

FACT SHEET

Pre-Purchase Examinations



The Equine Veterinary Clinic advises that all clients wishing to purchase a horse or pony carry out a full pre-purchase examination - otherwise known as a 5-stage vetting. This entails the following:

Stage 1: Preliminary examination

The horse is scanned for a microchip, and its identity and age checked against the passport. General appearance, condition and conformation are assessed. Heart and lungs are auscultated. Eyes are examined with an ophthalmoscope. The body and limbs are examined for any abnormalities. Limb joints are flexed to detect any pain or restriction of movement.

Stage 2: Trotting up

The horse is then walked and trotted on hard, level ground and assessed for lameness. This is followed by lunging on a small circle. If any abnormalities are detected that may influence the decision to purchase, including if the horse is lame, then the examination is stopped at this point and the findings discussed with the purchaser.

Stage 3: Strenuous exercise

The horse is ridden and examined for lameness and fitness. Its breathing is assessed and any irregular respiratory sounds noted. Untrained animals or those too young or small to be ridden can be lunged,

Stage 4: Period of rest

Breathing and heart rate are monitored during recovery from exercise. The horse's identification will be completed, including the name, colour, breed, sex, age and markings.

Stage 5: Second trot up

The horse is then walked and trotted on hard, level ground and re-assessed for lameness. Flexion tests are performed on each leg in turn. The horse is turned sharply made to step back a few paces. Finally a blood sample is taken and sent to the Horserace Forensic Laboratory where it is stored for 6 months.

It is advisable, wherever possible, for the purchaser to be present at the vetting. If this is not possible the vet will telephone you with a verbal report of the findings and a written certificate of examination will be subsequently issued. Please note that, if you are intending taking out insurance, you should be satisfied that appropriate cover can be obtained prior to completing the purchase. This may require sending the pre-purchase examination certificate to your insurer.

N.B. The above is for illustration purposes only. Each individual vet may change the sequence of the exam and add/omit procedures as they see fit. Each vetting is tailored to the intended use of the horse being purchased.