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Basic Care for Your Horses

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The History of Horses

Some interesting facts about horses:

- Approximately 75 million horses inhabit our world today.
- The height of a horse can be measured using hands. 1 hand is equivalent to 4 inches.
- The horse has a sharp sense of hearing, direction and smell. The skin is very sensitive and it will respond quickly with a slightest touch.
- Popular horse are Marengo, Moifaa, Bucephalus, Justin Morgan, etc. these are hall of famers in horses' line up.
- There are several markings on the horse's body like a star, white face, stripe, white muzzle, blaze, etc.

Facts are not useful without the historical information. Horses, like any other creature, became useful a long time ago. The Bible, specifically

the book of Job mentions horses and horse riders who used them in hunting ostriches. Horse drawings existed about 3000 BC. Drawings of chariots being pulled by horses can be seen in caves during the Bronze Age.

A tomb in Egypt presented horse riding in 1600 BC; this is the earliest records that can be traced in Egypt.

It was during 1400 BC when a first written text regarding horses is produced. The text states training of horses for chariots. Xenophon wrote the Art of Horsemanship about 360 BC and therein discussed horseback riding, psychology and care for the horse. Information on the book is still relevant and being utilized nowadays.

During the Ice Age, horses roamed around every continent excluding Antarctica. Horses vanished mysteriously during this era; a theory stated that the disappearance was due to migration of these animals towards west through land bridges in Siberia.

After Charlemagne around the 4th century, horses with stirrups and saddles were very visible. This is an Asiatic invention; it was believed that Asians were the first who had tamed and ridden horses. It paved

the way of the mounted knights' development. Around 1519 AD these animals reappeared in Northern America and were brought by Spanish conquerors to Mexico

Even with these historical reviews, there are other historical facts being presented by other countries. It is known that Persians, Chinese and Assyrians were skillful horse riders way back in 3000 BC.

- Brahmans of India claimed themselves as the first horse riders. Chinese were believed to be the true horsemen; way back to 4000 BC, they started harnessing their horses. As early as 1000 BC, Chinese were also involved in selective conformation and breeding of horses.
- Hittites of Mediterranean were using horses for wars around 1,600 BC
- Assyrians were the first race among eastern Mediterraneans to have used horses with a load; this resembles the saddle of today.
- Egyptians used chariot horses to expand their empire; this is way back to 1650 BC. The kinds of horses used in Egypt are much different from the Arabian horses.

- Greek mythology presented horses as sea creatures ruled by their god Posiedon. Posiedon's winged horse named Pegasus is also written in mythology.

- Long ago, horses that ventured into Kenya unfortunately died because of a horse disease known as Trypanosomiasis. Ponies that had reached the clean and disease free part of Kenya and survived became the first horses in East Africa.

Though horses become domesticated long ago, a lot of misconceptions appear about their history. Quoting B. MacFadden from University of Florida, he presents some records from his journal "Science":

- Around 20 million years ago, horses changed in size. Some got larger and others minimize to sizes of dogs. These animals did not simply evolved bigger.

- Prehistoric horses weren't leaf eaters. They just adapted into eating both leafy materials and grasses.

- The horse's fossils in North America went extinct about 55 to

10,000 million years ago. These were the first horses and not those that were brought by settlers in Europe.

MacFadden further stated that a clear knowledge of the records of horses' fossils is vital to illustrate their evolution.

Horses have been visible throughout the history and have been used in various purposes. One vital purpose of these animals is a means of transportation. They have also been used in agriculture and wars. Nowadays, the gracefulness, agility, speed and strength of horses are employed for pleasure and competitions. Similar to other animals, horses have rich history worthy of studying and comparing.

Selecting Your Horse

Say Neigh If You Don't Want It: Tips on Selecting a Horse

A horse is a beautiful animal that can rival dogs – which is arguably the most popular choice for pet – in terms of companionship and value in various aspects in life. If you wish to purchase a horse, here's what you should know and do. Whereas it's rarely possible for you to regret

the decision of purchasing a horse, you may however regret your choice of horse if you're not careful.

Tips on Selecting the Ideal Horse

When selecting a horse, you need to ask yourself the following questions in order to arrive at the ideal choice.

WHY ARE YOU BUYING A HORSE?

This question tackles the appropriate breed or type of horse you should select. Are you interested in owning a horse for recreational purposes? Are you interested in competing? Do you wish to engage in the business of breeding horses? Are you going to use a horse as an all-around work animal on your farm or ranch?

WHO IS GOING TO USE THE HORSE?

This mostly concerns individuals who are simply riding enthusiasts and wish to own a horse they can ride whenever they wish. If you are the only one who's going to use the horse then you have your preferences alone to consider. If, however, you're purchasing a horse that will be of use to the whole family then you need to take into account the

riding level, size, and weight of all possible riders. You need to select a horse that can easily accommodate the biggest rider among you but will not be inclined to throw off an inexperienced rider.

HOW OLD SHOULD A HORSE BE UPON PURCHASE?

A slightly older horse may be "house-broken" already but this also means that it has also had the time to get used to certain routines. A slightly older horse for instance may already be used to being able to graze free in a large area and being handled by competent riders. If you only have a small stable and little riding skills to be speak of, such a horse is obviously not the ideal choice for you.

A foal, on the other hand, may not have any such considerations but it will, however, require efficient care and professional training from its owner. As the foal's owner, it's your responsibility to ensure that it's comfortable with its quarters, watered and fed regularly, and with a gentle disposition that will allow people to ride it safely.

WHAT ABOUT GENDER?

Gender is mostly a concern of would-be horse breeders. Owning a

mare will allow you greater rights in all future offspring. Having a stud is mostly suitable for experienced riders. Geldings on the other hand are ideal for riders with skills at the beginner level.

DO YOU HAVE ANY COLOR PREFERENCES?

The skin color of horses is generally any of the three: black, brown, or white. Skin color is only a factor if you're particularly concerned with aesthetics.

HOW MUCH ARE YOU WILLING TO SPEND?

Expect to spend a considerable amount of money whether you wish to purchase a horse for riding or working purposes. Make sure that you consider the costs of feeding, caring and grooming as well. If you don't have sufficient budget and space at home to build a stable for your horse, you will have no choice but use the services of a boarding stable.

