

SELLING A HORSE OR PONY~Things to Consider.

Over the years PHHWV volunteers have seen many horses moved on to unsuitable homes and in many cases the horse's welfare has become compromised. The purpose of this educational material is for horse owners to stop and think about what sort of home is appropriate for their horse instead of entertaining the notion of making a quick dollar or finding an easy way out.

Introduction

Unlike cats and dogs the majority of horses change ownership many times throughout their lives. There can be many reasons for finding a new home for your horse or pony and it is very important that responsible horse owners are totally honest about the reason why they need to find their horse a new home. PHHWV receives calls from people who have bought a horse that was not what they were told it would be. Many of these owners have had nasty accidents as a result of this and just want the horse gone; and understandably they also want to recoup the cost they paid for the horse. As a result they sell it on to another unsuspecting buyer and the vicious circle begins. Then there are the calls from the person who felt pressured to take the "Free Horse" or very cheap horse at the time to stop it going to the knackery and they really didn't want it in the first place.

Please take a moment to consider the horse in all of this; what about its welfare? What sort of life will it lead going from home to home every six to twelve months? What if the new owner couldn't care less about what they paid for it and decide to run it through the sales yards or simply leave it unattended in a paddock to die?

PHHWV often receive calls from people who want to give their horse away. These horses usually fall into three main categories: the younger horses that are injured, have ongoing soundness issues, horses that have behaviour problems; and the old horses that can no longer be ridden and paying to keep this kind of horse is no longer viable in the owners eyes. Many of these owners have had these older horses for most of the horse's life and can't bear to put them off to sleep but are happy to give them away to the first person that comes along, without seriously considering the horses future welfare. Sadly, many of these horses end up being left for dead.

Be Realistic about your Options

It is important to keep the welfare of your horse at the forefront of your mind when deciding to find it a new home. Be honest and realistic as to why you need to find it a new home and how you will go about it.

Consider your options

You have Out Grown your Horse or Pony

Consider the size and breed of your horse or pony and contact the relevant breed societies or equestrian groups for interested homes. You are more likely to have success with people the hold a similar interest.

You are Changing Riding Disciplines

Spread the word among your current discipline group to scout a serious owner and be sure to highlight your horses achievements.

Behavioural Problems

You might like to consider sending your horse to a professional trainer to re-work and/or sell on your behalf to the right person who can handle it. Remember, if you horse already has problems a quick sale could risk someone else's safety and the horses welfare.

Aged or un-sound Horse

Ask yourself if you should be moving your horse on or, as hard as it is, should you be making the tough decision and considering euthanasia. Potential owners should be informed that the horse they are considering is going to require more care and feed as the years go on and most likely, without the benefits of being ridden. If your aged horse is a smaller, easy going pony you may wish to consider re-homing it as a companion horse.

Be Honest

If you do decide to find a new home for your horse and advertise your horse it is very important that you be honest in your advertisement and any enquires you receive about the horse. Make sure you disclose all the horses vices, if any; and what sort of home the horse needs. If the horse is to be sold as a riding horse offer a trial period where the horse is currently residing to make sure they are the right people for your horse.

If you are giving a horse away you need to be careful in the type of home you choose. Remember that buying a horse is the cheap part and there are plenty of people out there willing to take a "Free Horse". While most of these people have good intentions you need to make sure they are representing themselves honestly before allowing them to take your horse. Ask to visit where the horse will be living and what they want the horse for. Consider a lease arrangement for the first six to twelve months to be sure they are not merely taking the horse to sell it on and make a quick buck. Generally, honest people will not have a problem with a lease agreement or providing a reference. These lease agreements can be purchased from any large saddlery chain. You do run the risk of the horse being returned but this is a much better option than having it moved on, put through the sales or left to die. At least you have a say in its future.

Where to Advertise or Place your Horse

Word of Mouth

Many horses and ponies are sold by word of mouth. Useful reliable horses and ponies that have attended pony clubs and competitions are always sort after and generally someone in the club or other local groups will snap these horses up very quickly.

Print Publications

There are many forms of print publications from the local riding club Newsletter, Weekly Times, Trading Post, Local paper through to the monthly gloss magazine known as Horse Deals.

Web Sites

There are countless websites that you can advertise your horse for very little cost and include a photo with your ad. Advertising this way is instant as your ad is out for all to see immediately.

Wanted Ads

There are many ads in newspapers that are for people wanting to buy horses. Check these out very carefully as these can be for meat purposes.

Horse Dealers/Riding Schools

There are many people out there that make a living in buying and selling horses. Some run riding schools as part of their businesses. Look into these businesses very carefully and check these sorts of homes will suit your horse's needs.

Sale Yards

There are many horse sales held though out the year around the state; in places like Echuca, Pakenham, Bairnsdale, Colac, Kyneton. Many knackeries and horse dealers buy their horses at these sales. Payment received at these sales is minimal and this environment can be very stressful for your horse, especially if it is an aged horse.

Rescue Centres

Every year there seems to be more rescue centres being set up so it is very important that you check them out carefully. Make sure they are registered organisations. Make sure you are familiar with their re-homing policies i.e. do they sell the horses they take in or do they lease them? Do they keep track of the horses they on sell? How do they choose the homes horses are placed into? How long have they been in operation for? Can you visit your horse once they take it or find out how it is going?

Summary

Selling a horse can be a long drawn out process and one that should not be rushed out of convenience. As a responsible horse owner you need to keep the welfare of your horse first. If it means considering euthanasia for a horse that is aged or has an illness or injury that requires costly ongoing veterinary treatment then that is the responsible thing to do. Yes there is always someone willing to take the "Free Horse" but the PHHWV Volunteers see the other end of this in the cases they attend each year. In these cases where the new owner has little regard for the horse that was a much loved family pet in it last home. They don't have the bond or attachment that was formed over many years with the previous owner – to them it is just the "Free Horse" that is now a burden and left with an uncertain future and could have been prevented.

Keep in mind that when selling your horse you must be honest many sales have been brought before the Small Claims Court for misrepresentation in Victoria. This can be a very stressful and costly process for all parties concerned.

Resources

Horse Force company that produces legal contracts for Equine Industry
www.horseforce.com.au

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Please seek veterinary advice if your horse requires specific attention.**