

HERD WORK

Here is a breakdown of the Victorian Reined Cow Horse Association (VRCHA) Herd Work. "Herd Work" refers to the Cutting portion of VRCHA competition. This phase is based on NRCHA USA rulebook. Below are the key guidelines:

General Overview of VRCHA Herd Work – Guide Only

Objective:

Herd Work is one of the three main phases in an VRCHA reined cow horse class
Typically In Herd Work:

- One horse and rider enter a small herd of cattle,
 - Separate one animal (cut it out), and
 - Prevent it from returning to the herd for up to 2½ minutes.
Judges look for a willing entrance, precise separation, control of the picked cow, minimal disturbance of the herd, and good horsemanship.
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General Herd Work Judging Principles

✓ Timing & Approach

- The clock starts once the horse crosses the timeline.
 - The horse should enter cleanly and willingly into the herd, without hesitation, weaving, or reluctance.
 - More time spent actively working a cow within the 2½ minutes generally improves the score.
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What Judges Look for

Judges typically assess Herd Work based on:

- **Quality of the cut:** entering the herd deep enough and cleanly separating a cow.
- **Control of the cow:** keeping it from returning to the herd on a loose rein.
- **Degree of difficulty:** working a stubborn or challenging cow well.
- **Courage and attitude:** confidence and willingness shown by horse and rider.
- **Eye appeal:** overall look and balance of the work.

Scoring System

VRCHA herd work isn't scored on a fixed "60–80" scale like other classes, but runs as part of an overall score combination. Judges evaluate quality, following NRCHA USA official guidelines, and marks are added or subtracted based on performance and penalties.

Common Penalties

Judges will deduct points or penalize for:

- Failure to control the cow,
- Disturbing or scattering the herd,
- Insufficient working time,
- Poor position or putting excessive cues on the horse
- Lack of difficulty or eye appeal.

This is a Guideline Only always refer to the Rulebook if in doubt.

