

PREPURCHASE EXAMINATIONS

The standard Prepurchase examination of horses and ponies follows the guidelines as recommended by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the British Equine Veterinary Association.

It involves five stages:

1. Preliminary Examination: The horse is examined at rest including, but not restricted to, auscultation of heart and lungs, examination of eyes, mouth (to confirm age and check for mouth and teeth abnormalities), skin, body and limb abnormalities.
2. Walk & Trot in hand, to include straight lines and circles and differing surfaces, reversing and following limb flexions.
3. Exercise phase: the horse is ideally ridden, but may be lunged or loose schooled as appropriate to strenuously exercise the horse. The purpose is to highlight respiratory or cardiac problems or some orthopaedic problems which only become apparent in the working horse.
4. Period of Rest & Re-examination: this allows the horse to cool off. Usually a further superficial examination is made and identification features and passport are checked.
5. Second Trot-up and foot examination. This is to check that the action has not changed from the initial action, following the work.

It is normal to take a blood sample from the horse. This can be stored at a specialist forensic laboratory at Newmarket for six months for retrospective examination if indicated. This is the usual procedure, but the sample can be tested before purchase if required. Blood sampling protects the honest vendor, purchaser and veterinary surgeon performing the examination.

A two stage examination (First two stages above) can be performed but, although it is less expensive, will miss conditions only made apparent by exercise. It is not recommended and before being undertaken will require a written acceptance of this caveat.

Specialist procedures (such as internal examination of mares in evaluation of suitability for breeding) are not normally included except by previous arrangement.

Further examinations such as X-Rays, ultrasonography or endoscopy may be taken in order to try to provide further information in the light of findings on the clinical examination, or in response to request before acceptance of an insurance proposal. These are not part of a normal prepurchase examination

The results of the examination are discussed with the potential purchaser as soon as possible. This is not a pass/fail scenario but an evaluation of the potential problems identified during the examination and their significance in the context of the potential purchaser's requirements.

Where the vendor is a client of the examining vet or their practice, the known case records of the horse will be divulged to the potential purchaser with the agreement of the vendor.