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Horse Buying Checklist

Mark Russell, Assistant Professor - Equine

As hay supplies dwindle over the next few months and the uncertainty over feed prices continues, horse prices may continue to be low for some horses. Of course, the talented horse with ability will continue to sell well, but there are always those horses that make buying a huge temptation due to their low price. Whether you are a veteran buyer or a novice, there are some items to consider before making that purchase.

1. Ask for the health history of the horse.
 - a. Has he/she ever foundered?
 - b. Has it ever colicked?
 - c. What condition are his/her feet in?
 - d. Are there any visible injuries or scars?
 - e. When was the last time it had vaccinations and was dewormed?
 - f. Has he/she worn shoes before?
 - g. What does the current owner feed?
2. Ask to have the horse lunged or ridden to see behavior and movement.
 - a. Is the horse sound?
 - b. Does it buck?
 - c. Ride the horse yourself to see if you "click."
 - d. Can he/she be tied without sitting back?
 - e. Can he/she be clipped?
 - f. Is he/she easy to catch?
 - g. Is he/she kid safe?
 - h. Does he/she spook easily?
3. What type of trailer is he/she used to riding in?
 - a. Can he/she load without problem?
 - b. Does he/she back out of the trailer?
4. What is the job/event you are hoping to do with this horse?
 - a. How is it bred?
 - b. Will he/she need more training or only maintenance?
 - c. Is the horse arena sour?
5. How long has the current owner had him/her?
 - a. Where was it born and can it handle the Arkansas climate?
 - b. How many owners has he/she had?
6. What are the possible reasons the horse is being sold?
7. Does the seller have a positive reputation for selling good horses?
8. What type of facility is the horse used to?
 - a. Many horses have only lived in a pasture or stall.
 - b. Many horses are used to a certain type of fence.
9. If applicable, when was the horse gelded?
10. Take a transfer of ownership form with you so everything can be taken care of at once.
11. Take someone with you who is knowledgeable and may notice something you don't.
 - a. Consult with a veterinarian and have the horse vet-checked if possible.
 - b. You should also take a farrier with you, if possible.

Arkansas 4-H'ers Compete in Western National Round-Up

Mark Russell, Assistant Professor - Equine

Arkansas 4-H was well represented at the Western National Round-Up held in Denver, Colorado, January 10-13. Faulkner County sent a team to compete in the Hippology Contest, and Washington County sent a team to compete in the Individual Demonstration Contest and the Team Demonstration Contest. Each of these individuals qualified to attend this competition during the 2012 4-H State Horse Show.

Here is a recap of the winners:

Sarah Smith – 10th Place Judging division of the Hippology Contest

8th Place Team Problem of the Hippology Contest

Lauren Cheevers – 1st Place Individual Demonstration

Maggie Fancher and Kayla Mahan – 3rd Place Team Demonstration

8th Place as a state for the entire Horse Classic Competition



From left to right: Faulkner County Agent Leigh Helms, Coach Malinda Smith, Sarah Smith, Dalton Lewis, Lauren Crow, Lexi Haney and Mark Russell, U of A Extension horse specialist.

Rabies in Horses

Mark Russell, Assistant Professor - Equine

This year in Arkansas (as of March 1), there have been 23 reported cases of rabies. Twenty-one of these cases have been skunks, while one has been in a cow and one reported case in a dog.



Though it is unlikely your horse will become stricken with rabies during its lifetime, as a horse owner you should always be cognizant of the signs of rabies, not only in your horse but also in other animals that could come in contact with your horse. Further, rabies is especially dangerous because rabies can be spread to humans quite easily.

How does a horse get rabies?

- In nearly every case of rabies, it is spread from one animal to another in a bite.

- Horses are curious animals and will often walk up to another animal which is acting bizarrely and will often get bitten on the nose or somewhere on the face.

What does a horse with rabies look like?

- Surprisingly, horses that come in contact with rabies will not show signs of infection until two to six weeks later. In more rare cases, a horse may not show signs for up to one year.
- Signs include:
 - Change in behavior
 - Dull
 - Aggressive
 - Ataxia
 - Head pressing and/or circling
 - Difficulty swallowing
 - Muscle tremors or convulsing

Treatment?

- There is currently no treatment available.
- Most horses die within two to four days after contracting rabies if not euthanized.

- If horse has been exposed to an animal with rabies and vaccination is more than 30 days old, revaccinate and hold in quarantine for 45 days. If there was no previous vaccination, it is recommended the horse be held in quarantine for six months.

Prevention

- Vaccination is the best prevention for your horse. It is also recommended that dogs and any barn cats that may come in contact with your horse be vaccinated as well. It should also be noted that just because a horse has received a vaccination for rabies does not guarantee the horse will not get it.
- Foals and weanlings less than 12 months of age are administered an initial series of three vaccines (the timing is dependent on the vaccination status of the mare). Thereafter, horses are vaccinated annually (even if the vaccine is labeled as a three-year product).

Sources: AAEP, Dr. Stacey Oke, TheHorse.com, Colorado State University Extension, and University of Kentucky Animal Science Department.