



A publication of the  
**Maryland Horse Council,**  
 Equine Welfare Committee  
[www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)

**Chairman:**

Kathleen Schwartz, *Days End Farm Horse Rescue*

**Members:**

Ann Joly, *Humane Society of Baltimore County*  
 Nicky Ratliff, *Carroll County Humane Society*  
 Beverly Raymond, *Maryland Dept. of Agriculture*  
 Debbie Rollins Frank, *Equine Rescue & Rehabilitation*  
 Allan Schwartz, *Days End Farm Horse Rescue*  
 Pat Stillings, *Days End Farm Horse Rescue*

**Advisors:**

Tim Capps, *Maryland Horse Breeders Association*  
 Dr. Rory Carolan, *MD Equine Practitioners Association*  
 Molly Chaffinch, *The Maryland Horse*  
 Debbie Clement, *Southern States*  
 Dr. Malcolm Commer, *Maryland Horse Council*  
 Dr. Richard Forfa, *MD Equine Practitioners Association*  
 Laura Junkins, *The William Snyder Foundation*  
 Dennis Lynch, *Equine Dentist*  
 Tracy McKenna, *The Equiery*

**Recording Secretary:**

Diane Dennis, *Days End Farm Horse Rescue*

Layout, Printing & Distribution provided by



For more copies of this brochure, please contact the

MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

410-489-7826 • [equiery@erols.com](mailto:equiery@erols.com)

or

DAYS END FARM HORSE RESCUE

410-442-1564 • [defhr@erols.com](mailto:defhr@erols.com)

Copyright © 2001 Maryland Horse Council

The Maryland Horse Council grants permission for this information to be copied, transferred, shared, or quoted, provided sole credit is attributed to the Maryland Horse Council.

# So, you're interested in owning a horse?

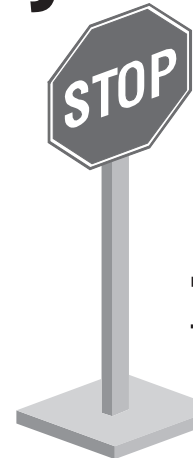


# If only love were enough...

## Horses provide numerous, positive benefits. Horses...

- 🐾 Are wonderful companions;
- 🐾 Can become a lifelong hobby;
- 🐾 Can help create a wholesome environment for children and adults;
- 🐾 Can help enhance self-esteem;
- 🐾 Provide an opportunity to develop enduring friendships;
- 🐾 Provide a method for teaching and learning important life skills, including responsibility;
- 🐾 Help develop a compassionate approach to life;
- 🐾 Are an excellent form of exercise & recreation.

**But, before you buy...**



**and think.**

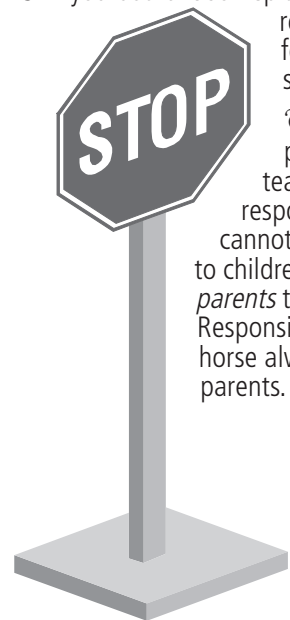
## Horse ownership is a huge responsibility. Before you acquire that adorable pony or wonderful horse, consider that horses and ponies...

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

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

- ☞ Will you keep it at home or board it someplace else?
- ☞ If you board it at home, do you have a safe place to keep the horse? Who will be responsible for maintenance (fence repair, pasture management, etc.)? Does the zoning in your area allow horses?
- ☞ If you plan to board it at home, are you aware that you will be responsible for that horse 365 days a year? The weather, your health, and your vacation schedule do not mean anything to your horse. Who will be responsible for daily care? Can you find back up help to care for your horse when you go away?
- ☞ Have you considered how and what you will feed it? (No two horses have the same nutritional requirements, and the grass in your "pasture" may not be suitable to the horse you have in your barn.)

- ☞ If you board it someplace else, will you be responsible for caring for it daily, 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 always falls to the parents.



**and think**

# REALITY CHECK: DOLLARS & CENTS

## BOARD

- ☞ **Self-Care Field Board** in Maryland starts at \$75 per month—for just the space. The horse owner must purchase everything else and provide the labor.
- ☞ **Full-Care Field Board** starts at about \$150 per month.
- ☞ **Full-Care Stall Board** can range from \$250–\$550 per month in Maryland.

## FEED

- ☞ **Grain:** Begins @ \$8 per 50 lb. bag (horses may need anything from nothing or a handful of grain to over 10 lbs. per day).
- ☞ **Hay:** Depending on the type and weight of the bale, \$3.25 per bale on up (horses without adequate grass pasture, or during the winter months, may need from a half a bale to a full bale per day, depending on the weight of the bale and type of hay).

