

# Equine Pre-Purchase Evaluation

Congratulations on your decision to purchase a new horse! At the University of Tennessee Veterinary Medical Center we follow particular guidelines when performing a pre-purchase evaluation. Prior to a pre-purchase evaluation, have an in-depth discussion with your veterinarian regarding your expectations for the horse. That discussion will enable your veterinarian to formulate a customized evaluation designed to provide you with pertinent information as you make the final decision whether to purchase the horse.

It is always best to schedule a pre-purchase evaluation at a time that you can be present to answer any questions your veterinarian may have.

## Basic pre-purchase evaluation:

- Complete physical exam
  - Looking for any signs of previous surgeries, injuries, or conformational issues
  - Checking the eyes
  - Listening to the heart and lungs
  - Checking the mouth for apparent congenital diseases or major dental problems
- Performing a gait analysis in an attempt to identify lameness
- Performing a limited neurologic evaluation while the horse is at rest and in motion

## Additional Options:

- **Upper Airway Endoscopy** – Using a portable endoscope, the horse's upper airway is examined at rest. This exam can tell us if the horse suffers from abnormalities of the upper airway such as Idiopathic Laryngeal Hemiplegia (Roarer), Dorsal Displacement of the Soft Palate or Epiglottic Entrapment. While some of these conditions are only evident while the horse is exercised, their presence at rest should be carefully considered because they could be progressive in nature or could affect athletic performance.
- **Dynamic Respiratory Endoscopy** – Specialists at the UT Veterinary Medical Center use a state-of-the-art endoscopy system that allows them to examine a horse's upper airway while the horse is being exercised. Some upper airway problems that can affect performance can only be detected while the horse is exercising. This exam should be conducted especially if the horse will be used in any athletic capacity.
- **Lameness Locator** – Subtle lameness may not always be obvious to the human eye. Often times they can only be detected with advanced equipment such as the Lameness Locator. A set of gyroscopes and accelerometers attached to the horse transmits data to a computer and software that aids in the identification of lame limbs. This equipment can be used at-hand or while the horse is being ridden.
- **Radiographs (X-rays)** – Radiographs allow veterinarians to see changes in the shape or density of bones. Radiographs typically taken in a pre-purchase evaluation include the hocks and the navicular bone. Changes seen in these sites may affect future performance in your prospect horse.
- **Blood Work Screening** – A chemistry panel and complete blood count can reveal chronic disease or infection that is not yet evident. Also, if you choose to purchase the horse, these results will serve as a good baseline. Normal blood work during the evaluation does not guarantee that disease will not occur in the future.
- **Drug Testing** – Samples are taken to determine what drugs, if any, are in the horse's system at the time of the evaluation. Various tests are available and can include detection of common non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, some sedatives, and others. The tests do not indicate the exact amount of drug given, when it was given or how much it affected the horse.
- **Breeding Soundness Exam** – Breeding Soundness Exam (BSE) is not part of the pre-purchase evaluation at the UTCVM. If you would like to have a BSE as part of the pre-purchase evaluation, please contact your veterinarian or veterinary reproductive specialists.