



Lesson Six

To Be or Not to Be a Horse Owner

- Content covers responsible ownership: Considerations for horse ownership, including alternatives to ownership, selection criteria for success, financial commitment, exit strategies, and current euthanasia and disposal options.

Teacher Guide and Resources:

Goals

1. Learner will develop critical thinking skills
2. Learner will increase awareness of equine care and management
3. Learner will practice math skills
4. Learner will participate in a cost-benefit analysis system

Common Core State Standards

RIT.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text
RIT.10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
SL.1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively
SL.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate
History & Social Studies	G5, G6, G7; Research to Build and Present Knowledge
5.NOB10	Perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths
6.NS	Compute fluently with multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples
G.6	Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume

Activities for this lesson:

Lesson Six Herd Time:

Exercise 1: Student will view and analyze barns for safety and efficiency and identify hazards.

Exercise 2: Student will list and discuss pros and cons of horse ownership

Lesson Six Pasture Time:

Exercise 1: Student will use research and record the annual costs of horse ownership in their community.

Exercise 2: Student will use research and record the possibility of housing a horse at his or her home.





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

Background Information

Our culture is full of metaphors, famous quotes and evidence of the powerful and romantic image horses have in our society. Ralph Waldo Emerson is credited with the quote "Riding a horse is not a gentle hobby, to be picked up and laid down like a game of solitaire. It is a grand passion." Bertrand Leclair wrote "Closeness, friendship, affection—keeping your own horse means all these things." These high praises for horse ownership are well deserved; it can be a truly joyful experience when the owner is prepared and able to meet the responsibilities that go along with ownership.

A growing body of scientific evidence demonstrates the beneficial connection between humans and horses. As a sport, horseback riding develops coordination, balance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, posture and to a more limited degree, cardiovascular endurance. Human to horse communication provides a mental challenge that improves cognitive skills, attention span, concentration, cooperation, confidence, and boundary setting. Relating to a horse creates a bond that develops empathy and compassion, two fundamental components of socio-emotional development. The rewards of any activity are commensurate to the quality of effort invested in it; this is true with horse ownership as well.

The Agreement You Make as a Horse Owner

Domestic horses are totally dependent on their owners for all of their basic needs. To be properly maintained, horses require the owner to make a commitment in time and money. Food, water, and shelter are obvious requirements; health care, training, exercise and mental stimulation are also necessities. Responsible ownership means taking all of these elements into consideration, and weighing the requirements against the ability to meet them.

Prospective owners should consider the amount of time required to care for their horses in relation to the amount of other commitments they have to their family, careers, and/or school. It is a big investment in time and often involves the whole family, yet a horse crazy child and an interested parent can make for a very successful experience in horse ownership.

Basic Necessities

Horses are grazing animals and anatomically designed to eat for many hours a day. Modern horse husbandry has shifted to housing horses in stables with limited access to pasture grazing. This confinement may be more convenient for owners, but it has changed horses' natural feeding patterns from free grazing to two or three meals each day. A horse's nutritional needs must be evaluated individually and monitored routinely. Typical programs should include forage (hay or grazing) in an amount equal to at least 1 to 1.5 % body weight (10 to 15 pounds for a 1000 pound horse). Many horses have all their nutritional needs met with only a high quality forage diet; however, concentrates such as grain are often used to supplement the diet when additional calories are needed. All forms of feed must always be free of mold and dust. The horse's digestive system is one of its weakest points; changes in diet must be made gradually to avoid founder, colic and possible death. If putting a horse on pasture for the first time, introduce it slowly, building from a few minutes, to an hour, then two each day, gradually increasing the time.

The animal also requires free access to water, consuming on average 10 to 12 gallons each day, more in high heat or with heavy exercise.





