

Evaluating the Costs of Participating in an Equine Business

Dr. Mark Russell Assistant Professor – Equine Extension

There are a variety of career paths for those interested in working in the Equine Industry. One of the best qualities of working in the Equine Industry is that fact that any person of any age can find some type of work associated within our industry. With these options, decisions should be made regarding what level of commitment one is willing to invest in a certain opportunity. For example, being a horse trainer or owning a boarding facility isn't a 9-5 job Monday – Friday. For most folks in those occupations, it's more than just a job or even a career; it's a way of life and most wouldn't trade what they do for anything. However, there are many other options for those that may not want to go into training or boarding. But no matter the occupation, one should consider following questions outlined by Dr. Rick Parker from the College of Southern Idaho:

1. Are you willing to work long, hard and irregular hours – 16 hours a day, 7 days a week?
2. Do you get along well and communicate effectively with people?
3. Are you comfortable with problem solving and troubleshooting?
4. Will you seek help when needed?
5. Do you have the technical expertise to manage the operation?
6. Can you afford to hire qualified help?
7. Do you know others in the business that will provide help or information?
8. What related associations or organizations can you join or do you need to join?
9. Are you willing to learn of current practices and new development?
10. Are you familiar with the legal issues of marketing your product?
11. Do you have the resources to construct and operate a facility?
12. Do you have the right location for the business you wish to conduct?
13. Is the prospective business site located near your markets?
14. Do you live close enough to the business site to visit and monitor it as needed and to ensure security?
15. What utilities are available at the site of the business?
16. Are the available water resources adequate?
17. Can you effectively manage any waste produced by your operation?
18. Will your neighbors and others accept your business operation?
19. Have you discussed you planned operation with the appropriate local, state, and feral agencies?
20. Have you identified the permits and insurance required to construct and operate the business?
21. Do you have the resources – financial, technical, and special – needed?
22. Are support services and industries available?
23. Do you have access to a dependable workforce for physical labor?

The equine industry can be a very enjoyable and rewarding career path. A keen eye for business and a well laid plan cannot be overstated. This article is not meant to discourage the prospective employee, but rather give him or her some aspects to consider when looking into potential careers and opportunities. For more information regarding equine education in Arkansas, please contact Mark Russell @ 501-671-2190. Good luck in your equine ventures!

University of Arkansas, United States Department of Agriculture and County Governments Cooperating.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.