



Canadian Society for the Andalusian Horse

Dedicated to the welfare of the Andalusian Horse in Canada
www.CanadianAndalusian.org – canadianandalusianhorse@gmail.com

OWNING RESPONSIBLY

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.

It is the job of every individual involved in horses to learn to own horses responsibly. What does that mean... "to own responsibly"? It means many things but, essentially, it means that before you buy or adopt a horse, you understand how it affects you and the horse, both in the present and in the future. To own responsibly means that you, as that horse's owner and provider, understand and consider all options available to your horse including sale, lease, donation, adoption, retirement, and alternative programs and uses. It means that you consider end-of-life decisions, including veterinary care, euthanasia, and disposal, before that time comes. It means you understand that there are day-to-day tasks of owning a horse, that you must have the desire and passion for learning all things 'horse' on a continuous basis, that you 'give back' to your horse and provide the long, comfortable life your horse deserves.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BUYING/ADOPTING

- Choose a horse that matches your goals, riding skills and temperament. This ensures that the horse you buy isn't left looking for a home because it's unsuitable for your needs.
- What happens if there is an injury? 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 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



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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.

Costs of Keeping a Horse

Horses most often become unwanted because their owners are no longer able to afford them or are unwilling or incapable of caring for them. 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? The two tables below are from a 2011 Equine Canada survey and give an estimate on how much it costs to keep a pleasure horse per year as well as per province. Of course, if you plan on showing or competing, these costs rise substantially.

Products & Services Purchased for the Care of Horses -- PLEASURE RIDING Sector	Average Expenditure per Horse
Hay	\$455
Horse Feed	\$184
Bedding	\$145
Feed Supplements	\$95
Grooming & Horse Care Products	\$105
Veterinary Services & Prescription Drugs	\$148
Farrier Services	\$312
Horse Dental Care	\$115
Horse Therapy Services	\$241
TOTALS	\$1,800



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Average Monthly Costs	CANADA	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL
Avg. Annual Cost to Keep a Horse	\$2,700	\$2,346	\$2,532	\$1,189	\$1,021	\$3,804	\$2,665	\$2,215	\$2,400	\$2,268	\$3,288
Avg. Monthly Cost	\$225	\$196	\$211	\$99	\$85	\$317	\$222	\$185	\$200	\$189	\$274
Avg. Monthly Charge for Boarding Services	\$307	\$356	\$334	\$127	\$306	\$335	\$225	\$279	\$296	\$324	\$159

The average life span of a light horse ranges between 20-30 years with 24 years being average. So, if you take the above costs and multiply by 24, you will see that keeping a horse over their lifespan is a big investment. Granted, you don't spend all that money at once but it is worth considering the total cost. Are you prepared to care for a horse for that many years?

Horses are an on-going expense - can you afford it?

Your Time

We all love being with our horses on those sunny warm days when the birds are chirping and the sky is blue. But owning a horse also means having to venture out on those not so nice days, too. One of the major reasons owners sell their horses is because of a lack of time to spend with them. Are you certain you can spare the time? Plan to spend at least an hour a day with your horse just for general everyday chores and caremore for anything else. If your horse is kept in a stall all day, you must exercise them daily – that takes even more of your time.

Can you spare it?

Knowledge

Do you have a basic knowledge of horse care, feeding, and equine behavior? Despite the countless books, magazines, and websites available with tips and ideas for managing a horse, there is a set of knowledge and skills that you must have to care for a horse on your own.

Do you know how to do this?

Alternative to Buying/Adopting

Think about this: You can take 10 riding lessons or trail rides each month for less than boarding your own horse at many barns. That's three rides a week with no other commitments, costs, or spare time to worry about.

Although, owning a horse can be a very joyful and rewarding experience, it is also hard work. Those of us experienced and dedicated folks that own horses cannot think about being without them, however, it is not for everyone. Please consider all the above suggestions carefully before owning/adopting.

Sources:

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