

STRATTON RIDGE EQUESTRIAN

Horse Purchase and Ownership

Consider the following basic costs estimated on an YEARLY basis:

○ Feed/Grain--	\$1500
○ Hay--	\$250
○ Board/Pasture--	\$3000
○ Farrier--	\$1000
○ Dental Care--	\$150
○ Supplements/Medication--	\$250
○ Worming/Immunizations—	\$150

Additional variable costs to consider:

Supplies—Shampoo, fly spray, hoof oil, thrush treatment, saddle soap, wound ointment brushes and combs. An additional emergency box should be available.

Transportation—truck and horse trailer. Consider how you will take your horse to shows or trail rides? To the vet in an emergency? Often these services can be contracted with a professional, but check out what is available to you before buying a horse.

Tack—Saddle, pads, bridle, girth, various bits, halter and lead rope.

Extras—Competition horses often need chiropractic work and other treatments.

HORSE PURCHASE

Backyard Riding Horses can cost anywhere from \$1500 to \$10,000 depending on their pedigree, performance, behavior, training, soundness and beauty.

Horses listed at \$20,000 and up are generally sold for use in competition or for breeding. Some are imported from Europe or elsewhere, driving the price even higher. These horses aren't likely to be purchased by the average first-time horse owner, and the prices aren't as impacted by market forces as backyard riding horse prices.

It's important to consider the total cost of purchase before committing to buying a horse especially if it's your first time. Additional purchase expenses will often include pre-purchase vet exam and x-rays, transportation and any testing and immunizations recommended before your horse travels to its new home. While these won't be part of the asking price, they are things you need to think about as you make a final decision.

The selling price—WHEN you buy is IMPORTANT

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The costs associated with raising horses such as hay, feed, medicines, and even fuel can affect the number of horses for sale and the asking price of those horses in any given year. In recent years, the banning of horses for slaughter in the US and the advent of social media marketing have impacted horse sale prices significantly.

Those looking for a first-time horse will probably need to have anywhere from \$2,500 to \$5,000 in their budget for the purchase. You may be able to find a gem on the low end of this range, but in general a safe horse with no health problems and training enough for a beginner to handle will cost more.

Horses tend to cost LESS going into the winter months when breeders are willing to sell for less because they are concerned about feed costs when there is no grazing. They also tend to cost MORE in the spring when everyone is gearing up for show season and demand is high while feed costs are low.

What about Ponies?

Ponies might be smaller in stature than horses, but that doesn't mean their purchase costs are proportionally smaller. The cost of a good pony is usually driven by the need for significant training and the importance of safety. Ponies however, are worth considering for a very small rider who will learn more from something they can handle, tack and ride independently. Resale on a well-trained and mannered pony is very high. There is often a waiting list of buyers when a kiddo outgrows his/her pony.

The Real Cost of a Free Horse

Yes, it's possible to get a really great free horse—like a senior citizen who is level-headed and serviceably sound, whose owner just wants a nice retirement home for it. However, these horses are rare and there's a real possibility you're just taking on someone else's problem that will risk you injury and expense.

Likewise, a free or very cheap young horse is a HUGE RED FLAG. These horses often have little training or handling; or have soundness, conformation, or behavioral issues. Of course, there's the exception to every rule—there are gems among lower-priced or giveaway horses, but it will take a keen eye and experienced horseman to identify and then handle whatever problems exist.

How To Invest in Your Purchase

Bloodlines, conformation and overall wellness/soundness tend to hold value as a horse ages. Beyond that, the BEST way to make a horse worth more money is to ensure it is well trained and well behaved.

Continue to learn and improve yourself throughout your life with this horse and when you are ready to move on to another horse, someone will willingly pay you for your investment.

Don't Be Discouraged...Consider leasing a horse

There are very good alternatives to purchase for beginner horse folks!! In fact, quite often a LEASE ARRANGEMENT works out better for all involved including the horse! A lease agreement is a legal contract between a horse owner and horse rider(s) that distributes the cost of maintenance between two or more individuals. Ask your local horse professional about more information or contact me at jfranklin@strattonridge.com.