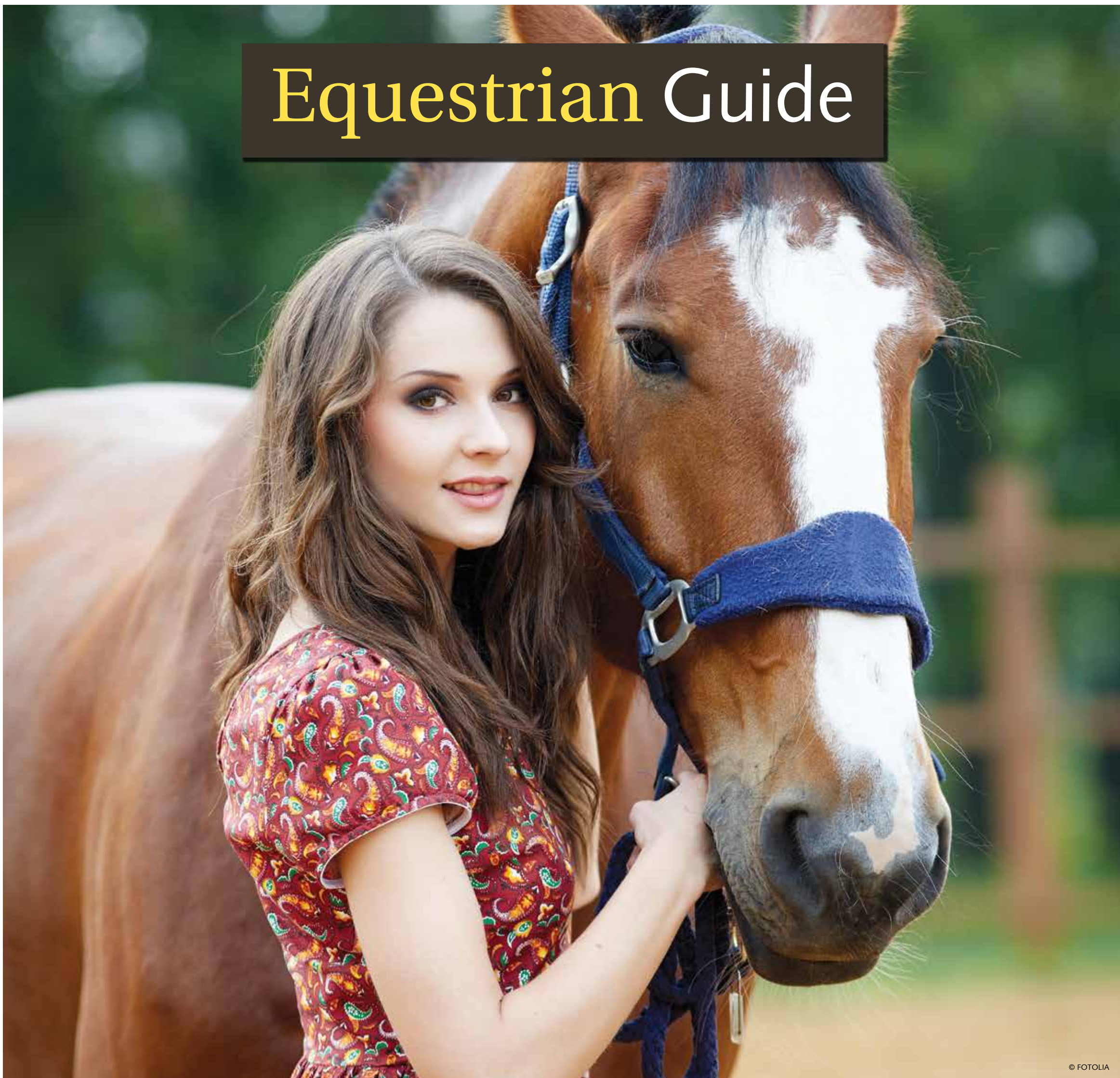


# Equestrian Guide





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# Pasture Management

**M**anaging a well-developed grazing system for your horses is one of the best ways to provide them with good nutrition and care.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, through the United States Department of Agriculture, asserts that well-managed pastures also protect and preserve our natural resources by reducing soil erosion and the pollution of ground water.