A Brief Guide to Different Breeds of Horses

ARABIAN – One of the oldest and arguably the most beautiful breed in

the world, Arabian horses are primarily bred by the Bedouins, a roaming Arab tribe, and mainly used for competitive and recreational riding. Expect to pay expensively if you wish to acquire an Arabian horse. This particular breed led to the development of Thoroughbreds.

QUARTER HORSE – The United States is the proud and original breeder of quarter horses, and they can be used for riding, racing, and work purposes. Most of the photos you'll see around you featuring cowboys are mounted on quarter horses.

ANDALUSIAN – Also referred to as the Spanish horse, the Andalusian breed originates from the Iberian Peninsula and has a considerable influence over almost all other horse breeds except for the .

BELGIAN HEAVY DRAFT HORSE – This breed is one of the most popular choices for working horses.

MUSTANG OR BRONCO – These horses are also known as Indian ponies. They are essentially intelligent and capable of enduring long hours of work.

As a last note, please don't forget to test out any horse you have your

eye on before closing the transaction. Ride on!

Stabling

Workhorses can help make farm or ranch work more convenient and comfortable. Pet horses on the other hand can provide you with unalloyed pleasure in riding. Racing horses are your ticket to fame or glory. Whatever purpose you have for owning a horse, it's important that you reciprocate what they're giving you by ensuring that they're living in relative comfort.

Tips on Building a Stable

Location – Stables must be located in a well-ventilated area not only for the benefit of your horses but yours as well. The smell of stables is rarely desirable and it's best for everyone to keep it at a considerable distance from the house and at a site where it can be easily rid of.

Box Space – If you have more than one horse, you'll have to divide the stable accordingly. Each box or stall must provide sufficient space for the horses to be able to lie down and stretch its legs in comfort.

Height – Height is not much of a factor when building a stable just as long as the horse's head doesn't hit the ceiling.

Stall Doors – You have two choices for stall doors: sliding or swinging. Sliding doors is the practical choice for stalls of limited size because you will not have to move the horse farther back whenever someone enters or leaves the stall. Regardless of your choice, however, make sure that you install heavy-duty locks for the doors. Stall doors should also be made of extremely durable material so that horses wouldn't be kick it open.

Aisles – For stables housing a number of horses, an aisle must be created if two rows of stalls will be built. If so, make sure that the aisle is wide enough for you and your horse to walk in comfort.

Flooring – Concrete is considered the best choice of flooring for stables because it's easier to clean and disinfect compared to other types of flooring. Whichever flooring type you end up using, just make sure that you have an effective drainage system to rely on to prevent ammonia or any other undesirable material from building up.

Lighting – Light is a source of comfort for horses as well just as it is for

us. When having light fixtures installed in the stable, the safety of your horses should be your topmost priority. Firstly, lighting must be sufficient for all the horses in the stable. Secondly, it must be kept out of reach from horses to prevent them from getting injured in the event that there's electrical failure.

Food and Water Storage Area – Food must always be kept in a warm dry part of the stable and kept clean at all times to prevent rats and other small animals from getting in and eating the horse's foods. It's also essential that you keep the water heated at all times because some horses are picky when it comes to what they're drinking.

Other Tips to Keep Your Horse in Comfort

It's possible for you to keep your horses in a barn alongside other animals but expect them to undergo a noisy period of adjustment before they can settle in properly.

Clean your horse's living area regularly. Don't wait until they resemble Augean stables. Regular cleaning will not only allow your horse to live in a beautiful environment but this can also reduce the health risks on

your horses.

Always keep a sufficient amount of hay in each stall to allow your horses to feed whenever they feel the need. At the same time, make sure that your horse always has at least a bucket of water nearby since horses get easily dehydrated.

If you don't have sufficient budget for building a comfortable stable for your horses, the best you can do is to rent living space from boarding stables. Your monthly fee may also include food, water, and other living expenses of your horse.

While you certainly don't have to spend millions of dollars to keep your horse in comfort, spending is an inevitable part of the process. More importantly, remember that money is not the only thing you need to keep your horse happy. You need to show that you care for them as well if you wish for your horses to live happily ever after!

Caring for your horse

How to Make Life Beautiful for Your Horse – Simple Tips for Horse Care

Do you sometimes feel the need to return the pleasure, comfort, and convenience that you're receiving from your horse? If so, here's what you can do to make the life of your horse beautiful indeed.

THE SIMPLE PLEASURE OF FEEDING

Food is one of the simplest but greatest pleasures of horses so make sure that your horse always has all the food that it needs.

There are three types of food that your horse may eat. Pasture is the favorite meal of horses reaching adulthood and used for recreational purposes alone. Keep in mind however that the greenness of a field doesn't automatically equate to richness in pasture.

Hay is another type of food for horses, but it's typically fed to those used for domestic work. As hay is more affordable than other types of horse food, do make sure that you're feeding the best quality of hay to your horses. Secondly, always store hay in a dry but well-ventilated

area. Feeding your horse with moldy hay can lead to various medical complications. Feeding your horse with hay alone will never make a sufficient diet so consider including another component in your horse's diet to ensure that all its nutritional needs are met.

Lastly, there are grains or feeds that are specifically produced to provide nourishment for horses. If your horses subsist mainly from hay, make sure that you mix either a small or moderate amount of concentrates with it to give your horse the benefit of a complete meal. Feeding your horse with concentrates is especially important when they expend lots of energy everyday because of working or racing, or when they're in a pregnant or nursing stage.

Abundant food will keep your horse healthy and happy and personally feeding your horse will strengthen the bond between you and your pet. As such, the act of feeding doesn't only nourish your horse's body but his heart as well!

WATER AS THE SOURCE OF LIFE

Horses are always thirsty, and they can consume up to 10 gallons of water everyday. As such, it's important that you have a ready supply

of water for your horses. During the winter, make sure that you place the water in heated buckets to prevent it from freezing.

SALT, MINERALS, AND SUGAR CUBES

Salt and minerals are also important factors in your horse's diet.

Consult your veterinarian as to what your horse should take to consume the necessary vitamins and minerals. Salt blocks and sugar cubes can be purchased from pet food stores. Feed your horses sugar cubes only as a reward because too much of this may cause your horse to suffer from diabetes.

