
Farrier Visits

How to Prepare for the Farrier

When it is time for a horse's hooves to be cared for, a professional of the farrier trade should be called in. When the need for a farrier's services arises, there are several issues of prime concern for the horse owner:

- Horse Manners
- Farrier Competency
- Farrier Price
- Pre-visit Setup
- Service availability
- Farrier Scheduling

Horse Manners

The goal of assessing the manners of a horse for a farrier visit is to determine the safety level of the situation and help establish if needed, the training for the task of standing during farrier servicing. Working with the farrier, the needs of each individual horse will be met on a handling basis. A horse owner can reduce the time and effort that a farrier service call can take through proper training. The end result is better hoof care, as well as lower farrier bills.

Farrier Competency

This is a crucial factor for a horse owner, finding a competent farrier. The care of a horse's hooves is a very sensitive and at times precarious thing. To develop his trade a farrier must acquire experience usually in the form of apprenticeship. There is a tremendously huge variance in quality acceptance on this point in the world. Those of you from the U.K. realize that it is illegal to practice farriery unless you are certified as such. In North America however, there is no law regarding the amount of education and practical training in the form of apprenticeship that is required for a person to practice farriery, thus creating a wide quality gap.

There are a few key factors to keep in mind when searching for a farrier. These factors can help govern the owner's search:

- Number of Years Experience Working Full Time
- Reputation in the area (with other horse owners, riding establishments, vets) - taken with a grain of salt
- Knowledge of Common Horse Problems

- Ability to provide corrective solutions to a wide range of hoof care problems

Farrier Price

Farrier pricing can vary widely, and not always in conjunction with the competency of the particular farrier. Value of a good sound setting that provides proper support allowing healthy growth and function - is actually worth extra. In the long run, a good setting will save you money because of the savings of medications and health care for that horse.

That being said, there are still wide variances in prices and price does NOT determine competency.

Farrier Pre-visit Setup

In preparation for a farriers arrival, horses should be brought inside, cleaned of mud and dirt, and dried off if necessary. Picking out of the hooves is a good practice to do every day, but as well just before the farrier arrives.

Work area for the farrier should be free of any obstacles, level as possible, surface could be asphalt or rubber matted for safety. The cleanest well lit space provided possible is the ideal.

Farrier Service Availability

As well as taking farrier competency and price into account - it is very important to find out if the service requirements, and service availability of that farrier and client match up. What this means is, will the farrier be able to come out quickly in case of emergency. This is often a problem in the well populated horse world. Demand is often great for a reputable farrier and travel limitations are a factor. This is an issue of prime concern in the different equine performance disciplines.

Farrier Scheduling

Scheduling of a competent farrier is very important. Every situation will be different for farrier scheduling. As such, the advice of the appointed farrier should determine the actual period needed for each particular horse. In general terms, a period of 6-8 weeks is quite common, but there are certain cases when a much shorter period may even be required. Hoof growth will change with the seasons, every location on earth has certain times of year for faster and slower hoof growth. A competent farrier will asses every situation individually, taking into consideration a number of concerns, to give a well educated answer for hoof care scheduling.

Written By: Josh Emsley