## PROS AND CONS OF GRAZING

Good-quality pastures have great advantages to your farm and the overall health of your animal. They include:

- **Pro:** Grazing is one of the best and inexpensive methods of feeding horses.

- **Pro:** Grazing allows horses to be out in the sunshine and fresh air and gives them an opportunity for some added exercise.

Without proper maintenance and management, grazing can have serious adverse affects:

- **Con:** There are many plants that are poisonous to horses, if eaten. Diligent attention must be paid to the

types of forage in your pastures.

- **Con:** Horses can become malnourished by deep greens. Lush forage is often high in water and low in fiber, creating imbalanced nutrition.

## ROTATIONAL GRAZING

It is important that the plants in your pasture are grazed often. However, horses can be picky eaters and play favorites with vegetation. To better control grazing, split your pastures into paddocks

— smaller fenced areas — and rotate your horses between them.

By doing so, you allow healthy forage plants an opportunity to regrow. Remember as you divide your pasture into smaller sections to ensure that water sources for each paddock are established. Horses should not have to travel more than a few hundred feet for water.

## MANAGE YOUR MANURE

Large clumps of manure are

the most common cause of spotty pasture growth, and horses will not graze where clumps of manure exist. Scattering manure piles is not only appreciated by the horses, but it help the pasture by distributing nutrients.

Dragging manure also can reduce parasitic problems by exposing them to sunlight. Just be sure to only drag a pasture when it is not occupied and that it remains unoccupied for a few weeks before returning the horses to it.

# When Disaster Strikes

The Humane Society of the United States sites barn fires as the leading disaster for horses and horse owners.

Taking preventative measures and being prepared for when and if disaster strikes can mean the difference between life and death for your animals.

It is essential that horse owners know the danger of fires and how to safely deal with them.

## FIRE PREVENTION

Engine heat can cause a flame, which is why it is important not to park tractors or other vehicles in or around the barn. Appliances should be kept at a minimum for the same reason.

Fans and space heaters should only be used when someone is in the barn. Be sure to conduct routine checks of your barn's electrical system.

Barns are not only cozy for your horses but for all manner of rodents, as well. Rodents like to chew through electrical wiring, creating a fire hazard.

## FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Being prepared for a fire is often inexpensive and can save valuable time if you need to evacuate the barn. At



a minimum, you should mount fire extinguishers in multiple locations around the barn.

Keep all aisles, stall doors and barn doors unblocked. Not only is it important to keep equipment picked up and in its proper place, but these areas also should be swept clean of debris.

## HAVE AN EVACUATION PLAN

Even when necessary precautions are taken, accidents can happen. This is why it is crucial to discuss and design an evacuation plan for your barn. In the event of a fire, immediately call your local emergency services or 911.

Your evacuation plan

should include evacuation routes for every stall in the barn. Make sure the location where you intend to hold your horse or horses won't be affected by the fire, or allow them to re-enter the barn.

Even if the fire is small, it is smart to call your veterinarian to check out each horse after the fire is extinguished.

Smoke inhalation is dangerous, potentially causing respiratory complications or lung damage.

Finally, make sure everyone on the property or in your family is familiar with the evacuation plan. You can never be certain who will have to initiate and execute it in the event of a fire.

# An Ancient Relationship

**H**umans and horses have a long, deeply connected relationship. This has led to the evolution of the horse as an animal of honor in many cultures.

In the equine sports world, it is not uncommon for owners to spend tens of thousands of dollars on their prized possessions — and a substantial amount of time pampering and caring for them, as well.

## HOW WE SHAPE HORSES

Through domestication, humans have shaped and honed horses' behaviors in many ways, the most notable being breeding. Horses that are domesticated do not choose their own mate but are bred with specific attributes in mind.

Humans have bred horses over the years for many reasons, but primarily to make them faster or stronger. No other animal has made such significant contributions to human civilization as the horse — due in large part to how we have defined their roles and key attributes.

