

## PURCHASING A HORSE

You have seen an advert for a horse that sounds as though it would suit your needs. When you ring up the seller ask as many questions as you can think of as to the suitability of the horse such as is he good in traffic, does he bite or kick, has he ever been lame or had colic and any other relevant questions that you can think of. Be honest about your riding and handling ability, if you are not very experienced, say so horses can be very strong and if after speaking with the seller you feel you would like to go and see the horse, make a mutually convenient time with them to go and try the horse. If this is your first horse always take an experienced person with you. When you get there check that the horse matches the passport, are the markings the same, are the whorls in the same place etc. Make sure that you check this document very carefully. Is the person showing you the horse the owner? Have a good look over the horse before riding him, is he the height that you have been told he is, is he the colour you were told he is. Watch him being tacked up and brought out of the stable. Is he good to girth up, does he take the bridle easily. Let the seller ride the horse first, then your experienced friend and then if you feel you like the horse, ride him yourself.

It helps to make a list of questions before you go to view the horse, when you are talking to the seller ask as many questions as you like, such as is the horse good to clip, is he good in traffic, is he good to load, is he good to catch and handle, is he good to shoe.

Is the horse in good condition with a shine to his coat, is he well shod. Ask the seller if you can catch him from the field and groom him yourself. Ask the seller to put the clippers on him and watch his reaction, you don't need to take off any hair the mere sound of the clippers will make some horses jump away.

If the horse is wanted for jumping, ask to see him going over some jumps, if you want to jump him yourself ask the seller if they would mind you putting him over some fences. It is important to ask the seller as after all the horse belongs to them until sold. Do you feel that you can manage the horse when he is jumping, does he get strong and rush at the fence or is he well schooled and steady to a fence.

If you feel that you would like to come back again on another day and perhaps ride out on a hack with someone else, ask the seller if this would be possible. This will help you to get a feel for the horse.

Ask if the horse is difficult in any way does he have any dislikes such as dogs, cows or pigs, heavy lorries. Ask again with your friend present if he has ever been lame or had colic.

Ask if the seller is prepared to release the veterinary records from their vet for your vet to see.

If the horse pleases you in every way and you want to proceed with a purchase DO PLEASE make sure you have a 5 Stage vetting done. This should be carried out either by your vet or if the horse is too far away ask your veterinary practice to recommend a Practice in the area where the horse lives. DO NOT use the seller's vet. During this vetting blood will be pulled and stored for 6 months. During this 6 months if there are any problems ie. the horse going lame or the horse turning into a "nut case" or showing any problems with his back or anything that did not show up during the vetting, the blood taken can be run.

Unfortunately you will have to pay for this service and it is quite expensive but can prove very useful especially if in the event of a dispute the test is positive. This can, if necessary be used in a Court of Law should it come to that.

If the horse is unbroken you will only be able to have a 2 Stage vetting done, this is still very important to carry out even though the horse is unbroken. PLEASE ask for blood to be pulled during this 2 Stage vetting, as stated above, it can be very useful. Also if you do purchase the horse and the seller gives you any food for him on the pretext of "just for the change over" take the food but DO NOT feed it to the horse. Keep this food and should the horse change in any way, ie. go lame, show signs of having a back injury or turning into a "nut case" then as with the blood this food can be analysed for any drugs used to cover up a problem.

If when viewing any horse you have any doubts whatsoever, PLEASE WALK AWAY. There are hundreds of horses out there and no one wants to purchase a horse with a load of problems. Finally, good luck.