

Equestrian GUIDE



Basics of Ownership

Ask any enthusiast his or her favorite part of being a horse owner and one response will reign supreme — the special bond between human and animal.

Horses depend on your love and care, which you will likely show through grooming, petting and riding. But if you're a newcomer to the experience of owning a horse, it's important you don't get in over your head, both financially and with the amount of time required.

UNDERSTAND THE EXPENSE

If you're thinking about purchasing horses for your land or a nearby stable, consider that the initial price is often much less than the cost of properly maintaining a horse for one year.

According to a recent study by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the average annual cost of owning a hobby horse is about \$4,000 if you're stabling your horse at home. Tack on another \$1,000 if you're paying to have your horse stabled at another location.

These numbers take into account food, shelter, veterinary care and other common costs associated with owning a horse. Before taking the plunge, be sure you're able to shoulder the financial requirements that come with responsibly owning a horse.

SHELTER & EXERCISE

The cost of owning a horse can be great, but don't forget about the time it takes to give your animal the proper amount of attention. Hopefully you're planning on exercising your horse by riding him and by providing ample space for him to relax and stroll.

No horse, except on a veterinarian's order, should spend all day confined in a stall. The pasture you provide your horse should be bordered with sturdy fencing made out of the appropriate materials.

Horses need constant access to dry, comfortable shelter to protect them from the outdoor elements. Even in fair summer conditions, adequate shelter can help shield your horse from biting insects and the sun's heat.



The Equine Business

It's obvious that you love horses. But when is it time to translate your equestrian passion into a business venture? If you're serious about finding a career in a rapidly growing industry, the time may be now.

There are many specialty colleges and trade schools across the country that offer programming solely dedicated to equine studies.

Starting off in animal science or biology in community college is a great way to set a solid foundation for an equine career. If you're looking for less time training and more time helping in a stable or farming operation, many organizations are looking for workers, both part-time and full-time to help keep their daily activities running smoothly.

BUSINESS IS GOOD

The following numbers were uncovered in a recent study by the American Horse Council:

- The equine industry directly provides 460,000 full-time equivalent jobs.
- Spending by suppliers and employees generates additional jobs for a total employment impact of 1.4 million jobs.
- Approximately 34 percent of horse owners have a household income of less than \$50,000, and 28 percent have an annual income of over \$100,000
- Forty-six percent of horse owners have an income of between \$25,000 and \$75,000.



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HOW TO JOIN THE INDUSTRY

Concentrations in the equine industry span all facets and leadership levels. There is the management

side with positions of authority over stables and farming operations. Medicine is a burgeoning part of the industry, as well, with many professionals coming out of veterinary

schools or equine wellness programs.

Both management and medicine require administrative support, bookkeeping, inventory control and hands-on horse care positions.

There are hundreds of ways to break into the equine industry, and choosing the one that best fits your skill set may be a question for your college advisor or career coach.

Equine Disaster Relief

Every few years, a natural disaster reminds us of how important proper planning is when it comes to keeping our animals safe.

During Hurricane Sandy, for example, 1.5 million horses were in the super storm's path, according to the American Humane Association. Storms can destroy shelters and fencing, leading to horses running away from their homes. What's worse, storms also can leave serious injuries and even mortalities in their wake.

AN EFFECTIVE FIRST AID KIT

Dealing with an injured horse can be a difficult task, especially if roads are down or veterinary offices are unable to return your calls due to lack of power or building damage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends having the following items in any horse or animal emergency kit in case you are forced to take matters into your own hands:

- Bandages, leg wraps and quilts
- Antiseptics
- Scissors/Knife
- Topical antibiotic ointments
- Tranquilizers
- Pain Relievers
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Fly spray
- Fence repair materials

CONTRIBUTE TO A DISASTER FUND

The United States Equestrian Federation has initiated a permanent disaster relief fund for dealing with the planning and the aftermath of natural disasters.

Money donated to the fund is used to prepare and recover from disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, blizzards and fires.

Many states also have their own disaster relief funds. For example, in Kentucky, the Horse Council provides feed and other assistance to Kentucky horses affected by natural disasters and other incidents. Assistance can include grain, temporary shelter and even fencing.

Funds like this are effective in putting up a united front in proper planning and recovery strategies.

The horse groups work with county extension offices, emergency management teams and veterinary clinics to identify the needs of horses displaced or injured by dangerous storms.

Check to find out if donations can be made at any time to organizations in your area that help horses during disasters.



Equine Gastric Ulcers

Horse injuries or illnesses can be a scary thing for any owner to deal with, especially if medical care is far away.

One of the main afflictions owners worry about is gastric ulcers. They can affect any horse at any age. Up to 90 percent of racehorses and 60 percent of show horses, as well as non-performance horses and even foals, can get equine gastric ulcers, according to the American Association of Equine Practitioners.

