

Horse Buying Checklist

Dr. Mark Russell, Assistant Professor – Equine Extension

As hay supplies dwindle over the next few months and the uncertainty of feed prices continue to exist, 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. Even as a veteran buyer or novice, there are some items to consider making that purchase:

1. Ask for health history of the horse.
 - a. Has he/she ever foundered?
 - b. Has it ever coliced?
 - 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 de-wormed?
 - f. Has he/she worn shoes before?
 - g. What does the current owner feed?
2. Ask to have the horse lunged or rode 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 easy?
3. What type of trailer is he/she used to riding in?
 - a. Can he load without problem?
 - b. Does he 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?
 - a. Where was he/she 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 that 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 vet checked if possible.
 - b. Should also take farrier with you if possible