



ONTARIO
EQUESTRIAN
FEDERATION

Be a responsible horse owner!

Owning a horse can be a fun and rewarding experience, but you need to do some long-term planning to ensure you are prepared to make the commitment.

Being a responsible owner involves much more than ensuring your horse has adequate food, water and shelter. Meeting the basic needs of your horse is the most obvious of your responsibilities, but those aren't your only duties as a responsible owner. In fact, your responsibility begins before you even purchase a horse. You must think carefully and plan accordingly instead of letting your emotions influence your decisions. Otherwise, that horse you dreamed of owning could become unwanted because it doesn't fit your needs, lifestyle or budget.

Just because you can afford the purchase price of a horse, do you have the financial resources to care for it? Are you prepared for unforeseen emergency costs? Do you have a plan in place if you were to lose your job? What will become of your horse if you lose interest? Horses often become unwanted because their owners are no longer able to afford them or are unwilling or incapable of caring for them. Choosing a horse that matches your goals, riding skills and temperament can also ensure that the horse you buy isn't left looking for a home because it's unsuitable for your needs.

While no horse owner likes to think of losing their equine partner, the reality is that injuries can occur that may impair your horse's ability to do the job you purchased it to do. A responsible horse owner thinks about the unexpected and devises a plan. Perhaps there is a less demanding job your horse could do if he becomes injured, or maybe a farm where he could live out his days. What is your plan to find a new home for your horse if you are no longer able to keep it for whatever reason?

A responsible horse owner also looks to the future – sometimes several decades into the future. With improved nutrition and advances in equine medicine, it's not uncommon for horses to live to be upwards of 30 years old, which means long-term planning is necessary to ensure their well-being. As a responsible owner, are you prepared to commit to the long-term care of your horse? If you aren't prepared to keep your horse through its golden years, what is your plan to ensure it has a home that will care for its needs and ensure it is euthanized humanely when the time comes?

Being a responsible horse owner also means planning for your own unexpected injury, illness or death that could leave your horse's future in question. Have you made arrangements to ensure your horse is cared for if you were to suddenly become incapacitated, or worse?

Every horse owner owes it to their equine partner to ensure its needs will always be met and that it will be treated humanely, with dignity and respect, throughout its life. Please be a responsible horse owner. We all play a role in preventing horses from becoming unwanted.