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

Where to house one's horse and under what conditions are primary considerations, whether housing is provided at a boarding stable or at the owner's premises. Boarding a horse may be a good idea if the owner does not have adequate facilities at home, or if the owner has little experience with horses, or if the owner simply has limited time for the demands of daily horse care. Boarding may also be good for the horse when the owner only has one animal, as horses are herd animals and greatly prefer the company of other horses. Boarding can be a full-care, partial-care, or self-care arrangement. These details, including costs and expectations for health and hoof care, are normally worked out in a legal agreement between the facility and owner. The owner is nevertheless the person ultimately responsible for the horse, and so must ensure that the facility to which he entrusts this dependent animal provides a safe and healthful environment.

Keeping the horse at home means the owner assumes the complete responsibility for shelter, water, feeding, and all care. Maintaining adequate, safe facilities is an ongoing task. If the horse is maintained at the owner's home, depending on the facility set up, daily care can easily take an hour a day, with demands varying seasonally.

Horses are highly adaptable to a wide variety of environments; however, horses without shelter from cold weather need more feed and water to maintain health and body weight—this is a less than optimal situation. Adequate shelter will vary widely given climate, geography, local materials and custom, and even the purpose of the horse. A grove of trees in a large pasture may suffice for mustangs in long term holding facilities while a show horse in a cold climate may thrive in an enclosed 12by12 stall in a heated barn; there are plenty of shelter options in between.

In all cases, a horse's housing must be evaluated for safety. Pastures and turn-out areas should be free of toxic weeds (including poisonous trees): fencing should be highly visible to the horse and adequate to keep them from getting out of the enclosure. An animal kept in a stall also needs a turn-out area for exercise or it will need to be ridden regularly. The typical stall is 10'x10' or 12'x12' and needs to have at least 8' of head clearance for a full sized horse, higher for larger breeds. Shelters should not have sharp edges or broken boards on which the horse could be injured. Many horses will chew wood especially if confined in small spaces, which is both bad for the structure and the horse. Barns and stalls should have good ventilation and adequate light. Walls and fencing around the stall and enclosures should be arranged so that it is difficult for a horse to catch a hoof or leg under a wall or in a fence.

Health Care

An experienced equine veterinarian (DVM) is an important contact for all horse owners. Routine healthcare includes deworming, vaccinations, and dental care; there will also be veterinary care required for injury or illness. Another important industry professional is the farrier, or shoer. Hoof care is vital to the horse's health and performance, and consists of trimming or shoeing; it is needed every 4-8 weeks, depending on the individual's use and hoof growth.

The horse's health and well-being is critical to the horse owner's ability to use and enjoy the animal for its intended purpose. So is its level of training as well as the owner's knowledge and skill. In some cases trainers or instructors will be needed to help an inexperienced owner learn the fundamentals of horse handling, care and management, and to help the horse learn the skills necessary for its appointed purpose. Many owners consider their own improvement as horsemen to be part of the responsibility of horse ownership; they continue to hone their skills throughout their lifetime with horses.





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

Expenses

Owners need to consider the costs associated with horse ownership; often the purchase price of the animal is merely a fraction of the overall expense. Predictable expenses to count on include feed, shelter and turnout, farm or stable equipment, hoof and veterinary care, management or disposal of manure, and transport to veterinary care, shows, competitions, or recreational riding trails. Less frequent or unexpected expenses occur, too: emergency veterinary care, property maintenance, rising feed costs, replacement or repair for tack and equipment. The American Association for Equine Practitioners estimates that the minimum yearly cost to care for a single horse, not including veterinary and farrier expenses, is \$1,825. Yearly cost for keeping one horse can easily reach \$5,000 if the animal has special needs for farrier and veterinary care or professional training. Costs can vary according to region, availability of resources, and purpose for which the horse is used. An activity on estimating annual costs of horse ownership is included in the Student Handouts.

Alternatives to Ownership

Fortunately there are a number of options available to people not currently ready or able to own a horse. Alternatives include commercial trail rides, riding lessons, private stables, horse camps, horse adventure vacations, equine sports programs, 4-H and FFA programs, horse councils, horse expos and more. One can volunteer with therapeutic riding programs, horse rescues and sanctuaries. College or high school students may have opportunities to participate on equestrian teams. Riders may join equestrian sports teams like polo, rodeo, and pentathlon without actually owning the horse they ride. Skilled riders can often find owners with horses needing more exercise. Apprenticeship with professional horsemen is a time-honored method to master horsemanship.

