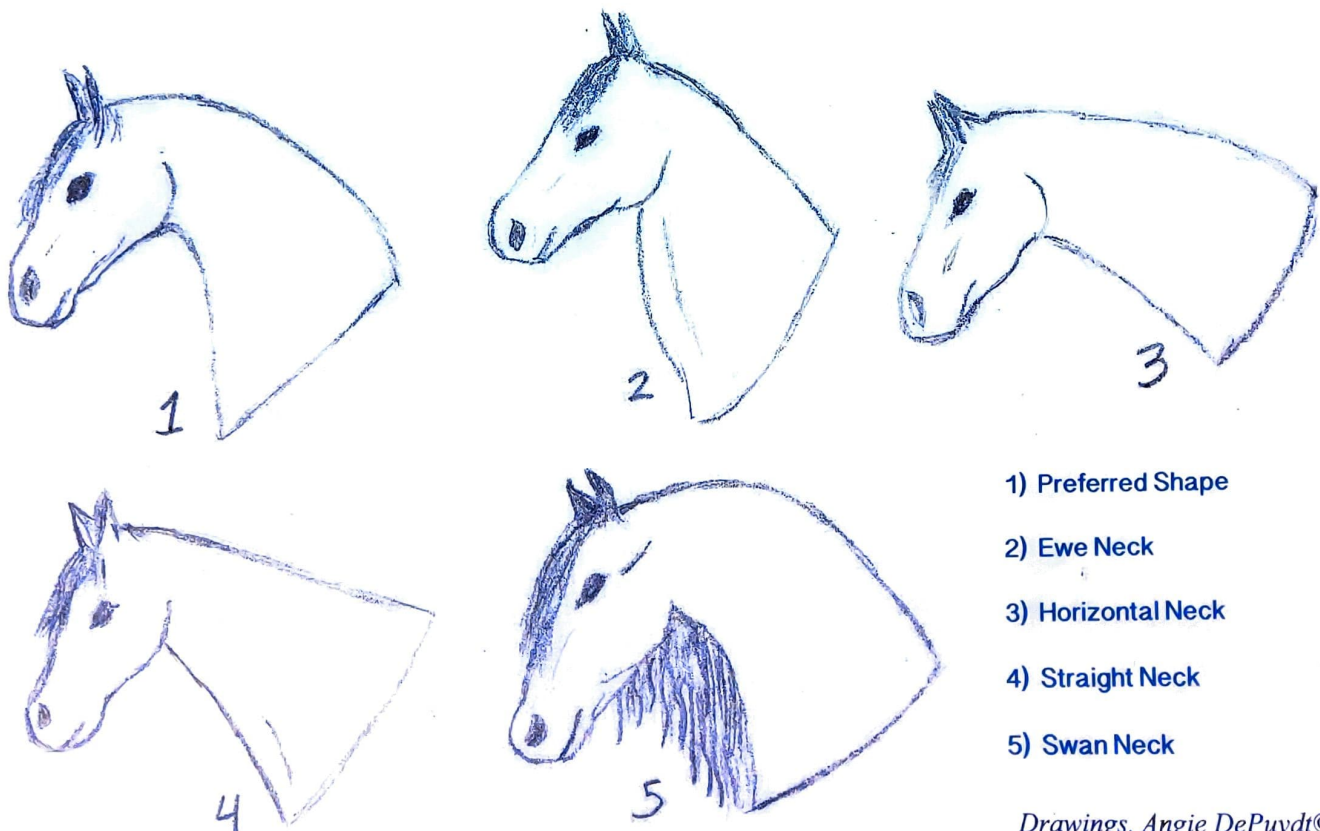
### Swan Neck

A swan-necked horse has a long, skinny neck set at a high upwards angle. This shape of the neck used to be popular in the past but is undesirable in sports because it may cause

problems riding the horse with contact. The poll must be the highest point. If the top of the crest is further back, the poll-neck connection will be too light and it will be easy for the horse to curl behind the bit and evade contact. It is important to note the concept of 'swan neck' is misinterpreted by some people. In a Friesian horse, the appearance of a swan neck is the shape of the neck of a swan. Some people consider a swan neck to be a vertical neck with an over developed underside and little neck but that is actually what is referred to as a ewe neck.

### Fallen Crest

A fallen crest is an undesirable, partly genetically defined phenomenon that incidentally occurs in mostly older horses. The appearance of a fallen crest will have a negative influence on inspection scores. This is defined by a deviation from the straight line (central) when viewed from behind. This characteristic is included under the category of "breed



1) Preferred Shape

2) Ewe Neck

3) Horizontal Neck

4) Straight Neck

5) Swan Neck



## The Neck

characteristics" because it is not related to the functionality of the horse and is therefore not a conformation trait. There are three stages of a fallen crest:

- C-Line (least severe)
- S-Line (moderate)
- Fallen Crest (most severe)



STAGE	3-6 YEARS	7-10 YEARS	11+ YEARS
C-Line	Maximum of Star, 1st Premium	Maximum of Crown	No Restrictions
S-Line	Maximum of Star, 2nd Premium	Maximum of 1st Premium, Not eligible for Crown	Maximum of Crown
Fallen Crest	No entry into the Studbook, No Premium	Maximum of Studbook, No Premium	Maximum of Studbook, No Premium

Reference: Judging the Friesian Horse, KFPS, 2013

## Let's Friesian™



Clockwise from Left: Photo by Dr.  
 Katherine Fox; Photo by Angie  
 DePuydt; Photo by Angie DePuydt;  
 Judy Cohn's foal, Isaac of S&S Frie-  
 sians with his mother, Ineke, Photo by  
 Lori Ann Thwing.



Moments by Lori Ann

Continued on Page 59!!! Let's Friesian - some more!