

## Horses provide numerous positive benefits.

### Horses ...

- Are wonderful companions
- Can become a lifelong hobby
- Create a wholesome environment for all ages
- Help enhance self-esteem
- Provide an opportunity to develop enduring friendships
- Provide a method for teaching & learning important life skills, including responsibility
- Help develop a compassionate approach to life
- Are an excellent form of exercise & recreation

## Horse ownership is a huge responsibility.

### Before you acquire that adorable pony or wonderful horse, consider that they ...

- Require an ongoing financial commitment. The least expensive part is usually the purchase price
- Need a great deal of time & labor in daily care
- Require specific knowledge for proper care
- Can live a very long life (up to 40 years)
- Usually prefer the company of other horses
- Need food, water, stall cleaning & looking after 365 days a year - NO EXCEPTIONS
- Can cause accidents without even trying
- Need lots of exercise

### MORE INFORMATION

To help you make an educated decision, the following organizations can provide you with more information, as well as access to professionals & seminars:

**American Assn. of Equine Practitioners**  
[www.aaep.org](http://www.aaep.org)

**American Humane Association**  
[www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org)

**American Veterinary Medical Association**  
[www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org)

**Maryland Cooperative Extension Service**  
[www.extension.umd.edu](http://www.extension.umd.edu)

**Maryland Equine Transition Service**  
[www.mdequinetransition.org](http://www.mdequinetransition.org)

**Maryland Horse Council**  
[www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)

**Maryland Horse Industry Board**  
<https://mda.maryland.gov/horseboard/>

**Maryland Fund for Horses**  
<https://mdfundforhorses.org/>

**Maryland Soil Conservation District**  
[www.mascd.net](http://www.mascd.net)

### ***The Equiery, MD's Equine Info Resource***

*Lists available for lesson & boarding stables, shelters & rescues, therapeutic riding facilities, products & services, and so much more!*

410-489-7826 • [info@equiery.com](mailto:info@equiery.com)  
[www.equiery.com](http://www.equiery.com)

You've now considered all the ramifications of ownership & have decided to move forward ... congratulations & welcome to the horse community! The world of horses can be a warm and loving environment for all the members of your family.

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## Considering Horse Ownership?

***Make sure you're prepared for such a major committment!***



# But ... BEFORE you buy ... STOP ... and think!



## REALITY CHECK: DOLLARS & SENSE

Decisions to make if you want to own a horse ...

- Will you keep it at home or board it elsewhere?
- If you keep it at home, do you have enough appropriate land & safe containment for the horse? Do you have adequate shelter from rain, snow, & wind? Does the zoning in your area allow horses?
- If you plan to keep it at home, are you aware that you will be responsible for the horse 365 days a year? The weather, your health & vacation schedule mean nothing to your horse. Who will be responsible for daily care? Can you find back up help to provide care when you go away or are ill or injured? Who will be responsible for maintenance (fence repair, pasture management, etc.)?
- Have you considered how & what you will feed? No two horses have the same nutritional requirements & the grass in your "pasture" may not be sufficient or suitable to the horse(s) you have.
- If you board elsewhere, will you be responsible for daily care, or will someone else?
- Do you want to purchase the horse to teach your children responsibility? Horses cannot teach responsibility to children ... they can only help parents teach responsibility. Responsibility for a child's horse will always fall to the parents.

## TYPES OF HORSE BOARDING

- Self-Care Field Board in Maryland can still cost hundreds of dollars a month for just one horse. The owner must purchase all necessities (feed, hay, veterinary & farrier care) & provide labor daily.
- Full-Care Field Board & Full-Care Stall Board can range from \$650 to \$1,500 a month depending on additional services such as training.

## FEED

A horse can require over 10 pounds of grain a day & bags begin at \$15 for 50lbs. Unfortunately, over the last few years, the price of hay has been increasing dramatically & depending on type & weight this could approach \$10 a bale. Horses usually require more hay during the winter (less grass in the field) & between ½ to 1 full bale a day.

## HOME SWEET HOME

Horses do require shelter, a place to escape inclement weather. Whether this is a run-in or barn stall, it is important to be aware of the necessities of proper shelter, where horses have access to a frost-free water source (very important). Each shelter needs bedding (shavings, straw, sawdust, etc.), which is an additional expense and must be cleaned daily. This means you'll need some basic supplies: rakes, shovels, muck buckets or wheel barrows, etc. A plan for manure removal is critical.

Lastly, but perhaps most important, you must have a clean, dry & mold free space to store grain & hay. It must be well ventilated as barn fires are sadly a perpetual concern.

## HEALTH CARE

- Regular farrier can vary from \$40 for a basic trim to nearly \$200 or more for advanced shoeing.
- Regular veterinary care & seasonal vaccinations & worming as needed (not considering emergency visits) can add up to several hundred dollars a year.
- Dental check-up an average of twice per year
- Emergency wound care from \$100 to \$10,000
- Incidental septic ointment, first aid kit

## BASIC EQUIPMENT

- Halter & Lead Rope - \$25 to \$95 (new)
- Bridle - \$80-\$500 (new) - may not include reins & bit
- Saddle, saddle pads, martingales, breastplates, girths, wraps, boots, blankets, coolers, sheets, buckets, saddle soap for leather care
- For riding, there's all the items you'll need for yourself ... helmet, breeches, boots & gloves; plus competition gear ... which ranges greatly in price

## BUY IN HASTE, REPENT IN LEISURE

Have you ever purchased a horse before? Do you know how to go about it? If this is your first horse, are you looking for a deal, a dream, or a safe, healthy, suitable horse? If you're looking for a deal, there is no such thing as a free horse. If you're looking for a dream, save that for when you have more experience.

Use a trusted horse professional to help you find an appropriate horse. Although it may cost more initially, it is frequently much less than correcting the mistake of buying the wrong horse. A pre-purchase veterinary exam is strongly recommended. This can help ensure that the horse is sound & healthy.

What will you do with the horse if your children outgrow it or lose interest, or if the horse becomes unusable due to injury or illness?

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- Riding Lessons - fun parts without the drudgery
- Lease - some of the responsibility of ownership with the ability to walk away sans guilt
- Volunteer - hands-on work without the daily responsibility
- Join the Maryland 4-H Horse & Pony Program or the United States Pony Club