For those ready to take it a step further, options might include a lease, which is a use agreement for a particular horse with specific privileges and responsibilities outlined in a contract (usually written) between the lessee and the horse's owner. The particulars of a lease are as individual as the people and horse involved in it. A step past leasing, just shy of ownership, is to "Try before you buy." This is an exceptionally wise approach, giving the prospective horse owner time to determine whether the horse is an appropriate choice.

The perfect match

A good match between owner and animal will make all the difference in having a successful experience with horse ownership. Finding the right horse can be a tricky process, one in which an inexperienced buyer may want to consult a few resources. General information and guidance on horse ownership and management can be found in many places, i.e. county agricultural extension agent, boarding barn manager, public library and internet. Still, there is nothing like an experienced horse person to evaluate an owner's unique situation with their horse.

Considerations for the right match include the animal's age, gender (stallions have many additional requirements), size, breed, intended purpose and specific training. Countless experienced horse people encourage using the "Rule of 10": the combined number of consecutive years of regular riding (or whatever discipline the owner wants to participate in, e.g. driving) for both the horse and the rider should be equal to at least 10 years of experience. So for a child with one year of riding lessons, parents may do well to look at horses that have at least 9 years of consistent riding in the type of riding in which the child participates. An experienced adult rider with more than 10 consistent years in the saddle may be able to accept the challenge of starting a young horse. While it has exceptions, this concept is really intended to discourage the idea of matching a young horse to a young rider; it may seem sweet to think they can "grow up together," but this combination is rarely successful.





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

The horse's training and primary purpose make a good starting point, but the horse's temperament, conformation, and health history are equally important. Some horses have placid, easy-going temperaments; others are more excitable and energetic. A first time owner's horse should be well-broke for the intended purpose. The animal should be easy for the rider to ride and control, responsive to the rider's cues, go wherever the rider directs, and not be prone to spooking at objects commonly found in the environment the owner expects to ride in¹. A pre-purchase agreement by an equine veterinarian will assess the animal's general health and suitability for the intended purpose. Expect to pay the vet fees for pre-purchase exams.

Exit Strategies, or Letting Go

Circumstances change, and every owner should accept that reality. The owner's health, financial or time resources may alter or decline, or the horse may no longer be appropriate for the owner's desired purposes. Parting with a horse can be a wrenching decision, made only after all other alternatives are exhausted. All too often, for example, owners reluctant to let a mare go will decide that breeding her is a reasonable alternative to sale or other disposition; they would be wiser to ask if such a breeding is really contributing to the unwanted horse problem—young horses without training or desirable bloodlines are not very marketable, and the owner may end up with two unwanted horses, rather than one.

When a horse becomes unwanted, there are three primary ways to handle the disposition of the animal: It can be sold, it can be given away (relinquished), or it can be euthanized. (Many potential outlets for relinquishing unwanted horses are discussed in Lesson 5.)

The sale of an unwanted horse can be handled as a private treaty under which the owner has more control and might offer the buyer a trial period to assure the new owner has made a good match. Sellers, breeders and some breed associations offer programs to give the new owner a chance to return the horse with a right of first refusal clause on the sale contract, meaning the last owner or original breeder wants the opportunity to buy back the horse should the new owner no longer want it. An example of this type of program can be found in the American Quarter Horse Association, called Full Circle. Read more about it online. Horses may also be sold at livestock auctions; this type of sale does not offer the seller much control over who buys the horse, other than refusing the sale should the bidder's offer be lower than they are willing to accept.