EXERCISING YOUR HORSE

The amount of exercise your horse needs depends primarily on its role in life. If you are using it for competitive riding, you or your coach should determine what type of exercises it needs and how many times should it exercise every week. As for all other types of horses, daily exercise is encouraged to allow horses' muscles to strengthen and not become affected by arthritis when they reach old age.

CARING FOR YOUR HORSES' HOOVES

Beginners are usually ignorant of what to do to take proper care of their horses' hooves. A horse's hooves will strengthen and develop naturally if it gets sufficient exercise. For those that don't, however, their hooves must be trimmed at least every two months. Secondly, use shoes for your horses only if necessary as various hoof problems are directly or indirectly linked to the use of shoes. Remember that just as it is with our feet, the hooves of horses are also the most abused part of their body so it's important for us to give them the best care we can afford.

CARING FOR YOUR HORSES' TEETH

Unlike human teeth, there is no end to periodontal growth for horses. As such, uneven use of their teeth can lead to the development of sharply pointed teeth and which may cause chewing troubles. To prevent this from happening, make sure that you have your veterinarian check your horses' teeth annually at the least.

GROOMING FOR YOUR HORSE

Allow your horses to enjoy baths regularly. Afterwards, remember to brush their coat slowly, carefully, and thoroughly. Make sure that you use grooming products that are specifically designed for horses.

Above all, the best way to make your horse's life beautiful is by doing your best to make your horse feel beautiful by showering them with love!

Your Horses Health

How to care for your Horse?

Caring for horses requires a deep dedication and love for the animal. Like all animals, horses must be given normal preventive care to avoid sickness and maintain their good health. The basic requirements for your horse to have a better health are clean fresh air, food and drink everyday. It is also basic for horses to be kept in a clean stable where water is always available.

When feeding the horse or the pony, you must remember that it needs

about three percent of its body weight for nourishment daily. You may feed it with grass or hay and hard feed. It must be fed with about seventy percent of grass or hay everyday.

Feed only good quality of grass, hay and feed. Usually, rotten hay can cause stomach pain to the horse. There must be plenty of fiber or bulk in the hay. The utensils for the feed or water must be clean. The food must be given in a regular basis. Allot at least one hour before bringing the horse to its routine exercise.

Feeds for horses may be composed of oats, barleys, bran, nuts, sugar beet, linseed or a course mix of cereals. Try to prevent the horse from eating too quickly since this can cause it to choke. One tip is to mix large rocks in the bucket of the horse's food. This way the horse is forced to take smaller amounts of food as it avoids the large rocks.

Horses should also have regular foot care. Usually, every four to six weeks depending on the condition of the horse and the weather, the horse's shoes need to be checked and fixed.

At least once a day, the hooves should be checked and cleaned by removing any stones or mud. Keeping the feet clean at all times will

prevent infections and lameness.

The teeth of the horse must also be checked at least once a year.

Sharp teeth can be problematic when feeding and riding the horse. To rasp or file the teeth of the horse, the vet would do a floating to remove the sharp points of the teeth.

To prevent horses from growing parasitic worms in their stomach, they must be given a worming program. Depending on the type of worms, the horse may be wormed every eight to thirteen weeks. Veterinarians can give wormers that can be mixed with the horse's daily food. These wormers may be in the form of paste, gel, powder, granules or capsules.

If not treated properly and immediately worms such as the lungworm, pinworm or seatworm, tapeworm and redworms may grow in numbers in the horse's stomach. Bot eggs can also hatch on the coat of the horse. The horse may also have ringworm, which is a contagious skin disease and can be treated through an anti-fungal wash.

In caring for horses, you must keep a first-aid kit intended for horses. This would include: a thermometer, petroleum jelly, salt or saline

solution for wounds, animalintex, gamgee, scissors, bucket, sponge, antiseptic cream or gel, bandages, medical gloves, towel, soap and brush. The horse or pony must also be vaccinated to fight possible equine flu or tetanus.

A few special problems that horses may have are the equine infectious anemia and laminitis.

The Equine infectious anemia is a serious health problem that amounts to approximately 500 cases each year. EIA is a viral disease that affects the immune system of the horse. Due to this, the horse may develop other infections such as bronchopneumonia. There is no cure yet for EIA. The horse may be tested through a serum test.

Laminitis on the other hand is also a horse killer. This disease affects the horse's feet caused by the disruption of blood flow to the laminae of the horse. The causes of laminitis are toxins in the horse's body, high fever, digestive upsets due to overfeeding, severe colic, severe stress and excessive weight carried.

This may be detected when there is heat in the horse's feet, increased pulse, pain in the toe and lameness. Treatments may include

administering medical fluids to the horse's body, dietary restrictions and therapy.

To know if the horse is sick, remember these few symptoms. The horse's appetite suddenly decreases. You could also notice a reduction in the horse's stamina and irregular heartbeats. The horse may also suffer from too much sweating, depression, red eyes and swollen legs. Call for the veterinarian when the horse seems sick to prevent serious problems.

Tack

Horse tack means any of the different equipment and garnishments worn by horses when they are used for riding and shows. Horse tack is composed of the saddle, stirrups, bridles, halters, bits, harness, and martingales. The horse also requires a horse blanket.

The saddle is the seat for riders placed at the back of the horse. The saddle is fastened to the back of the animal with the use of a girth or cinch that is a wide strap. Saddles can be classified into two major categories such as the English saddle and the Western saddle.

The English saddle is used in every Olympic equestrian discipline. This has no horn and its panels are pairs of pads that are attached to the side. These pads can be filled with foam, air or even wool. The Western saddle is designed for Western riding. This is also known as the "cowboy saddle". Unlike other saddles, this does not have pads of its own so this is used with a saddle blanket or a separate pad to provide a more convenient and comfortable fit for riders.

The saddle's parts are:

The tree-base where everything is attached

The seat where riders sit

The pommel or swell- part in the front that is slightly raised;

The cantle or the back of the saddle

The stirrup- where the feet of the rider rests and provides leverage and support

The leather or fender-the straps made of leather which connect the stirrups to the tree

The D-ring- the 'D' shaped ring at the front of the saddle where other pieces of the horse tack are attached.

The breastplates and the breast collars are additional equipment used to keep saddles from sliding back. These are used for fast-paced

sports.

