



PREPURCHASE EXAMINATIONS IN HORSES

WHAT ARE THEY? Prepurchase examinations are where a *perspective buyer* of a horse commissions a qualified Veterinarian to examine the horse *prior to purchase* to see if there is any abnormality detectable with the horse which may influence the buyer's decision to buy the horse, or, in some instances, allow price negotiation.

Prepurchase examinations **can only be commissioned by the purchaser**, *never* the vendor, and is only useful prior to purchase.

WHO DOES THEM? In our practice, Veterinarians who are members of Equine Veterinarians Australia (EVA), and have more expertise in horses, do our prepurchase examinations. In most instances, it is preferred that, when a client of our practice is the vendor, the buyer uses another Veterinary Practice to avoid a "conflict of interest".

WHAT IS INVOLVED? We use EVA preprinted duplicate forms and follow a careful and systematic approach. The first step is to discuss in detail with the buyer, usually by phone or email, what their specific requirements are, as this will change from case to case. We then email or FAX a form for the buyer to fill out, which has details of the Vendor, horse, and allows the buyer to indicate any particular areas they want examined. (See Equine Prepurchase Examination – Purchaser Instructions). After the examination is completed and payment is processed, a phone report is given, which often involves detailed discussion about the findings, and this is followed up with a written report.

HOW LONG DOES THE EXAMINATION TAKE?

For most horses destined to be involved with moderate level equestrian pursuits, and not high intensity exercise, the examination usually takes about one and a half hours.

The horse is always carefully identified, and a description drawn as part of the report. Next involves a detailed examination of all body systems at rest, including: eyes, mouth, teeth, nostrils, respiratory system, digestive system, neck, back and limbs, nervous system, and skin. Particular attention is paid to hoof quality and condition. The horse's temperament is taken into account also.

The horse is then examined moving in different gaits, which is determined depending on facilities, the intended purpose for the horse, the buyer's requirements, and the level of fitness of the horse.

We require an able bodied person to assist with managing the horse, which will involve trotting out under lead several times, and so being able, and fit, to run with the horse is essential. Sometimes we require the horse to be ridden.

There are extra areas of examination for stallions and broodmares, and, as is discussed with the buyer, extra procedures like Xrays, ultrasounds, endoscopes, and others may be undertaken if required or indicated.

GYMPIE VETERINARY SERVICES

ABN: 16 069 376 370



PERFORMANCE HORSES - For horses involved in high intensity exercise and competition, we often require them to be worked under saddle and have an extra examination after a cool down period of rest, and this will require a second visit some hours later, and extra cost.

How detailed we can examine any horse is often limited by the conditions we work in, and the fitness level of the horse.

WHY GET A PREPURCHASE EXAMINATION DONE?

As a buyer, most people want certainty about what they are paying their hard earned money for. Unless you have the expertise and experience to carry out a detailed examination of all the horse's body systems, you may not notice something about the horse you intend to buy. Once you pay for your horse, there is no comeback – the old adage applies: "*Buyer beware*".

We have experienced many instances where a client has asked us to look at a horse which they have recently purchased without a prepurchase examination and discovered that the horse is not the age the buyers were told they were, or has a problem which we would have detected during our examination, and which makes the horse not suitable for their purpose. One horse looked at had 3 loose permanent teeth, one of which was severely damaging the horse's gums. Another, an ex-racehorse, had chronic feet problems which it never recovered from, but would have been detected at a prepurchase examination.

Conversely, during a prepurchase examination on a high level competition horse conducted here, the horse was found to have cataracts and greatly reduced vision, in spite of competing at a high level – this was detected during the eye examination and saved the buyer from paying \$50,000 for a nearly blind horse!

Because our Veterinarians have had detailed University training, spend most of their days examining horses for clients (and have done so for many years), and regularly update their knowledge by attending conferences and workshops, we have the expertise required to help you, the buyer, decide if your horse has any condition which may affect your decision to buy.

As Veterinarians, we get a small window of time to examine horses on a buyers behalf, and having a thorough and systematic approach is the only way to ensure that, during that examination, any problem or abnormality can be detected. Our job is to present the facts to the buyer, and advise as is prudent, but the result is never a "Pass or Fail". The final decision is up to the buyer.

Finally, remember, only Prepurchase Examinations commissioned by the buyer can have any credence, and we are legally obligated to only conduct examinations on behalf of the buyer. If you are thinking of buying a horse, think "Prepurchase Examination". It may save you a lot of money and heartache.

Dr Steve Dennis, BVSc(Hons), MACVSc(EqMed)