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Pre-Purchase Examination ("Vetting") of Horses

What Does a Vetting Involve?

We "Vet" horses according to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and British Veterinary Association guidelines.

The standard "vetting" is a 5-stage examination taking approximately 2 hours. The 5 stages - are:-

- 1) Preliminary Examination - Heart, lungs, teeth, eyes, skin, scars/blemishes etc.
- 2) Trotting up & flexion tests - For any signs of lameness or abnormality in gait.
- 3) Ridden exercise - including walk, trot & canter on both reins.
- 4) Strenuous exercise - to test the wind & heart.
- 5) Second trot-up and foot examination - to check if exercise has induced any lameness.

For cheaper horses, it is possible to do a "stage 1 & 2 vetting" only. This takes about an hour. If you opt for this examination you must be aware that there may be problems with the horse that would show up on a 5-stage "vetting" that could not be detected on the stage 1 & 2 only examination.

A certificate is issued after the examination which lists the findings and gives an opinion as to whether the horse is suitable or not for the intended purpose. This certificate may be required for insurance purposes.

How Much Does It Cost?

The standard 5 stage vetting cost £150 + VAT

A stage 1 & 2 only vetting costs £90 +VAT

Our standard visit charge is £29.00+VAT

To visit a premises over 20 miles from our Great Harwood office, a mileage charge of 60p per mile is added for each mile over the 20 miles.

Additional procedures such as X-ray's and endoscopy will involve further charges.

If we abandon the examination because we find early on that the horse is not suitable, you will be charged according to the length of time spent.

Payment is normally required at the time of the examination unless you already have an account with us.

What is NOT covered in a Vetting?

The full 5-stage "Vetting" is an in-depth investigation of the horse's health, however it will only reveal disorders present on the day of examination and it is not a warranty as to the future health of the horse.

Some of the early changes associated with conditions such as navicular disease, ring bone, sidebone and arthritis are simply not detectable by observation and palpation. For this reason, you may wish to have x-rays taken in addition to the standard examination. These are recommended for particularly valuable horses or those being used for strenuous competitive work.

Some conditions may only become apparent at certain times of year or in certain environments. For example, it may not be possible to detect a horse with sweet itch during the winter months or a horse with a stable dust allergy if he has been kept outside.

The examination does not involve a height measurement or a fertility examination in mares. We do not give a valuation on the horse and although we may comment on his temperament, it is up to you to make sure that the horse is well suited to your level of confidence and ability.

The "vetting" certificate does not certify that the horse is free from vices and it is recommended to ask the vendor to sign a warranty stating that the horse has no vices and is good to clip, catch, shoe, transport etc.

A blood sample is taken at all vettings. The blood is stored so that it can be tested for certain drugs if you have any suspicion that the horse may have been on medication when he was examined. The blood can be sent directly for testing if you wish, but this costs around £100.

How Do I Arrange a Vetting?

First, try the horse thoroughly. If you are not experienced with horses, it is sensible to take someone with you who is. Try to arrange a two week trial at the end of which you may either pay the agreed sum or return the horse if he doesn't turn out to be everything you thought he was (Remember to sort out insurance and a contract beforehand).

Decide whether you require the standard 5-stage vetting or the cheaper alternative and whether you would like X-rays or any other investigations. Please feel free to call us if you wish to discuss these options.

Write a list of any concerns you have after trying the horse (Such as lumps, swellings etc)

In order to do the vetting properly, we need a good level hard surface on which to trot the horse up and down and a suitable area for ridden exercise including a fast canter or gallop. If these facilities are not available where the horse is kept, you will need to arrange for the examination to be done at a more suitable site (By hiring an indoor arena if necessary).

Ring our surgery on 01254 888600 to arrange a suitable date and time for the examination. Vettings are done on weekdays between 9am and 4pm. Remember it takes around two hours to complete a standard "vetting".

When arranging the examination, we need to know:

- Your name, address and telephone number
- The name address and telephone number of the person selling the horse,
- Details of the horse (Name, age, sex, colour, and breed),
- Where the examination will take place (including directions)
- What activities you intend to use him for and how much you are paying,
- Any concerns you have after trying him.

For legal reasons, we need to obtain written permission from the vendor to carry out vettings on horses that have been treated by the practice in the past.

If you require any further information, please call us on 01254 888600

J D Aldington MRCVS

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