The bridle is an arrangement of straps or ropes around the head of the horse. This is mainly used for communication with the animal. The bridle holds the horse bit that is attached to the reins. The bridle is used for riding, driving and controlling the horse.

The bridle is also called the headstall and is consisted by the following parts: crownpiece, cheekpiece, throatlatch, browband, noseband, cavesson and reins.

The halter is also an arrangement of straps or ropes used as a headgear or a headcollar to guide the horse. This is fitted over the back of the horse's neck and around the mouth. When the rider pulls the end of the halter, the head of the horse turns towards the rider.

Unlike the bridle, the halter does not have a bit that is placed on the mouth of the horse.

The bit and the hackamore are parts of the horse tack placed also at the head of the horse. Like the bridle, these are used for control and communication. The bit is placed particularly at the mouth of the horse while the hackamore goes around the nose of the horse.

The basic types of the bit are the curb bit, snaffle bit and the Pelham bit. Different bits offer different levels of control and pressure to the horse by the rider. The bit is designed to fit the needs and condition of the horse to serve its purpose properly.

The hackamore is made of rope, leather, cable or plastic. The hackamore is used whenever the horse has dental problems or tongue injuries and also during winters to avoid hurting or freezing the mouth of the horse.

The harness is a complicated arrangement of straps that attaches the horse to the cart or sleigh. Depending on the type of vehicle or load the horse is attached to, there are different kinds of harnesses.

The martingale is also a strap that keeps the horse from putting its head above the point of control. This also keeps the horse from tossing its head that would be risky to the rider's safety. The martingale has various types such as the running martingale, standing martingale and the Irish martingale.

The horse blanket gives the horse warmth and comfort. This is

intended also to protect the horse from other elements. This is made especially to fit the body of the horse. It has straps crossing the underneath of the horse so that it would not fall when the horse moves freely. This also has a hole at the back for the horse's tail to pass through.

Naturally, the long hair of the horse makes it warm especially during winters. But horses are preferred with short hair. It is believed that the horse blanket keeps the hair of the horse short. Short hair for horses is important for show.

Clothing for the Rider

Clothing The Horseman

When riding horses, the rider usually uses an array of garments and accessories intended only for horse riding. Through the times, these clothes, foot wear and head wear have developed to suit the needs and styles of different people, practices and beliefs.

The horse rider's apparel is composed normally of the coat, shirt, vest, pants or trousers, boots, hat or helmet and gloves. For dressage or

horse training, the spur is a special wear. Accompanying the rider's apparel is a whip.

To protect the head of the rider, a certain headgear or a hat is used. Falls during horse riding or even being kicked by a frightened horse sometimes happens so to be able to protect the head and avoid death or head injuries, a helmet should be used. The classic riding helmet is made of black velvet with a brim. Even during trainings, the rider must wear the helmet. Since hats have become a mark in fashion, there are actually many styles to choose from.

Aside from the helmet, the horseman may also use as a headgear the cowboy hat that is highly rugged. This is commonly made of felt or straw with a large brim that is as wide as four inches or more. This is useful in protecting the eyes from the sun. Compared to the helmet, the cowboy hat is much more fashionable.

The coat used as an outer garment is used for warmth and fashion. Coats have long sleeves and are open in front but may be closed through buttons or fasteners or belt. The coat for the horseman usually is longer than the hip of the rider. The shirt is the inner garment under the coat.

The vest is part of the rider's clothes worn as an outer garment that has been associated with working class men. This has been worn in other outdoor activities such as hunting or fishing and has outside pockets. The vest for the horseman must have useable shock absorbing and impact resistant pads or panels.

Each of the panels must have a grid of discrete pockets with shock absorbing elements. The grid lines are placed in an overlapping fashion making the vest very flexible and form fitting. This gives the horseman significant protection.

The horseman's pair of pants is a garment worn on the lower part of the body covering the two legs separately. This is a tight fitting but flexible garment that clings to the legs. This is made often with cotton or lycra. The horseman's pants are comparable to the leggings.

Boots are footwear essential for riders. This is a type of shoe that covers the foot and the ankle and can extend up to the knee. Boots sometimes have a high heel. Other features of the boots include reinforced insteps and toe caps with a slim-cut leg. It has also a removable foot bed for added cushioning and insulation.

Other boots can have what is called a kick-rim that allows riders to kick boots off without any damage. Others may have an Achilles protector made of rubber to protect the ankle from blows. There are also boots that have anti-shock heels and linings with moisture-control that offer comfort and good foot health.

A glove is the type of garment that covers the hand. Gloves have openings and sheaths for each of the fingers. Usual gloves used for horse riding are made of leather. This is important to protect the hand whenever it holds or grips the rope or reins of the horse. Without the gloves, the hand can obtain cuts and bruises made by the friction with the rope or rein.

The spur is an attachment to the rider's boot used to back up the rider's leg aids. This is useful in giving a sharp jab on horses that are reluctant to move forward. Spurs should not be used if it is not necessary.

The whip is a long flexible rod that has a lash at its end. This is used also to back up the rider's leg aids. This can also be used as a training tool to tap the horse to perform some movements.

If you plan to ride a horse, make sure you have already prepared your riding gear. Horse riding gears should not only be fashionable, but also comfortable.

Equestrian Events

Horses and Equestrian Events

In ancient times horses were regarded as one of the most useful animals. That is because the beasts served as modes of transportation during those times when automobiles did not exist.

For many years now, cars have replaced horses as the primary mode of transportation. It is a rare occurrence that you see horses used specifically for transportation.

More often, you see horses used as luxury animals. Those who use the animals for transport are doing it for hobby, while some consider riding horses a form of extreme adventure.

Otherwise, horses are now being used for different purposes other

than for transport. Often, the animals are being used as objects for gambling and recreation.

Equestrian activities

You probably are aware of the different equestrian activities that are very popular all over the world nowadays. You might have taken note that equestrian events are some form of recreation and sports at the same time.

The dictionary defines the word 'equestrian' as a term referring to the skill or talent in riding, driving and manipulating horses for practical, sports and driving purposes.

Nowadays, the most practical and popular function of horses is for competitive sports. There are many horse owners and riders who are investing significant amounts of money and time to breed and raise horses.

The animals are fed and trained to run as fast as they can. Part of the training is the ability to run over many different obstacles.