## HOW HORSES SHAPE US

Horses have changed the way we live, the way we work, and the way we travel and play. When horses were first used in warfare, the balance of power changed between civilizations. The American Museum of Natural History asserts that for more than 1,000 years, people have relied on the power of horses to achieve their own ends.

Horses do far more for us emotionally now, than socially or politically.



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Today, in many instances, people view their horses as pets rather than livestock and become emotionally attached. This is underscored by the fact that the majority of horse owners do not raise any other livestock, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

## AMERICA'S WILD HORSES

Horses have roamed free in the American West since they were brought over by the Spanish 500 years ago. However, their numbers are dwindling.

According to the Smithsonian Institute, there are approximately 60,000 free-roaming horses in the

United States and Canada combined. While it is impossible to ascertain an exact number, the Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust estimates that fewer than 48,000 horses and 10,000 burros remain on the 31 million acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

# The Triple Crown

The Triple Crown, or the Triple Crown of Thoroughbred Racing, is comprised of three races: The Kentucky Derby, run at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ken.; the Preakness Stakes, run at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore, Md.; and the Belmont Stakes, run at Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y. Winning all three races in the same year is considered the highest achievement in the sport of horse racing.

## TRIPLE CROWN WINNERS

There have only been 12 Triple Crown winners in the history of the triad.

- 2015 — American Pharoah
- 1978 — Affirmed
- 1977 — Seattle Slew
- 1973 — Secretariat
- 1948 — Citation
- 1946 — Assault
- 1943 — Count Fleet
- 1941 — Whirlaway
- 1937 — War Admiral
- 1935 — Omaha
- 1930 — Gallant Fox
- 1919 — Sir Barton

However, others have come close. There have also been 23 instances where a horse has won the first two of the three races, only coming up short in the last leg.

## WHY THE TRIPLE CROWN IS SO HARD TO WIN

Before American Pharoah earned the Triple Crown in 2015, it had been 36 years since a horse had won the title. At least a dozen horses since 1978 have won the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness, only to fall short at the Belmont Stakes.

While sports experts can't seem to pinpoint exactly why this happens, there are a few theories.

- **Endurance:** Belmont is big, with a very long track.



Many horses have never raced that distance (one-and-a-half miles), and aren't bred for distance racing.

- **Sand:** Belmont Park is sandier than most tracks, due to the mixture of rain and humidity in the area. The park is even nicknamed, "the Big

Sandy."

- **Modern training:** Through several interviews in a feature piece on the sport, National Public Radio has alluded to horse training schedules, and the idea that they might not be as intense as they used to be.

## TRIPLE CROWN FAST FACTS

- Secretariat, the 1973 Triple Crown winner, is the only non-human to ever appear on ESPN's 100 Greatest Athletes of the Twentieth Century.

- The Triple Crown was not referred to as "The Triple

Crown" until the 1930s. The term was coined by New York Times sportswriter Charles Hatton.

- There were five years where betting on the Belmont Stakes was a coin toss, with only two horses in the field: 1887, 1892, 1910 and 1920.

# Be a Successful Rider

**L**earning how to ride a horse — or become a better rider — takes hard work and time, but remembering the following tips will help you along in the process.

To be a successful rider, keep in mind the advice below:

**DON'T** worry about things outside of your control: the weather, judges, other competitors or onlookers, other horses. These are things you can't do anything about, and wasting energy worrying about them is just that: wasteful. Spend that energy instead focusing on your form and listening to your horse.

**DO** relax. If you are nervous, your horse will pick up on it. Also consider the world from your horse's perspective. If you can imagine what it must be like to have a bit in your mouth or a saddle on your back, you will begin to think of horses in a different way.

**DON'T** make excuses. Ever.

**DO** hire a trainer. There's no way to know it all by yourself, and this is true of almost everything. Trainers, coaches, veterinarians — these people are able and willing to help you and your horse. Accept the help. Encourage the help.

**DON'T** hire a trainer just to stroke your own ego. A successful rider is interested in where they can improve, and the only way to learn is to be shown what you need to correct. Also consider working with different trainers. Know when you have reached the point of learning all they can teach you, and move forward with another.