Euthanasia is the third means of disposing of an unwanted horse. It is an emotional and difficult decision for most owners, but often the most humane for a horse that cannot be made comfortable or safe to handle. The decision is often made with the help of a veterinarian (DVM). The term euthanasia is derived from the Greek terms eu meaning good and thanatos meaning death. The American Veterinarian Medical Association (AVMA) recognizes three methods of euthanasia as humane: chemical euthanasia, with pentobarbital or a pentobarbital combination (administered by DVM); gunshot (performed by someone skilled in the method and in a safe environment); and penetrating captive bolt (administered by someone trained in the method)—it is common for large animal emergency rescue groups to carry penetrating captive bolts for use in emergency situations where gunshot would be unsafe.

The method of euthanasia will dictate the options available for carcass disposal; these include burial, bio-digestion, cremation/ incinerating, composting, landfills, processing for food, and rendering. A chemically euthanized carcass represents a bio-hazard if the drugs are ingested by wildlife or decomposes into water sources. Gunshot and captive penetrating bolt do not create bio-hazards.





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Regardless of the potentially painful prospect, planning ahead for an exit strategy is a necessary part of responsible horse ownership and should be faced squarely. Parting with a horse can be quite difficult, but the horse's well-being must be considered first as part of the responsibility a person accepts when taking on the joys and cares of horse ownership.

1. Fran Devereux Smith, *First Horse, The Complete Guide for the First-Time Horse Owner*, chapter "What You Want In Your Horse", Western Horseman, Inc. 1995

Resources for further reading

American Horse Council. *Own Responsibly, Guidance for current and potential horse owners from the Unwanted Horse Coalition*. Washington DC 2007: <http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org>

American Youth Horse Council. *AYHC Responsible Horse Care*, resources page, cited at <http://www.ayhc.com/pdfs/Horseownership.pdf>

AVMA website. http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf, cited June 13, 2012

Devereux Smith, Fran. *First Horse, The Complete Guide for the First-Time Horse Owner*, Western Horseman, Inc. 1995

eXtention. "Options for horse carcass disposal", cited June 18, 2012: <http://www.extension.org/pages/20164/horse-disposal-options#Burial>

Montgomery, Jill and Nancy Fell. *Colorado Unwanted Horse Environmental Assessment Report*. Denver: Animal Assistance Foundation 2008

Montgomery, Jill. "The Horse and Human Connection – Why Kids and Horses Equal Magic," 2010

Ralston VMD, PhD, dACVN, Sarah. "Responsible Horse Ownership", cited at http://www.esc.rutgers.edu/downloads/Responsible_Horse_Ownership.pdf





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner

1. Explain to students the format of the lesson

- a. Introduce the topic: A look at considerations involved in responsible horse ownership.
- b. Distribute Student Background Information (SB1-5) for students to use in completing the exercises.
- c. "Herd time" looks at the pros and cons of ownership and features important in barns.
- d. "Pasture time" looks at the cost of owning a horse and how and where you could own one.
- e. Provide students with exercise handouts and worksheets.

2. Why do people want horses to begin with?

- a. The English language is full of quotes praising the joy of riding horseback, and horses in general. As Bertrand Leclair wrote, "Closeness, friendship, affection - keeping your own horse means all these things," these words capture emotional rewards of having a horse.
- b. Scientific research shows some of the physical rewards of having and riding horses. Riding can improve coordination, balance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, posture and cardiovascular endurance.
- c. Riding has been proven to improve certain mental health and cognitive skills, such as communication skills, attention span, concentration, cooperation, confidence, and boundary setting.
- d. Emotional bonding with horses has been shown to build empathy and compassion; this has even been used with prison inmates and at-risk children.
- e. The average person who wants a horse wants it fun and recreation.
- f. The quality of the horse ownership experience is equal to the amount of effort invested.