At the same time riders are also undergoing vigorous training for horse riding. Significant training and practice is needed before a horse rider is allowed to ride horses for competition.

There are several businessmen and ranch owners who are spending money to raise horses and subject the animals to training and preparation for sporting events. They do this either for gambling purposes or simply for recreation.

Different equestrian events

There are a number of equestrian events that are popular all over the world. You would be surprised at how numerous these events are, meaning, people are really hooked into horse sports and recreation activities.

One of the most popular of these events is the horse show. Horse shows are exhibition activities that are somehow like a parade to flaunt the posture of horses and the unique riding talents of riders.

Rodeos are very popular in Canada and in rural America. Rodeos are horse shows that can sometimes turn violent as the event shows how

seasoned riders extraordinary skill tame wild-acting animals.

Distance riding is the root of the modern horseracing events, while gymkhanas primarily involve very young horse riders.

Cross country jumping is great entertainment because horses and riders are subjected to different and difficult obstacles like log piles and steep courses.

Polo is a horseback sport that involves a small ball. It somehow like a combination of the sports hockey and golf, only that players have to be at the back of horses before they are allowed to hit the ball into target holes.

Selecting a Farrier

Tips When Selecting and Hiring a Farrier

Imelda Marcos, who is well known for her uncanny interest in shoes, will surely be awed by the fact that horses are also into collecting shoes.

Yes, horse owners are spending significant amounts of investments for the hoof and foot care of their animals. The strength of horses rely heavily on the animals' speed running. Horseshoes are especially crafted to help horses maintain overall standing posture and speed when running.

Shoemakers are for humans as farriers are for horses. Yes, horses need their own expert hoof care specialists. It is very rare that a community attends to the foot care and needs of horses.

Those areas where the need is recognized are fortunate to have a few farriers around. Farriers are those people who are specially trained and experienced to make horseshoes and take care of the hooves.

The expertise of a farrier is a necessary step for maintaining a horses' foot and overall health. Farriers are one of the most important aides an owner can provide for his animals.

When hiring a Farrier

Once upon a time, farriers were considered as estranged bedfellows to

the blacksmiths because it had been assumed that the nature of the jobs of the two is one and the same.

But through the years, the distinction between the two eventually surfaced. Though, the two are considered almost the same, their expertise are different from each other. Though, both professions command great recognition because it would take significant amount of skill and talent to emerge in both of them.

The work of farrier is as complicated as the work of the blacksmith because trimming hooves and making special shoes for horses are as tedious as crafting glasses and furniture.

That is why when hiring a farrier, the owner must pay particular attention to the applicant-farrier's expertise and knowledge base.

The first thing the horse owner must look at when selecting a farrier from a pool of applicants is the history of experience. Though, it would somehow seem unfair to the new farriers, old and seasoned ones are more favored anywhere.

That is because experienced farriers know what to do in certain

difficult situations. Whatever challenge or problem may arise, the experienced farrier would definitely know how to handle each obstacle.

Experience must have also taught him how to get along with the horses, especially those which are bred and raised to race and join other equestrian events.

Farriers must know when to shoe horses or what to do when there are problems fitting the horse for shoes. Farriers must also be experienced on trimming hooves.

Interviewing the farrier-applicant

Of course, hiring a farrier is just like hiring regular employees. Other than just looking at the work experience sheet, the horse owner must take time to interview the applicant.

It is through casual talk that the horse owner would get to know better the prospective employer. Ease and rapport between the horse owner and the applicant-farrier must be established for they would have to work hand in hand in maintaining the overall foot care of the horse.

The horse owner could ask strategic and inquisitive questions that would gauge the applicant's personal knowledge and experience. For example, the prospective employer could ask about the applicant's work history and experience personally.

Through questions, the horse owner could also tell how the applicant would fare when faced with situations. For instance, you could ask the applicant about his experience on doing gaited horses.

Those farrier-applicants who are tending to be too know-it-all should be screened out because based on the experiences of other horse owners, such farriers would not be really helpful in maintaining the over all health of the horse. Such farriers would also disregard suggestions and comments from horse owners, which would be a source of a gap between the two.

Overall, when hiring a farrier, you, the horse owner, could seek advice and recommendations from friends and acquaintances. Asking your local veterinarian about good farriers would also be really helpful.

Decide well and be inquisitive enough so you will get to hire the deserving and trustworthy farrier for your horse. Good luck!

How to select a horse trainer

How to Select a Horse Trainer

Horses are not considered as domestic animals, but they are efficient assistants that could help owners perform different and complex activities.

For example, horses in farms are used to help transport commodities and carry heavy loads of crops and agriculture products to other locations. In far-away communities, horses serve as the essential and efficient mode of transportation because those areas are still not provided the basic infrastructure.

But horses in the wild are never turned to do those activities in an instant. Horses, when untamed, are truly uncontrollable and would not be helpful to people for whatever purpose.

Traditionally, horses have been trained for different functions, like for transport, for farm works, for sports and even for warfare. You might have seen those epic movies and sagas where warriors are riding

horses during battle.

You might have been awed, at one point of your life, over the usefulness of horses to people and businesses. However, always be reminded that horses can be destructive when left untamed and untrained.

That is why it is very important that horses undergo training sessions, where they will be taught the basic skills and tricks to perform many different helpful tasks.

Hiring a horse trainer

Thus, for the horse owner who aims to turn his horse into a useful assistant and as an alternative to machines, it is imperative that a horse trainer be hired to do the purpose.

The horse trainer will help unlock the full potentials of the horse. He will be tasked to condition the mindset of the horse so it could be prepared for training sessions and could be open to learning tricks.

A horse owner will play a very important role to unlocking the horse's

potential. That is because in him lies the efforts and the skills to help the animal embrace learning and action on queue.

If you are a horse owner and you are aiming to hire a good horse trainer, the first thing you could do is to seek recommendations from peers and other horse owners.

Peer advice would be helpful in finding a good horse trainer for the task. If peers are unable to give such recommendations, the local veterinarian will be of great help. He should know about the best horse trainers in the community. The vet could tell if the horse trainer does good work or not.

Be advised that there are some vets who also offer horse-training services, but in general, not all of them do so. That is because horse training requires a lot of effort and patience, and takes more time than a veterinarian with a busy practice can give.

You could also directly hire a horse trainer. You could seek links and contacts from the online Craig's list or from the traditional and online classifieds.

