

SHOW PREPERATION

1. THE HORSE / PONY

If looking at purchasing horses / ponies with the intention of showing, the main things to consider are confirmation, movement, attitude and presence.

Take your time and do your home work if purchasing a horse/pony for a specific discipline. Where possible, go to as many events as you can as a spectator, and visit as many studs as possible. The right choice can make all the difference in the show ring. While presentation is important you need a good foundation if you want to stand out in the crowd.

If you already own a horse decide what show activates are appropriate for it. A less than perfect halter horse / pony may make a good performance horse / pony.

2. FEED

Your horse / pony's diet is very much an individual requirement. It is a matter of finding what works best for you and your horse / pony.

Your own hard feed mix, manufactured pre-mixed feed or grass / pasture are the three main options. Making your own mix, using basic ingredients, takes a little extra effort but you have the ability to adjust the diet as needed to suit each horse / pony at each stage of its development. Manufactured blends are convenient, but they are usually expensive and you don't really know exactly what ingredients your horse / pony is eating. Horses / ponies kept solely on a pasture diet may have a grass belly and their coat may not be as good as when fed hard feed.

While there is no right or wrong method of feeding if you are planning to show your horse it is important to have an ultimate goal in mind and work towards it each day by adjusting when necessary.

3. RUGGING / STABLING

Stabling your horse is the ideal way to achieve the best show preparation results, however not all of us have access to stabling. Appropriate rugging of your horse / pony can produce similar results. Once again there is no right or wrong way to rug your horse / pony it is a matter of finding what works for you and your horse / pony. Take care to purchase correct fitting, well cut rugs to avoid rub marks on the shoulders or flanks. Overheating under neck rugs or hoods can cause problems with the mane being rubbed out. Keep a close eye on your horse / pony and check and adjust rugs daily to prevent a minor problem becoming a major problem. A variety of rugs are required to suit the changing weather and your horse / pony's coat requirements and it is best to have spares as well in case repairs are needed.

5. EXERCISE

Regular exercise and training is the basis of good show preparation. Choose a program that suits you and your horse / pony's needs and be realistic. Give your self plenty of time to get your horse / pony trained so there will be no problems when show day arrives. Don't be too repetitive with your training or your horse / pony may become sour. Break up the routine sometimes by doing something different, it can be as simple as going for a walk somewhere new. Whatever program you decide on, stick with it as muscle tone, fitness and education will not happen over night.

6. GROOMING

Daily grooming produces the best results. Grooming time is the best opportunity for a thorough visual assessment of your horse / pony. While you are grooming, check the physical condition of your horse / pony as adjustments to diet, rugging, and exercise might be required.

Remove loose hair with a curry comb followed by a thorough brushing with a soft body brush and a rub down with a hot towel gives good results. Pick out and oil the hooves and have them trimmed regularly. Shampoo designed for horses, with the correct pH balance, will clean thoroughly without stripping the oils from the coat. Over washing your horse can strip the natural oils from their coat and leave the coat dull.

7. SHOW TIME SPRUCE UP

The pre show spruce up will have greatest impact if you have put the effort and time in to all other parts of your show preparation. There are many products available for use in the final show time spruce up. Ask or observe what experienced show people use and experiment a little at home. A fine wipe with a bit of baby oil can be just as effective as a purpose build coat polish but the price tag is very different. Makeup is used to highlight the features on your horse / pony's face and body. Practice applying makeup at home to see what gives the best results for you and your horse / pony. Applying good make up is an art and it is better to understate than overdo.

8. CHECKLIST

A check list can help you remember all the important things you need to go to a show. The following is a sample of what a checklist might include. Customise a list to suit yourself so important items are not forgotten or over looked

1. CAR & FLOAT

Clean? Good Order?

2. HORSE/PONY GEAR

Clean? Fits? Appropriate? Good Order?

3. YOUR GEAR

Clean? Appropriate? Fits? Your grooming kit!

4. HORSE/PONY GROOMING

Kit containing all your horse/pony grooming gear, makeup etc?

5. HORSE/PONY WASHED

Whole body if necessary. Socks, legs, mane, face and tail.

6. CLIPPING / TRIMMING

Whole body if necessary. Socks, bridle path, ears, whiskers.

7. MAKEUP, PLAITING & HOOF PREPARATION

8. ENTRIES

Registration Papers if required & membership card

9. SHOW TIME

GOOD LUCK AT THE SHOW!