If you ever suspect that your horse may be affected with a gastric ulcer, your first course of action should be to consult an equine veterinarian.

WHAT IS A GASTRIC ULCER?

Equine gastric ulcers are brought on by the result of the erosion of the lining of the stomach and caused by prolonged exposure to its normal acid. Unlike in humans, bacteria do not appear to be the cause of gastric ulcers.

A main culprit can actually be under-eating. The less feed there is to neutralize these normal acids, the more likely a gastric ulcer may occur.

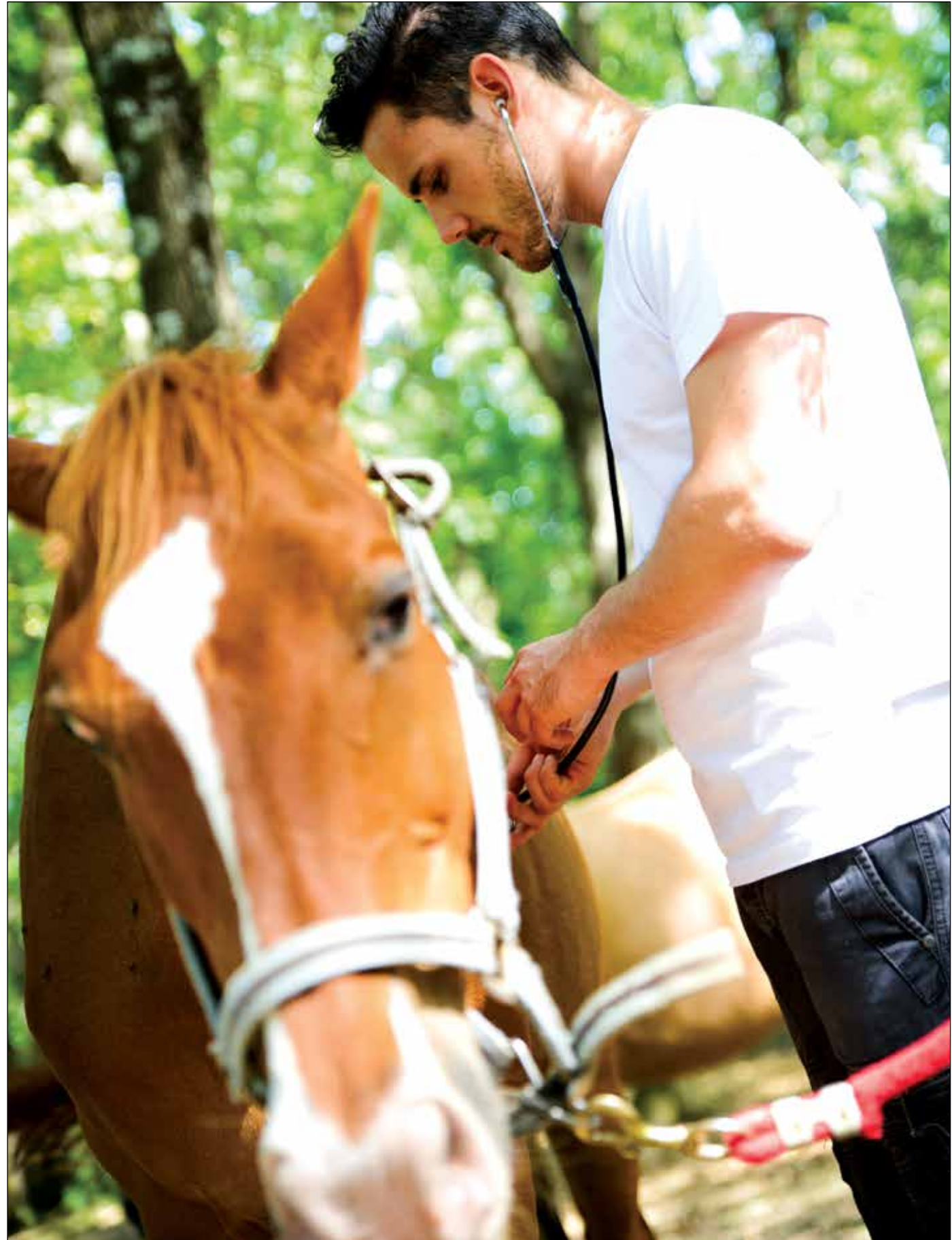
The AAEP identifies major warning signs of a gastric ulcer:

- Early cases can be signaled by poor appetite, decreased performance and a poor hair coat.
- Serious cases may show abdominal pain or teeth grinding.
- Some horses may spend more time on their backs since the position seems to provide relief.