You must do an interview and examine the personal and work history data of the horse trainer to ensure that the services your horse will be provided will be commensurate to the remuneration package.

Several accreditations from horse training bodies and industry groups are also being provided to certify a horse trainer's capabilities. If the applicant horse trainer holds one, then, you are assured that the horse trainer would be the perfect candidate for the position.

Choosing the best horse trainer

When it comes to choosing the best horse trainer, it is a relative and case-by-case basis. What is good enough for the standard of one horse owner may not be good enough for another. Preferences and standards of horse owners vary.

That is why you can never really rely mostly on the experiences of other horse owners on horse trainers. Though, recommendations would be helpful, it is not advisable that you entrust the overall welfare of your horses wholly to the horse trainer. Take heed from your personal discretion and insights.

Remember, when hiring a horse trainer, you should always look out for the best candidate there is. However, the best do not assure that overall care for the horse is guaranteed. Through the interview process, you would get a sneak at the overall disposition of the applicants.

Jolliness and genuine interest on horses would be the best trait a good horse trainer must have. The horse trainer applicant in front of you may not be the best according to recommendations from vets and peers, but knowing the person through a sincere talk may indicate that he is truly interested in training horses.

That would be the best quality of a horse trainer.

Camping with your horse(s)

How to Truly Enjoy Camping with Your Horse

Camping as an activity is truly exciting. The recreational initiative is truly a rewarding and exhilarating adventure for the modern workers, who are working so hard on weekdays.

If you are a horse owner and you have a few good horses in your stable, camping is an activity that will test the overall endurance and reliability of each horse.

Camping with your horse would surely be a worthwhile experience and will provide a good bonding activity between you, the horse owner, and the horse.

Horse camping can be done with you alone with the horse, or with you and some company, together with a few horses. The excitement would also be as fun if you camp with your family or friends and the best loved horses from your stable.

But because horse camping is an outdoor activity and you will be out there subjected to the less sophistication of the wilderness, there are a few reminders that would surely help make the activity fun, worthwhile, safe and rewarding, all at the same time.

Checklist before going to a horse camp

Before finally embarking to a horse camping, whether alone or with some company, you must first make sure that the horse, or horses,

you would take with you are healthy and vigorous enough to go outdoor and spend a few days and nights out in the cold wilderness at night and the scorching sun at daytime.

You must make sure the horse is free from any medical complication or is not diagnosed to be suffering from any physical defect or shortcoming. This will ensure that the animal will not encounter problems when out there trailing steep roads and courses or enduring long-distance travel.

This should be done especially when you are about to horse camp alone with the horse. Imagine, if the horse suddenly fell ill or died in the wilderness hundreds or thousands of miles away from home, how could you possibly go back home?

Check the horseshoes. Before going to the camp, make sure that the horse's nails and shoeing outfits are in good condition. Otherwise, make sure also that you are knowledgeable of fixing loose horse shoes or are adept at replacing lost shoes in case of emergencies.

Remember that horseshoes will help assure the walking and running capability of the horse especially on abrasive terrains.

Next thing you should look at would be your familiarity with the place. You do not want to be lost in the wilderness for a few days, do you? It would also help if the horse is familiar with the area or the terrain.

The horse should be used to trekking terrains. Experts say that the horse should be used to taking abrasive and steep terrains. Previous experiences of the horse in taking such initiatives would help to make sure that animal would not give up amid the camping activity.

When finally going to the camp, of course, you should check on the basic needs for both yourself and the horse. Water is on top of the list. Bring sufficient drinking water for yourself. You may not opt to bring water for your horse if you are 100% sure that there would be a nearby stream or river in the camping site where the horse could refresh to take in some liquid.

Since horses eat grass, there is also no need to pack food for the horse. But do pack food that is bound to last you about a few days. Bring only the basic food supply.

The horse trailer

If the camping activity involves a group of people, it is advisable that you a horse trailer. Many come with accommodations for humans. For children and women, horse trailers with accommodations are also ideal to use to make sure they would be comfortable all throughout the camping duration.

When going to a horse camp with a horse trailer, you could opt to buy one or at least rent for the event. If you feel the horse trailer would not be useful to you in the future, then, it would be wise to just rent one for a particular horse camp occasion.

Good luck on your horse camping experience and have fun!

Horses and the Handicapped

Who Says That Handicapped Individuals cannot Ride Horses?

Horse riding can be therapeutic because it involves the movement of the whole body, joints and muscles. Sitting on a horse increases

movements and stretches muscles. Common exercises in a clinical setup can sometimes be stressful but trail rides can be interesting knowing that you will be touring on to different surroundings.

Horses and horse back riding can really be exciting. But are handicapped people amenable to this kind of activity? How can they enjoy riding horses if they have disabilities and they are fearful of what the trainers and other people will say to them?

These are only few of the major concerns of certain organizations dealing with horses and the handicaps. Some of these organizations are:

1. Westwind 4 H Riding. October 1978 marked the beginning of Westwind. This organization provides instruction about horseback riding for physically handicapped. 5 to 19 years old individuals are eligible to join. They are also accepting volunteers with at least 14 years of age.

Westwind 4H sessions are held during spring, winter and fall; definitely year round. Classes are held every Mondays and Thursdays from 4 – 5 pm. Sessions last for 8 weeks; different volunteers and

professional riders will handle students. During the month of July, a short summer class is also being offered.

The 4H Center is located in Los Altos Hills, CA. They have their own horses and to date they have 8 horses and a lot of ponies.

Basically, the volunteers are the backbone of the program. They care for both horses and the clients.

2. Riding for the Disabled or RDA. Primarily, the mission of RDA is to provide assisted activities (connected with horses) among disabled people to enhance and develop their abilities. RDA is one organization which offers multi diagnostic services among people of various disabilities. These include learning disorders, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, multiple sclerosis, hearing impairments and other accident related injuries.

Programs such as carriage driving, vaulting, horse riding and dressage aim to provide training, sport, riding therapy, safety and recreation among the handicaps.

Riding for the Disabled have branches in other countries, namely:

- RDA NSW in Australia aims to encourage and assist other centers in providing necessary therapeutic programs for the handicaps. The funding, management details and training are also included in the list.