## HOME SWEET HOME

- ☞ Safe fencing—Can start at \$4.00 per foot (how big is your back yard?). Fencing is in constant need of attention.
- ☞ Shelter—Barn, run-in shed, or anything that allows the horse an escape from extreme weather conditions.
- ☞ Bedding (if stall kept)—Shavings run about \$4.00 per 50 lb. bag, straw runs about \$3.00 per bale. Bedding needs to be changed daily.
- ☞ Basic supplies—rakes, shovels, muck buckets (for removing manure, etc), water and feed buckets, hoses, grooming equipment to see to your horse's physical comfort, etc. (and nothing lasts forever).
- ☞ Places to store bedding and hay safely—Bedding and hay need to be kept in dry, well-ventilated areas—fire is a constant danger.
- ☞ Places to store feed—grains need to be protected from molding and rodents.

## HEALTH CARE

- ☞ Regular farrier care (hoof trimming and shoeing) runs from \$20 for basic trimming to over \$100 for shoeing all around and more for special care. The average horse needs farrier care every six to eight weeks.
- ☞ Regular worming—every six to eight weeks. Wormer runs between \$8 and \$12 per tube.
- ☞ Regular veterinary care—seasonal vaccinations. Some can be administered by the horse owner, others require veterinary certification. The vet calls start at \$25, and the shots vary in price, but plan on at least \$75 per visit, 2 visits per year.

## HEALTH CARE, con't.

- ☞ Annual dental check ups—can be administered by your veterinarian during one of his seasonal visits, or by an equine dentist, approximately \$35 per visit, average of two visits per year.
- ☞ Emergency veterinary care—can run from stitching up a wound to major surgery at a veterinary hospital—\$100 to \$10,000 and up.
- ☞ Incidental health care supplies—thermometer, antiseptic ointment, surgical scrub, liniment—a pre-made first aid kit runs about \$75.
- ☞ Your own daily labor to make sure that your horse is happy, comfortable and healthy.

## BASIC EQUIPMENT

- ☞ Halter & lead rope—even if you don't ride or drive your horse, you will need a halter to lead and control him. \$15–\$75 (new).
- ☞ Bridle or harness: \$50–\$500 (new) and may or may not include reins and bit.
- ☞ Saddle for riding or cart for driving: \$400–\$2000 (new, for the saddle), \$1000 on up for a cart.
- ☞ Saddle pads, martingales, breast plates, girths, wraps, boots, blankets, coolers, sheets, buckets (for bathing), saddle soap (leather goods last longer when cared for). You don't have to break the bank, but it is easy to do.

*Approximate prices as of August 2001.*

## Buy in haste, repent in leisure.

- ☞ Have you ever purchased a horse before? Do you know how to purchase a horse? If this is your first horse, are you looking for a deal, a dream, or a safe, healthy horse who will teach you how to care for a horse? If you're looking for a deal, there is no such thing as a free horse. If you're looking for your dream horse, save that for when you have more experience in horse ownership. Find a trusted trainer or horse professional to help find an appropriate horse. Although it may cost more initially to purchase a horse through a professional, the cost is frequently much less than correcting the mistake of buying the wrong horse.
- ☞ To avoid heartache, a pre-purchase exam is strongly recommended. A pre-purchase exam can help make sure that the horse you want is sound and healthy.
- ☞ What will you do with the horse if your children outgrow it or lose interest, or if the horse becomes unusable because of injury or illness?

## Options to Ownership

- ☞ Consider riding lessons—you get the fun parts without the drudgery.
- ☞ Consider leasing—you get to try horse "ownership", but if it doesn't work, you can return the horse to the owner, and walk away without the guilt.
- ☞ Consider volunteering—more hands-on work, without the *daily* responsibility.
- ☞ Consider joining the Maryland 4-H Horse and Pony program, or the United States Pony Club.

## More Information

You have considered all ramifications of owning a horse and you decide you want to own. Congratulations on your decision to purchase a horse...the world of horses can be a warm and loving environment for all the members of your family. It is important for everyone that you make an educated and informed decision.

The following organizations will provide you with more information, as well as access to professionals & educational seminars:

American Humane Association: 800-227-4645  
American Veterinary Medical Association: 800-248-2862  
American Horse Protection Association: 202-965-0500  
Maryland Cooperative Extension Service: 410-531-0534  
Maryland Assn. of Equine Practitioners: 301-854-5689  
Maryland 4-H Foundation: 301-422-7803  
Days End Farm Horse Rescue: 410-442-1564  
Equine Rescue and Rehabilitation, Inc.: 410-343-2142  
*The Equiery*, MD's Equine Info. Resource: 800-244-9580  
Your Local Library, Book Stores, and Feed/Tack Stores

**and then think again.**