PREVENTION & PROPER DIAGNOSIS

According to the AAEP, the only way to definitively diagnose ulcers is through gastroscopy. This process involves placing an endoscope into the stomach and looking at its surface. The endoscope is passed through the nostril and down the esophagus into the stomach, and it includes a light and camera on its end to allow observation of the lining.

There are some actions you can take to prevent most cases of gastric ulcers from occurring. The AAEP recommends limiting stressful situations and offering frequent feedings, if possible. Allowing free-choice access to grass and hay is usually enough to keep the horse's stomach full enough to stave off ulcers.



Keep Bugs Away

Taking care of pesky flies within your own facility is one thing. Doing the same while transporting your horses is another altogether.

A horse bothered by flies can be perturbed and difficult to manage. And no owner wants to battle dozens of flies to groom, feed or pet his horse.

Fortunately, there are some steps you can take to prevent flies from showing up in the first place and eliminate them. This will ensure optimal comfort for your horse's ride.

COMMON OFFENDERS

The house fly is the most common nemesis to your horse in transit. They feed and reproduce in manure, making them a regular sight around your horse.

Biting stable flies, or horse-flies, are also on the list of irritating fly species. While they are especially noticeable in the Midwest and Southeastern states, they are commonly found throughout North America. These types of flies not only cause an annoyance but also can deliver painful bites to your horses.

SMART PARKING

When arriving to your destination, look before you park. Choosing a spot near an untended pond or lake, or one with tall grasses, is asking for trouble. Flies and mosqui-



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toes favor these environments and will seek out your horse quickly.

When you are parked, consider using fans near your horses to discourage pests. Winds from fans can prevent them from making them-

selves comfortable.

OTHER TIPS

Flies are drawn to manure, wet spots and rotting vegetation. It is critical to frequently remove these items from in

and around your trailer. Regularly spraying down your trailer can be a great way to break the reproductive life cycle of flies, too.

And while not the preferred method of sustained prevention, many insecticides are

effective in keeping flies away in the short term without harming your horse or other animals.

Check with your local county agent or regulatory official for which insecticides are legal to use in your state.

Coat Care

Caring for your horse's coat requires a year-round commitment and a diligent handle on any warning signs of damage.

A horse's coat looks its best in the summer when it is sleek and shiny. If you'd like to keep it that way, there are some care tips to take in the winter, fall and spring to help you achieve this goal.

NATURAL COAT CYCLE

Horses usually shed their thinner summer coat near the end of the season, helping make way for the thicker hair that keeps them warm when the weather turns. Likewise horse owners will likely notice the winter coat shedding a few short months later to prepare for the warmer climate.

This cycle is based on day length, meaning the winter coat is stimulated by a reduction in daylight. Conversely, the summer coat is stimulated by increasing daylight.

BLANKETING

Owners who frequently blanket their horses are actually impacting this natural coat cycle. But this isn't always a bad thing. Horses that have been clipped, recently transported to a cold climate or are sick may require the additional warmth and protection of outerwear.

In general, horses with an adequate hair coat and with access to shelter probably do



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not need to be blanketed. Of course, consult your veterinarian for advice on blanketing for your particular horse.

DIET & GROOMING

Your horse's diet will have

the biggest effect on coat quality. A healthy balance of proteins, vitamins and minerals all contribute to the health of hair. Veterinarians recommend ample amounts of protein because deficiencies have been shown to

slow both hair growth and shedding — both vital to a healthy hair cycle.

In combination with diet, grooming contributes to a gleaming coat. It thoroughly removes all dirt and dead skin that holds a coat back

from shining. Professional groomers recommend vigorous rubbing for up to 30 minutes per day to help stimulate the natural production and distribution of the body's natural oils over the hair.

Economic Impact

Nine million and counting. That's how many horses live in the United States.

And with more than 4 million Americans involved in the equine industry as horse owners, service providers, employees and volunteers — not to mention the more than 10 million participating as event spectators — horses are major business in this country.

What makes horses great to own is their versatility. Here are their most common purposes, according to a recent study by the American Horse Council, which also uncovered the fact that 9.2 million horses are in the U.S.

- Racing: 844,000
- Showing: 2.7 million
- Recreation: 3.9 million
- Other: 1.7 million

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The council's study results show that the industry directly produces goods and services of \$38.8 billion and has a total impact of \$101.5 billion on the U.S. economy. And that lofty total is probably an understatement. Consider all of the off-site spending that spectators partake in when they're visiting a city for a show, and the economic impact is much greater.

Racing, showing and recreation each contribute between \$10.5 and \$12 billion to the total value of goods and services produced by the industry.

BY THE NUMBERS

One out of every 63 Americans is involved with horses, according to the council's study. Some other facts:

- 238,000 owners involved in breeding
- 481,000 involved in competing
- 1.1 million involved in other activities
- 119,000 service providers
- 702,000 employees
- 2 million family members and volunteers