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**DON'T** expect immediate results. Learning takes time, for both you and your horse. Gift yourself the patience and wisdom to accept this.

**DO** listen to yourself. While

surrounding yourself with experts can be great, remember that you know yourself (and your horse) best. Listen to advice, but you don't have to put all of it into practice.

Discern what will work best for you.

**DO** ride as much as possible. Because improvement takes time, riding as frequently as you can will bring you closer to

your goals. If you don't own a horse of your own, there are other ways to maximize your saddle time, such as volunteering to ride horses in need of exercise.

# Help a Horse

Horses need a lot of care and attention. Equine rescues and sanctuaries do their best and wouldn't be successful without generous help from others.

If horses hold a special place in your heart, consider donating what you can — whether your donation is in the form of your money, your time or a temporary home.

## FOSTER A HORSE

Fostering a horse is a great way to help a horse in need. Equine rescues and sanctuaries are often operating at full capacity, and fostering gives a horse a safe “home.”

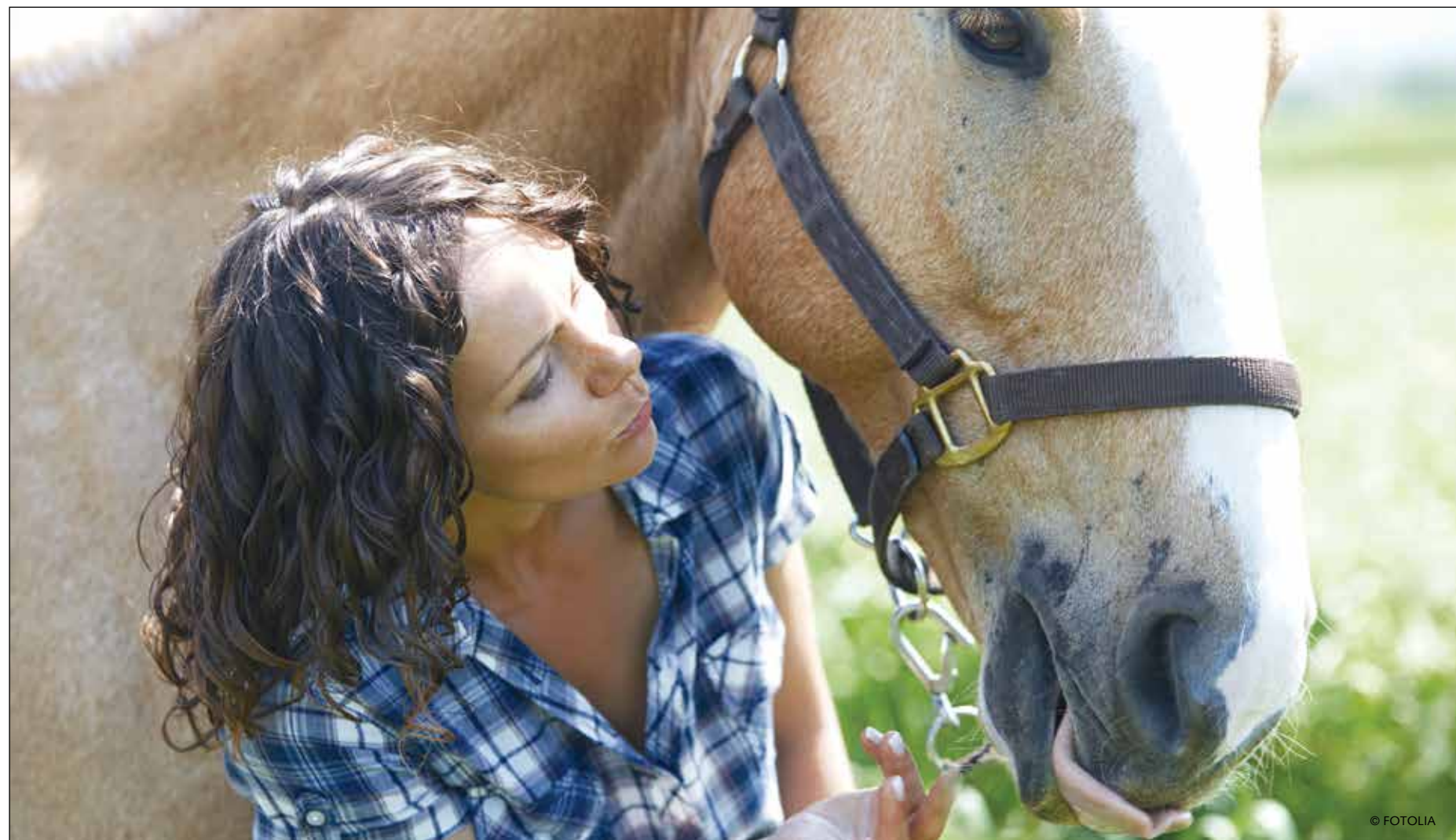
Most foster programs allow people to foster horses up to the point of adoption. However, you also can become a sanctuary foster home for older horses or horses with permanent disabilities, or rehabilitate emaciated or injured horses, if qualified to do so through vet licensure or prior rehab experience.

