

# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN OWNING A HORSE

**SO YOU DECIDED** that you want to take the leap and own a horse. There are questions that you must first ask yourself when choosing your horse:

- What type of horse will best fit my needs?
- Where should I purchase a horse?
- What supplies & equipment will I need to get started?
- How are the daily needs of the horse going to be met?

## SELECTING THE RIGHT HORSE

Whether you choose to travel to horse shows or just tail ride for pleasure, consider the type of riding that you intend to do. There are several styles of riding, which include English or Western disciplines. Once the horse's use has been determined, it is important to select one that has already been schooled or trained for that type of riding. Also, select a horse that has had the right level of training depending on your experience.

Once you understand your own riding experience and limitations, you will be in a better position to choose a horse with a temperament that will best suit you.

Also, consider that a horse's value is usually a combination of its pedigree, build or conformation, and its ability to complete desired tasks. A horse's ability to perform desired tasks (its training and behavior) usually affects its value more than its pedigree or conformation. Expect to pay more for a horse already trained to complete a task than one that will require time and expense to reach that point.

## WHERE TO LOOK FOR THE PERFECT HORSE

There are many different options for finding a horse to purchase. Two ways to purchase a horse are through a private contract and at a public auction. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. Whatever way you choose to purchase your horse, a first-time buyer should be accompanied by a knowledgeable horse person. Together, you can evaluate the horse in various actions such as standing in the pasture, loading, grooming and riding.

There are many resources available for finding a horse most suitable for your intentions. A primary resource is through the stable – **CIRCLE K RANCH** – where you plan to board or ride. Riding instructors can act as agents in locating a horse most suited for your riding style and ability. You can also check newspapers or the bulletin board at your local tack store, which is a handy resource for locating horses for sale.

Avoid purchasing any horse over the internet or sight not seen. A video does NOT substitute for direct contact.

## DON'T SKIP

## THE PRE-

## PURCHASE

## EXAMINATION

Owning a horse can be a big investment in time, money and emotion. Unfortunately, horses seldom come with a money-back guarantee. This is why it is important to investigate the horse's overall health and condition through a purchase examination conducted by an equine veterinarian. The following guidelines from the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) will help ensure a custom-tailored exam:

- Choose a veterinarian who is familiar with the breed, sport or use for which the horse is being purchased.
- Choose a veterinarian who does not have a prior relationship with the owner or the horse in question.
- Explain to your veterinarian your expectations and primary uses for the horse including short and long-term goals.
- Ask your veterinarian to outline the procedures that should be included in the exam and why.
- Establish the costs for these procedures.
- Be present during the purchase exam. The seller or agent should be present.
- Discuss with your veterinarian his/her findings in private.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions or request further information about your veterinarian's findings in private.

The veterinarian's job is neither to pass nor to fail an animal. Rather, it is to provide you with information regarding any existing medical problems, and to discuss those problems with you so that you can make an informed purchase decision.

Many individuals that are looking to purchase a horse hear the words "guaranteed sound" or "I'll buy him back if you do not like him" or "money-back guaranteed." If comments like these are made, you should ask the seller if they are amenable to a 30-day grace period until the sale becomes final. This will often eliminate the question regarding whether the horse has been given a sedative or pain relieving agent during the pre-purchase examination to help the sale go through.

For more information about pre-purchase examinations, ask your equine veterinarian for *Purchase exams: A sound Economic Investment*, a brochure provided by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). Additional information can be found on the AAEP Web site, [www.aaep.org](http://www.aaep.org).

## HOW WILL MY HORSE'S NEEDS BE MET?

When owning a horse, many different management styles exist when it comes to care and housing. As a prospective horse owner, one of the first decisions that must be made is where to house the horse.

Many individuals have the ability to provide housing for their horse on their property. On site housing has many advantages related to convenience of daily horse care and use. **On the other hand**, the responsibility of feeding and daily maintenance of the horse is **much higher** when the horse is housed on your property. This must be taken into consideration, versus boarding the horse at a local stable or boarding facility (Circle **K** Ranch) where it can be fed and watched on a daily basis by barn personnel. Also, be sure to check with local zoning officials before planning to keep your horse at home.

**A stable facility can offer the advantage** of increased interaction with other horses and their owners plus organized activities for those boarding horses.

## COSTS TO CONSIDER WHEN OWNING A HORSE

Potential horse owners should be aware of the associated costs that accompany ownership before purchasing a horse. These types of costs will vary due to the diversity of the use of your horse and the way that it is managed.

### **Some expected costs to consider include:**

- Grain/Feed
- Hay/Forage/Straw \*
- Pasture Turnout \*
- Salts/Minerals or other supplements \*
- Farrier service (required every 6 to 8 weeks)
- Veterinary Care
- Utilities \*

\* These services are **free** at the Circle **K** Ranch

### Some expected costs to consider, (Continued)

- Tack and supplies
  - Bedding \*
  - Insurance
  - Riding lessons
  - Horse trailer parking rent \*
- These services are **free** at the Circle **K** Ranch

## ENJOY THE RIDE

Most individuals own horses for hobby interests related to family and youth development or the enhancement of the quality of their life or entertainment. Advancements in the equine health field have helped to increase the life of the horse to well into their 30's, but often well beyond their athletic usefulness. Prepare to be a responsible horse owner and plan ahead for your horse's retirement years. As a horse owner, you should also plan to set aside an emergency fund for the unexpected but all too common injuries or illnesses that may occur in horse ownership.

One final point for all horse owners to remember:

- *The horse is a living being whose life and welfare are in your hands.*

## HAPPY TRAILS