

Zabaikalskaya Horse; Sometime Curly

Native Russian Breeds & Horses

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Localisation: The Zabaikalskaya horse is bred in Trans-Baikal Territory (the former Chita Region in the Agin-Buryat Autonomous District).

Ecosystem: Mountain-taiga steppes.

History: The Zabaikalskaya breed was the result of grading-up local Mongolian horses with harness horses brought by the Russians during the development of the Transbaikal, beginning in the XVII century. In the XX century, the Zabaikalskaya horses were intensively crossbred. As a result they almost disappeared in the Irkutsk region (in the 1920s and 1930s) and in Buryatia (in 1950s and 1960s). Nowadays, the Zabaikalskaya horses are bred mostly purely at farms of the Trans-Baikal Territory.



Conformation: The Zabaikalskaya horses have proportional or large gross heads; necks are short, thick and low; withers are short, low, and muscular. The chest of the Zabaikalskaya is deep enough and not very wide; a back and a waist are straight or roach; a croup is sloped. Forelegs are straight, with well-defined tendons; sometimes they are calf-kneed or post-legged.

Coats: various: buckskin, bay, chestnut, grullo, grey, seal brown, dun, pinto, leopard. May be Curly coated.

Size: Stallions – height – 141.7 cm, body length – 144.1 cm, girth – 185.3 cm, cannon bone circumference – 19.7 cm. Weight 445 kg. Mares – 137.3-141.6-172.2-18.7 (cm). Weight 390 kg.



*IHHO NOTE: **Bider Markings:** In 2007, Japanese and Mongolian scientists found unusual markings on Przewalski horses and native domestic horses of Mongolian origin. These markings are called bider by the Mongolian nomads. They have the appearance of dark stains on the horse's shoulder blades, shoulder joints, or base of the neck. Bider markings can be of any size and have any structure. The underlying skin is also darker than the rest of the body. They are symmetrical in placement, appearing on both sides of the horse's body. Bider markings are very rare and observed in approximately 1% of Mongolian horses. They are heritable: It is supposed there is a dominant allele *Bi* (from "bider") that is responsible for them. According to the Japanese and Mongolian scientists from the study, the marks have not been seen in other breeds, but it has been said that they have also been seen in the Bashkir and in the Yakut horse, and as we would expect, the Zabaikalskaya horse.*

Mitch Wilkinson about Zabaikalskaya curly horse:

"In an effort to save these unique horses, state breeding farms were created. The Hakimov stud farm in Chita is one of the largest facilities.

In 2012, Tatjana Pankova contacted the Curly Mustang Association Facebook site about the Zabaikalsky Curly Horses of Siberia.

In 2018, Tatjana Pankova introduced Luydmila Khrabrova, PhD of the All-Russian Horse Breeding Institute in Moscow to Dr. Mitch Wilkinson and Dr. E. Gus Cothran of Texas A&M University. This began a fruitful collaboration which has led to greater understanding in both countries about curly coated horse populations. The same year thanks to samples sent by Dr. Khrabrova, it was confirmed that the curly coated Zabaikalsky horses did not carry the KRT25 or SP6 mutations that were the causative mutations in many American curly horses.

There is a slight possibility that the Cook curly coat producing mutation which has not been isolated at this time may match with at least some of the Zabaikalsky horses of Siberia. In order for these tests to be made, either the causative mutation for Zabaikalsky curly coats or the American curly coat producing mutation known as the Cook Mutation must be isolated. American curly horses known to be carrying the Cook mutation are in precariously low numbers.

If the gene mutations which produce these horses prove to be entirely different than the Cook mutation which produces some American curly horses, it will be a remarkable finding due to the similar coat phenotypes.

IHHO NOTE: Actually, in genetics, it is known to be quite normal for different mutations on the same gene to cause identical phenotypical results.

Because of the great variation in coat phenotypes (appearance) of the Zabaikalsky Curly horses, it is suspected several gene mutations may be found in the population, much like their American counterparts.

IHHO NOTE: If the original theory advanced by IHHO founder (Donna Grace) is correct, she and other curly breeders noticed and have discussed since the 1990s, that dominant curly mutations seem to have occurred and reproduced among wild or feral horse herds living in mountainous or cold climate zones... which could explain why so many curly mutations found were among horses that survived because they were tough and handled harsh habitat exceptionally well.



At the present time, none of these horses have been imported to North America or Western Europe. It is also not known if these (curly coated Zabaikalsky) horses have hypoallergenic properties, but it is not an unreasonable assumption to think they might be hypoallergenic like their American counterparts. It is hoped that an adventurous breeder of curly horses in either location could alleviate this situation and start a new line of curly coated horses.

In the future, it is hoped that the continued corporation between Russian equine scientists, breeders of Zabaikalsky curly horses, and curly horse enthusiasts in the United States, Canada, and Europe will continue. This exchange of information will be in the best interests of the rare horses that are loved in multiple countries.”

for more Zabaikalsky photos see: <https://ok.ru/group/50967594205353/album/50981962055849>