



Horse Buyers Guide

Education is the key to responsible horse ownership. Buying a horse is a long term responsibility, not to be taken lightly.

There are an overwhelming number of un-wanted horses out there today. A lot of them were purchased by people who did not realize what they were getting into.

Horses are being sent to **slaughter by the thousands**, and suffering needlessly, mostly because people no longer want, or can't afford to keep them.

They don't realize how much money and time is involved with taking care of a horse. Don't let anyone fool you, horses are a lot of work. Yes, there fun to ride and Yes, there nice to look at. But what happens when he gets sick or injured? **Vet bills!** That's what happens, and vets are expensive.

Before you go out and buy a horse, please know all the facts... I've seen so many people go out and buy a horse because their child wanted one. Six months later, the child has lost interest in the horse and Mom & Dad are tired of footing the bill to feed and keep a pasture ornament.

This guide will hopefully help you understand what's involved with owning a horse. It also serves as a guide to buying the right horse that fits you and your riding abilities.

My goal is to help you understand the total experience of owning a horse. I truly believe that if more people understood exactly what responsible horse ownership includes, there would be less un-wanted horses in the future.

I would love nothing more than to never have to see another horse go to slaughter or be abused because he was un-wanted.

If you are a novice horse person or are not sure exactly what to look for when buying a horse, get someone with experience to go with you.

If you cannot get someone to go with you, here are a few things to consider when buying a horse.

- ◆ Always have a vet do a wellness check on the horse you're considering, to make sure he has no hidden illnesses or conditions.
- ◆ Start by looking at a breed you prefer, but always keep an open mind. Another breed may suit your purpose just as well.
- ◆ Set your price range, but be a little flexible with it.
- ◆ Pay close attention to the horse's attitude. A bad attitude may be an indication that he will be difficult to ride or handle.
- ◆ Choose your horse according to whatever purpose you have in mind for him.
- ◆ Figure out what age range you want the horse to be in. Be flexible in this area also.
- ◆ Choose a horse that fits your personality. Meaning, Do you think that you can bond with this horse and form a relationship with him?
- ◆ Make absolutely sure that he has good ground manners. You definitely don't want a horse that is pushing his handler around or walking all over him. Trying to bite or kick at every chance he gets.
- ◆ Decide what aspects you can live without in order to stay within your budget.

- ◆ Think about what questions you may want to ask the seller ahead of time. Write them down if you have to, so that you don't forget to ask an important question.
- ◆ Go and visit the horse on multiple occasions, before buying. You want to make absolutely sure that he was not just having one good day.
- ◆ Ride the horse a couple of times before buying. You certainly don't want any surprises after you get him home.

Aboslute No No's For The Novice Horse Buyer

- ◆ Do Not... Buy a horse at an auction. Most of the time horse's that wind up in an auction are there for a reason. He could be ill, old, or very hard to handle. Sometimes horse's end up at auction, simply because there not wanted. That's not a chance that you need to take.
- ◆ Do Not... Buy a horse that is very young (green). There's an old saying in the horse world. Green or Green make Black and Blue. It will end up costing you more in training than you originally would have spent on the right horse for you.
- ◆ Do Not... Buy a horse just because you think he "will" make a good horse someday. You must make sure that the horse you buy, fits your riding and horsemen skills. There is such a thing as having "To Much Horse", for your abilities.

The following is a list of questions that you should consider before buying a horse. As I said in the beginning, horses are a long-term commitment, and not something that should be taken lightly.

It's not the same as going to the local pet shop and buying a dog or cat. Horses are a **huge responsibility** and a **full time commitment**.

Questions You Should Consider

Q. How much does a horse cost?

A. The American Association of Equine Practitioners estimated that the minimum yearly cost to properly care for a horse is around \$1,800.00. This does not include vet bills or farrier services. Add these to the mix as well as boarding fees (if applicable) and the yearly cost for caring for one horse can reach up to \$5,000.00.

If you are not sure you can afford to keep a horse, try leasing one instead. Taking riding lessons will also help you decide if horse ownership is right for you.

Maybe you are looking for a horse for your child. Make absolutely sure their commitment is there. Arrange for him/her to take riding lessons first. Ask the person giving the lessons to also let your child do barn chores, such as cleaning out stalls, helping to feed and water horses, sweeping out the barn, etc. That's one sure fire way to tell if the commitment is there.

Q. How long will I own my horse?

A. Horses have been known to live as long as 30 years. Like I said, they are a full-time commitment. If you don't think you can take care of a horse for that long, you should have a plan to provide for your horse when you can no longer take care of him.

Q. What if my horse gets sick?

A. Despite their size, many things can affect a horse's health. It could be anything from mild allergies to severe colic. You have to be prepared to handle a sick horse when the time comes. Horses get sick and they get injured. Make sure you have a vet and be ready to call him.

Q. Is my child leaving home soon?

A. Is your child at the age where he/she will be going off to college or moving out soon. If so, what is going to happen to the horse? Is there going to be someone around who can take care of him? If this is the case, leasing a horse might be a better option, rather than buying a horse.

Q. Am I going to be moving anytime soon?

A. Moving a horse half way across the country isn't going to be an easy task. It may require a great expense to move the horse along with you. You may want to consider leasing as an option until you find a permanent residence.

Q. What if I can no longer care for my horse?

A. Always try and find your horse a good home first. You want to make sure that he will be given a good home where he will be taken care of.

As most of know, most of the horses that are sent to auctions are ending up at the hands of slaughter buyers.

According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service/USDA, the number of horse sent to slaughter in 2007 was 121,459. Most of these horse were not old and sick. They were horses that people simply did not want or could no longer take care of.

Since last year when the U.S. slaughter houses were forced to shut down, the number of horses being sent to Mexico has risen over 300%. In Mexico, there is no regulations on how these horses are killed. There are thousands of horses who are **suffering** horrific deaths at the hands of the slaughter houses. You don't have to take my word on this, go to the web and type in "pictures of horse slaughter", but be warned, these scenes will give you nightmares.

Q. What happens if my horse dies?

A. The expense of burying a horse can be extremely high. There are regulations on carcass disposal that range from state to state. If you happen to own your land, you still have to have access to a backhoe. If you don't own your land, then you have to haul the carcass to a landfill or other designated place.

There are also other expenses that you will have to consider:

- ◆ Horse Tack
- ◆ Horse Feed
- ◆ Hay
- ◆ Horse Wormer
- ◆ Vaccinations
- ◆ Horse Trailer
- ◆ Medications for illness or injuries
- ◆ Housing facilities (barn or run-in shed)

As you can see it is quite expensive to own and care for horses. I hope this book has helped you in some way to consider all the factors before making the decision to purchase a horse.

My main goal is to educate potential owners about the long-term responsibilities of owning and caring for horses. My dream is that there will someday, no longer be a need for horse slaughter plants at all, and that no other horse will ever have to be un-wanted.

For more information on horses and horse care, visit my website:
<http://www.greenhorn-horse-facts.com>

Many people have sighed for the "good old days"
and regretted the "passing of the horse", but
today, when only those who love horses
own them, it is a far better time for
the horses.

-C.W. Anderson