## VOLUNTEER

Many rescue farms and “safe house” farms rely on volunteers to help coordinate care and fundraising for horses. A few ways to volunteer:

- **Farm work.** Feeding, cleaning, grooming, riding: There is no end to the chores on a horse farm.

- **Yard work.** There are other ways to get your hands dirty that have less to do with the horses and more to do with their home. Most habitat farms strive to look as attractive as



possible to potential adopters and donors. This includes keeping the front lawn mowed and manicured.

- **Fundraising:** Farms are continuously looking for new ways to raise funds. Extra hands are always needed at events. Don't be shy to offer suggestions. Anything from organizing a potluck to a golf scramble will most often not

only be considered but welcomed. Put your personal interests and connections to good use, and be creative with fundraising ideas.

- **Grant writing:** If you have the experience and a passion for the cause, this is your gig.

- **Marketing and public relations:** Help spread the word and brag about the great work these sanctuaries do.

## MAKE A DONATION

There are many farms and organizations that count on every penny, and most of these donations are tax deductible. Also don't discount a donation of supplies or services. Blankets, halters, lead ropes, treats and many other supplies are always in high demand.

If you desire a more personal touch, consider sponsor-

ship. Many organizations, including [equinevoices.org](http://equinevoices.org) and [savethehorses.org](http://savethehorses.org), offer sponsorship programs, so you can be sure your donations are being used exclusively for the sponsored horse. You also will be sent a picture of the horse you are sponsoring, and sometimes a small gift of appreciation, such as a horsehair key chain.

# Learn Something New

Horses are beautiful creatures that have been around for thousands of years. While some of the things we know about horses are commonplace, other pieces of information are more unique. Enjoy these 10 pieces of horse trivia.

1. Horses have nearly 360-degree vision, due to their eyes being more on the sides of their heads.

2. According to Equinest, a horse's brain weighs about half that of a human's at approximately 22 oz.

3. The Chronical of the Horse states that the easiest way to tell if a horse is cold is to feel behind its ears. If that part is cold, so is the horse.

4. According to National Geographic, there is only one species of domestic horse, but it is comprised of more than 400 different breeds.

5. As a general rule, wherever a horse points its ears is where the horse is looking. If the ears are pointed in different directions, the horse is probably looking at two different things at the same time. The United States Department of Agriculture affirms that horses are able to do this due to their "monocular" vision — or, being able to see a different image out of each eye.

6. Horses also have the largest eyes of any land mammal, according to Horse and Hound. They also have a third eyelid.

7. Once a domesticated horse is released into the wild, it sheds all traces of domestication very rapidly.

8. Horses have very good memories. Evelyn Hanggi,



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co-director at the Equine Research Foundation, said according to multiple studies, horses can recognize and complete tasks that were learned a decade prior with a nearly per-

fect level of accuracy without having to relearn the skill.

9. Horses cannot breathe through their mouths, burp or vomit. This uni-directional aspect of their digestive sys-

tems often makes horses prone to colic.

10. White horses are not born white. They are born darker and gradually turn white. This is why more horses

are not white but gray. The only exception to this are rare Camarillo white horses, which are white from birth and remain white throughout their lives.