



Decoding the jargon.

The Thoroughbred Industry, like any other, has its own unique jargon that can prove daunting to even the most experienced industry person, let alone newcomers to the sport. Below is a list of words that are commonly used by industry participants and followers alike.

- AGISTMENT** — Keeping and looking after horses, often when on a break or still growing.
- BACKWARD** — A horse that is not fully mature.
- BANDAGES** — Used to protect a horse's legs.
- BARRIERS** — Also known as starting gates. The metal gates in which the horses are assembled to start the race.
- BID SPOTTERS** — Staff at an Auction House strategically placed around the sales ring to identify where a bid is coming from.
- BIT** — A metal bar which is placed in a horse's mouth to assist in controlling it. Attached to the bridle.
- BLACK-TYPE** — A horse that wins or places in a Group or Listed race earns "black-type", whereby the achievement is noted in **BOLD** print in a sales catalogue.
- BLEEDER** — A horse that is recognised as bleeding through the nostrils due to blood vessels in the lungs rupturing during physical exertion.
- BLINKERS** — A hood placed over a horse's head which has shields covering its peripheral vision to prevent it from being distracted, thus keeping it focused on racing.
- BREAST PLATE** — A strap attached to the girth (belt used to fasten a saddle) to help prevent a saddle from slipping.
- BRIDLE** — A bridle is a head collar of leather straps which encompass a horse's head. The bit and reins are attached to the bridle.
- BREAK DOWN** — When a horse sustains an injury on the track.
- BROODMARE** — A female horse which is used for breeding.
- BY** — A reference to the father (sire) of a horse. If a horse is by 'Zabeel', it can be inferred that its father (sire) is Zabeel
- CAST** — When a horse lies down too close to a wall or fence and is unable to stand due to not having sufficient space, it is said to be cast.
- CLASS OF RACE** — All racing jurisdictions schedule races based on the class of horse within the population. The different class races provide winning opportunities for all grades of horse, at differing stages of their careers.
Black-type races (Group and Listed races) make up around 5% of the total races held in NZ and are the nation's most prestigious races. These races are graded by level of importance (Group One, Group Two, Group Three, Listed)
Age Restricted races are those which are limited to horses of a particular age.
Maiden races are for horses that have never won a race.
Ratings races are races which are limited to horses who are rated by the handicapper up to and including a particular rating (ie a Rating 70 race is for horses rated up to and including 70). This rating is determined by a handicapping panel based on past performances.
Open Class races are open to all horses and are generally run under handicap conditions. Black-type weight-for-age races are an exception to this rule.
Weight-For-Age races are races in which horses are handicapped according to age and gender.
- CLERK OF THE COURSE** — A rider who assists jockeys in getting their horses to the barriers before a race and escorts the winner back to the parade ring after a race.
- CLEAN LEGS** — Legs that are free of swelling, deformity or conformation faults.
- COLIC** — A broad term given to a medical condition where a horse is nauseous and has a stomach ailment.
- COLOURS** — The coloured jackets (made from silk) worn by jockeys in a race.
- COLT** — A male horse three years and under.
- CONFORMATION** — A horse's anatomical makeup.
- CONNECTIONS** — A term used to refer collectively to a horse's jockey / trainer / owner.
- DAM** — A horse's mother.
- DRAFT** — A group of horses offered by a vendor at a sale.
- FAVOURITE** — The horse with the lowest odds, on whom the majority of money has been invested by punters.
- FETLOCK** — The equine equivalent of an ankle.
- FILLY** — A female horse aged three years or under.
- FOAL** — A baby horse still suckling its mother.





Decoding the jargon...continued

- GELDING** — A male horse that has been castrated.
- GOING/ TRACK CONDITIONS** — A term used to describe the condition of a track. Gradings range from heavy through to good and are dependent on how wet or dry the surface is.
- HALTER** — A bitless bridle used to lead horses.
- HAND** — The unit of measurement used to determine the height of a horse. A hand equates to 10cm and is measured from the ground to the top of the wither.
- HANDICAP** — A weighting system that determines a level playing field for horses to compete against each other in a race. Horses deemed 'better' than others in a race carry more weight.
- HANDS AND HEELS** — A phrase used to describe how a jockey rides a horse without using the whip.
- HANGING** — A horse is said to be 'hanging' when it carries its head to one side whilst galloping causing it to race erratically.
- HOME TURN** — The final corner in a race.
- HOOP** — A colloquial term for a jockey.
- HORSE** — Also known as an entire, the term horse is a synonym for stallion, which is a male horse four years of age and over which has not been castrated.
- JUDGE** — The official charged with determining the finishing order and margins in a race.
- LOT NUMBER** — A number used to designate a horse's appearance in a sale.
- LENGTH** — A measurement used to determine the margin between horses in a race, which equates to 2½ metres.
- MARE** — A female horse four years of age or greater.
- MEDIAN** — The middle price of a sale. (ie the figure which represents that 50% of the catalogue sold for more, and 50% sold for less).
- NEAR SIDE** — The word near is used to refer to the left side of a horse, as this is the side that is closest to the jockey when mounting a horse in the traditional manner (from the left).
- OFF SIDE** — The right hand side of the horse.
- PEDIGREE** — A horse's family history, often presented in a similar format to a family tree.
- PENETROMETER** — A device used to measure moisture levels of a racetrack surface. The higher the reading, the wetter the track.
- PINHOOKING** — The practise of buying young horses with the specific intention of reselling them for a profit.
- PLATE** — A lightweight shoe worn by a horse when racing.
- PULLING** — When a horse grips the bit strongly and 'pulls' heavily against the reins, usually whilst travelling too quickly too early in a race.
- RATING** — A classification given to a horse by the handicapper to indicate its ability to ensure fairness in handicapping and its level of competitiveness.
- REINS** — Leather straps attached to the bit/bridle used to steer the horse.
- RESERVE** — The minimum price set by the vendor for which a horse will be sold at auction.
- RIG** — A horse that has undescended testes, or a horse which has been improperly castrated.
- ROARER** — A horse which makes a sound whilst breathing due to issues with its larynx .
- SADDLE** — A seat in which the jockey sits whilst riding the horse.
- SADDLECLOTH** — The cloth placed on a horse's back under the saddle used to highlight the number of a horse during a race.
- SERVICE** — The mating of a mare by a stallion.
- SHADOW ROLL** — A padded noseband made of sheepskin used to encourage the horse to lower its head carriage, used on horses that are notorious for racing with a high head carriage.
- SIRE** — The father of a horse.
- SPELL** — A period of time in which a horse has a holiday from racing and training.
- STEWARDS** — A group of people responsible for ensuring that all industry participants adhere to the rules.
- STRAPPER** — A person employed by a trainer to look after a horse, and assist with saddling.
- STUD** — A property used for breeding horses.
- STUDMASTER** — The person managing a stud.
- TONGUE TIE** — A tie used to prevent a horse from getting its tongue over the bit.
- TYING UP** — A physical condition similar to cramps in humans which is generally brought on by exercise.
- WEANLING** — A young horse that has been separated from its mother but has not had its first birthday.
- WINDSUCKER** — A vice developed by horses in which they grab onto a surface such as a fence post or stable door and gulp in air.
- WORK** — A common term used to describe a horse's training.
- YEARLING** — A horse that is one-year-old.