- RDA Singapore offers free lessons on horseback riding among physically and mentally disabled individuals. Volunteers are also accepted.

- RDA Hong Kong on the other hand is a charitable organization that teaches handicap children and adults on how to ride horses for fun and therapy.

3. Flying Changes Center Inc. Flying Changes Center serves 60 to 80 diagnosed disabled adults and children from 3 years of age to senior years. There are 300 individuals served by the Center annually. State agencies, group homes, schools and rehabilitation centers generally referred clients to the Center.

The Center implements experiential and rhythmic movements of horses alongside the bonding of animal and human. Another good

point of the organization is that they work closely with family members, educational, medical and social service specialists to better develop equine programs.

Flying Changes Center merely depends on funding and contribution from sponsors and outside sources. In 2004 alone, almost 70% of the disabled clients were Medicare Eligible and belong to low-income level family.

It is pretty obvious that many riding programs for handicaps are appearing in many countries. While their utmost concern is for the disabled to enjoy, important things must also be looked upon before engaging your loved ones to these programs. Some of them are:

- The program must be safe with gentle horses or pony.
- Gear such as helmets must be provided.
- Stable and horses must be clean.
- The professional rider must assist the student in getting on and off the horse. Riders must have credible records or licenses and must

show patience and dedication in instructing the students

Horse riding can give both physiological and psychological benefits. It builds self-esteem and confidence. It can develop balance and coordination and gives free movements to the handicap. It can really offer a sense of fulfillment other than fun and excitement. It also enhance cooperation among able bodied and the disabled. So fear no more, let your child or relatives enjoy horse riding and see them grow!

Horses and Hollywood

The Making of the Next Superstar Horse in Hollywood

The horse is a one of a kind animal that stands regal and symbolizes strength. There are certain categories many famous horses fall into; among them are:

Hall of Famers

Bucephalus- a well-known horse of Alexander

Incitatus – horse of a cruel Emperor

Igonquin – White House horse

Justin Morgan – the father of a new horse breed

Muhamed – Math whiz

Moifaa – shipwreck survivor

Buttermilk – the horse of Dale Evans

Jim Key - chosen as the smartest horse

Red Buck - Emmett Dalton's horse

Red Fox – the horse of Jesse James

Silver – by Lone Ranger

Famous Military Horses

Black jack - the horse of U.S. Army

Babieca - the horse of El Cid

Comanche – the only survivor in Little Big Horn War

Blueskin - General Washington's horse

Cincinnati - the horse of Ulysses Grant

Copenhagen - the horse ridden by a Duke in the Battle of Waterloo.

Marengo – a war horse by Napoleon

Famous Horses in Mythology

Baku – dream eaters with a body of a horse

Arion – extremely fast and immortal horse

Centaur – half human and half horse

Hengroen - the horse of King Arthur

Pegasus – winged horse by Pegasus

Unicorns – beautiful horned horse

Trojan horse

The Famous Horses in Literature

Concorde of Sir Lancelot

Black, Satan and Flame from Walter Farley's The Black Stallion

Rocinante the horse on Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote

Silver Blaze the hero in Sherlock Holmes story of Arthur Doyle

Artax from The Neverending Story of Michael Ende

Black Beauty by Anna Sewell's Black Beauty

Boxer of Animal Farm written by George Orwell

Arod, Hasufil, Roheryn , Shadow Pax, Fatty Lumpkin, Bumpkin, Firefoot and Bill the Pony all from Lord of the Rings of J. R Tolkiens

Horses are not only famous in myths and books; there are also famous horses in history such as Lexington, Kidron, Haleb, Winchester, Hanover, Traveller, Little Sorrel, Trigger and Old Henry Clay. The skeletons of these horses are exhibited in many museums worldwide.

On a lighter note, there are horses that made their way by being famous in songs, video games, televisions, animations and films in Hollywood.

The famous animated horses are Stallion, Khan in Mulan, Philip of Beauty and the Beast, the cousin of Care Bears Noble Heart Horse and Barbie's horse. Those famous in songs are Chestnut Mare, Patti Smith's "Horses", Trigger Wild Horses and The Horse with No Name. Video games also have their famous horses: Epona, Ocarina and Majora's Mask all from The Legend of Zelda.

The famous horses in films are Black Beauty, Buttermilk, Khartoum which is the Godfather's horse, Trigger: Golden Palomino horse,

Tornado of Zorro and the many horses on the film The Man from Snowy River, The Lord of the Rings and Seabiscuit. Famous horses in televisions are the Budweiser horses Clydesdales, Esquilax and Princess of The Simpsons.

Ever wonder why horses are being used in Hollywood? Well, it's because of the numerous action and western movies being filmed. Western films genre evolves in a conquest on the wilderness; horses are suited than machines in these kinds of films. Clint Eastwood, Richard Gere, Antonio Banderas, etc. are the hottest actors that epitomize horse riding. Hollywood has been contacting outsiders and linkages to supply them with horses that are needed by certain films.

A website, named horsesforhollywood.com provides horses for Hollywood movies. They claim to have world-class training for their horses apart from having world-class equipment for their herd. Horses for sale are available and they also provide training for riders. At present, horses available are Lanie amounting to \$12,000 and Charlie \$2,900. It will not be surprising if we will see them in Hollywood movies one of these days.

Starting from "Black Beauty" to "Seabiscuit," the horses have been

occupying a special place in Hollywood and also in the viewer's hearts. There are still many other not so famous and famous horses in theaters and in televisions and they have really touched and continue to touch the lives of many viewers.

As long as there are films requiring beautiful cinematography being shot in wilderness, forests and mountains, the need for herds and herds of horses will be required.

Horses and Youth

How to Help Youngsters Raise and Train Horses

Youngsters nowadays divulge in different hobbies like video games and cartoons. Although this is a typical case, there are also those youth who are horse enthusiast and would rather go horseback riding than sit on their couch all day long.

There are many programs involving youngsters in activities with horses. Future Farmers of America for example offers training for young people.

Some subjects being taught are herd behavior to learn the movements of the horse and the 2-way communication using body languages to improve the bonding of youngsters and their horses. When positive relationship with the horse is utilized, the riding skills will also be improved.

Rural areas in America hold country fair week for 4H youth. The participants usually exhibit their horses for competition. All are excited to get a first place trophy or ribbon. Some of the boys and girls appear very small compared to their horses.

