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Questions to Ask a Prospective Trainer

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FACT SHEET

Department of Animal Science, University of Connecticut

Effective Horse Management - Third in the Horse Selection Series

Questions to ask a Prospective Trainer

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The role of a horse trainer is to prepare your horse for you so that the horse is safe and responsive to your cues. Trainers can work with a horse from a minimum of 30 days to a more extensive training period, depending on your training goals. Here is a list of questions you should ask when looking for a trainer. It is important that you are on the “same page” and you both agree on methodology.

1. How often is a horse in training worked at your facility?
 - a. How often will he be lunged?
 - b. How often will he be saddled and ridden?
 - c. What is the total training time in hours per week?
 - d. How are the horses cooled down after exercise?

2. Is instruction for me riding my horse included in the training price?
 - a. Can I drop in and watch you work my horse?
 - b. How many lessons per week are included in the training price?
 - c. Is there a discounted lesson rate for riders who have horses in training?

- d. After I take my horse home, if I have problems, will you help me? What charge will there be for this, if any?
3. What training aids do you use on a regular basis?
 - a. Do you headset lunge? If so how do you accomplish this?
 - b. What methods would you use with a horse that is misbehaving?
 - c. Do you use crops, spurs or whips? How do you use crops, spurs, and/or whips?
 - d. Do you use tie downs or martingales, side reins or draw reins?
 - e. Do you tie horses in their stalls?
4. How long will it take to accomplish my goals?
 - a. Are my goals realistic?
 - b. Will I be kept up-to-date on the progress of my horse?
 - c. Will you tell me if I (as a rider) am holding up my horse's training progress?
5. How is diet and free exercise managed at your facility?
 - a. What is the feeding schedule?
 - b. Do you feed supplements?
 - c. What brand of grain do you feed?
 - d. Where do you get your hay and how do you determine how much each horse gets?
 - e. How do you check feed quality?
 - f. Is there pasture opportunity and what is the turnout schedule? How long are horses turned out?
 - g. Are horses turned out together?
6. Do you have insurance to cover my horse while it is boarded and ridden at your farm?
 - a. Do you have a training/boarding contract?
7. How is routine health maintenance managed at your facility?
 - a. What is the required vaccination schedule?
 - b. What is the deworming protocol followed at the farm?
 - c. What farrier is used and often does the farrier visit?
 - d. Do you pay for cost of the above directly or through the trainer?
 - e. Can I select my own veterinarian or farrier?
8. What is your fee and payment requirements?

The key is to ask any question you feel needs an answer. Trainers are used to working with novice horse owners and they should answer all questions with patience and care. Just think – if he/she cannot make it through a list of questions, how patient will he/she be with you under saddle?

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