



#### The Cost of Horse Ownership

With the number of “free” adoptable horses and “bargain” sale horses on the rise, it is easy to get caught up in the allure of owning a horse. However, the cost of acquiring a horse is the cheapest part of horse ownership. The annual cost of owning a horse is estimated at \$3,600 (not including board), but if the horse becomes sick or injured, or requires special care, the costs can quickly rise. Owning and caring for a horse has many rewards, but it is important to understand the costs before taking on the responsibility of horse ownership. In addition to the financial burden of horse ownership, a great deal of time is required for daily care, exercise and farm maintenance.

#### Average Costs for Horse Care

- Board (Full care)- \$400 to \$1,500+ per month
- Board (Self care or field board)- \$100-\$300 per month
- Hay- \$300 per year (with 2 acres pasture per horse) \$600 per year (less than 2 acres pasture per horse)
- Feed- \$600 to \$1,200+ per year (depending on nutrient requirements of horse)
- Hoof care- \$30 to 75 for trimming; \$75-\$300 for shoeing (every 6 weeks)
- Dental Care- \$150 to \$250 per year
- Deworming and Fecal Exams- \$50 to \$100 per year
- Vaccinations- \$100 to \$150 per year
- Coggins Testing- \$50 per year

#### Consider Leasing or Riding Lessons

Adults and youth new to horses should consider taking lessons and/or leasing a horse from a reputable professional stable before

jumping into horse ownership. Taking riding lessons not only creates competent riders, but it also builds horse management skills necessary for future horse ownership. The cost of riding lessons are variable, but typically range from \$25 to \$100 per hour depending on if they are group or private, and level of instruction. In the long run, leasing a horse is an inexpensive alternative to ownership. All types of horses can be leased from those suitable for beginners to advanced riders. Horses are generally leased for one year at 10% their sale value plus all expenses. Some stables will lease horses for cost of care and lessons only. Leasing is especially beneficial for youth that may become disinterested in horses or outgrow their current mount. Leasing is also an attractive option for adults before committing to horse ownership. It's important to make sure there is a lease contract and the terms are clear to protect all parties involved.

#### Tips for Finding a Trainer and Riding Stable

- Level of instruction should be matched with rider's goals
- Be clear on rider's goals with the trainer
- What is the primary discipline and goals of the trainer
- Ask other equine professionals or experts for recommendations
- Visit multiple facilities and schedule an appointment with the trainer
- The barn should be neat and tidy
- The horses should be well cared for and in good condition
- How many and what type of horses are available for lessons
- What are the barn hours and lesson time availability