The youth prove their abilities in handling their animals. The enormous love of the kids towards their animals is clearly seen in the project. Endless hours of feeding, taming and grooming of their horses are spent to have their best show to impress the judges.

Camaraderie is also developed during 4H and FFA shows. This is regarded as a family event where kids are assisted by their moms and dads. The kids are also taught responsibility, character and good work ethic through FFA's training.

With a great tradition like this, FFA and 4H draw a good picture of the

future horse lovers and care takers.

Other competitive activities under FFA are:

- Youngsters are allowed to watch competition and FFA horses'

Shows

- Youngsters are required to participate in various horses' activities such as public speaking and riding events.

Just recently, around 500 young horse lovers joined in FFA Horse Show at Ike Exposition Center. Many youngsters came from Louisiana and they have won from various competitions like demonstrations, roping and riding. The youngsters have proven that they can be excellent in their crafts through hard work and dedication. Among the activities are:

Timed events such as breakaway roping, tie down roping, stake race, pole bending, barrel racing. All participants are 14 years old and below. There are also public speaking, quiz bowl and demonstrations for open and junior divisions. Riding events on the other hand include western horsemanship, western riding, trail, reining, working hunter,

hunter under saddle, hunt seat equitation, English showmanship and miniature horse showmanship; all participants are over 14.

Horse related activities are just a part of the development programs of FFA. They also cover the topics regarding nutrition, public speaking, photography and character education. The youngsters who participated are well supported by their parents, teachers and volunteers; thus making the program a success. Focused on the youth, FFA's horses' competition is designed to honor the skills and general knowledge of the young people.

There are a lot of trainers but there are only few who can touch the youngsters' lives and bond with their horses. The lives of the youth can radically change when being enrich and when skills are being enhance. Among the good trainers of youngsters are the following:

1. J. Rydberg is the 2006 Faculty of the year in Lamar Community College. He joined the Horse Training and Management in 2000 August. Before joining the community, he had spent most of his life training horses and competing for professional rodeos. He had been ranked as one of top 20 horse trainers. He teaches clients of all ages with horse roping, barrel racing and cutting.

2. Jason Kravig spent 3 years in horse training and rodeoing. He gained other insights and techniques from professional trainers like JJ Rydberg.

3. Jill Chase coached successful FFA national champions. She started horse production, reproduction, management and evaluation. She has been involved in horse business since nine years old. She graduated from Colorado State University of Equine Science.

4. Van Sant is the daughter of Vicki and Ernest Van Sant. A 10 year experienced equestrian who often wins in horse shows. She is a member of FFA for almost 4 years. She enjoys photography and her usual subjects are horses.

Helping youngsters in riding, raising and competing with their horses is a tedious yet enjoyable task any trainer can love if they have enough patience and dedication. Youth have the enthusiasm to learn new things and they are very passionate once they get involved in any activities. Willingness to teach and develop a kid's skill can be essential for a smooth learning process. As one trainer stated, the most important thing in youth training is setting a good example.

Horse Associations

All About Horse Associations

Horses. They are often used as a symbol of strength and beauty. To most breeders, being the guardians of the horse's breed can preserve the beauty of these creatures. A pure breed, as they believe, is rare and precious and should be propagated.

While there are numerous breeds of horses, there are also various existing organizations that certify horse pedigrees. In the U.S. alone, there is quite a number to add up to a list. Here are some of these organizations and their rules in pedigree certification:

1. The American Drum Horse Association
2. Fallabella Miniature Horse Association—one of the first of its kind in the world. Fallabella can be certified under the following breeds: Quarter horse, Arabian horse or Thoroughbred.
3. MPHBEA (Mountain Pleasure Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association)—this association is practically new in the field. Its main goals are promote, preserve and enhance the process of breeding and

presenting the breed from the line of Mountain Horses. It also boasts that they certify horses not for profit but to guarantee that the requirements are met.

4. The LANA (Lippizan Association of North America)—this organization provides a record of up to 5 generations of the horse's pedigree once it is registered and has passed all requirements. The data included in the record are exact locations and dates of birth.

5. The Rocky Mountain Horse Association—one of the largest organizations that issues certification and registration for Mountain horses. They are also one of the few that would require a certification ahead of the breeding itself to make certain that a pure breed foal would be produced.

6. The Scottish Icelandic Horse Association

7. The American Trail Horse Association

Here are some of the common requirements of certifying a horse breed:

1. These organizations would only register or certify a horse that has qualified or passed their standards. If any standard is not met such as giving false information, they can deny certification immediately.

2. The horse's DNA should be submitted for testing. The purity of the breed can be proven through this process. Upon the approval of the owner's application for registration, the DNA sample should be submitted within 30 days. Any discrepancy in the DNA test results would automatically revoke the certification.
3. Any name that is submitted for registration should not match any other name that has been submitted formerly. While this is so, a name that has been submitted and approved should be the permanent name that the horse should carry all the way through.
4. Owners of stallions should submit breeding record and be able to fill out the necessary breeding information in the registration form provided by the horse association.
5. Artificial insemination or the natural way should have begotten a foal to be able to qualify for pure breed.
6. Some organizations look at color as a requirement for certification. Others don't. In the case of those who do, the color of the horse must pass the standard color of the horse's breed.
7. A horse must be of good disposition.
8. The stallion should have his two testicles beneath the inguinal ring.
9. Proper gait.

10. While most horses have markings on the face, there are some organizations that would accept such horses only if the markings are extremely noticeable or numerous.

11. Some of the organizations require a video before certifying a certain horse. The video should be able to show all four angles of the horse with a clear visual of the horse's whole body. It should also show the kind of shoe that was used. A close up of the entire body should also be recorded, as this will show any marking that was put on the horse. The owner should also record a few minutes of horseback-riding to show the beats of the horse's hooves.

12. In the case of an imported horse that an owner is submitting for certification, the submitted name can be different from the name on the horse's passport.

Common registration form data are: name of the horse (first and second choices are provided just in case any of the choices would match a previous registered name); name of its current owner and previous owners; date of birth; color; markings; and the sire's and dam's names and breeds.

Looking at all this information, we would come to the conclusion that keeping a line of pure breeds is a must. It is more than profit-oriented,

it is actually a noble task, and the breeders, are themselves,
guardians.