3. The agreement you make as an owner includes providing the basics.

- a. Domesticated horses are totally dependent on their owners for all their basic needs.
- b. Responsible ownership demands commitment to provide for all the horse's needs: food, water, shelter, exercise, healthcare, and mental stimulation. This care must be provided daily, 356 days a year, rain or shine, and will require the owner to invest either time (doing everything himself) or money (paying others to do this) or a combination.
- c. Food:
 - i. The horse's digestive system is one of its weakest points. A sudden change can cause founder, colic and possible death. Changes to horses' diets must be made gradually.
 - ii. The horse is a grazing animal and eats between 1 and 1.5% of its body weight daily in forage (hay or grass). That is between 10 and 15 pounds for a 1000 pound horse. Many horses have all their nutritional needs met with only a high quality hay or pasture forage diet.
 - iii. Concentrates (grains) are often used to supplement a horse's diet when additional calories are needed.
 - iv. All feed must be free of mold and dust.
- d. Water: Horses require on average 10 to 12 gallons of fresh water each day, more in high heat or with heavy exercise.
- e. Shelter at boarding stable or barn can be costly, but is a good idea if:
 - i. The owner does not have adequate facilities at home
 - ii. The owner is inexperienced with horses
 - iii. The owner has only one horse (horses are herd animals)





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

- iv. Can be full-care, partial-care, or self-care
- v. Agreements between owner and boarding stable should be in writing and detail all, costs, responsibilities and expectations for quality and extent of care.
- vi. Can give owner access to facilities and professional help not easily accessible at home: arena, round pen, trainers, instructors, vets, farriers
- g. Shelter at the owner's home: Owner commits to daily care which can easily take an hour or more a day. It is a big investment in time and often involves the whole family; however, a horse crazy child and an interested parent can make for a very successful experience in horse ownership.
- h. Basic shelter in any facility should include protection from wind and weather extremes.
 - i. First rule: It must be safe.
 - ii. Adequate shelter can vary from a grove of trees to a heated, enclosed barn, depending on the horse and its use.
 - iii. The less protection from cold and wind, the more food and water the horse will require to maintain condition.
 - iv. Pasture should be free of toxic plant materials and have adequate fencing.
 - v. Shelters should not have sharp edges or broken boards on which the horse could be injured.
 - vi. Barns and stalls should have good ventilation and adequate light.
 - vii. The area around the barns should be free of debris and clutter to reduce fire hazards.
 - viii. Fences and panels should be difficult for a horse to trap a leg or foot in when pawing or rolling.
- i. Horses need turnout or exercise daily, as well as mental stimulation. Stalls are usually 10x10 or 12x12, which makes turnout especially important. (If owners were required to give a comparable space for a horse to move about as the amount of room a prisoner in jail is given, the horse's pens would be at least 30' x 30'.)
- j. Healthcare: Routine healthcare for horse includes deworming, vaccinations, hoof and dental care. Routine healthcare will help keep vet bills low and riding time high.

Break Presentation Here: Ask the students to work through the **Herd Time Exercise 1: Horse Housing** handout. Find these answers with the whole group working together. You may have to prompt some to contribute; they can list the good and the bad features of the various barns shown on their handouts.

4. Consider the expenses of ownership:

- a. Predictable expenses include feed, shelter and turnout, farm or stable equipment, hoof and veterinary care, management or disposal of manure, and transport to veterinary care, shows, competitions, or recreational riding trails.
- b. Less frequent or unexpected expenses might include emergency veterinary care, property maintenance, rising feed costs, replacement or repair for tack and equipment.
- c. The American Association for Equine Practitioners estimates that the minimum yearly cost to care for a single horse, not including veterinary and farrier expenses, is \$1,825. Yearly cost for keeping one horse can easily reach \$5,000 if the animal has special needs for farrier and veterinary care or professional training.

5. Alternatives exist for those not ready or able to own a horse. Perhaps your students can help you name some:

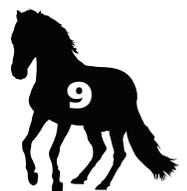
- a. Commercial trail rides, riding lessons, private stables, horse camps, horse adventure vacations, equine sports programs, 4-H and FFA programs, horse councils, horse expos and more.
- b. One can volunteer with therapeutic riding programs, horse rescues and sanctuaries.





Lesson Six

- c. College or high school students may have opportunities to participate on equestrian teams. Riders may join equestrian sports teams like polo, rodeo, and pentathlon without actually owning the horse they ride.
 - d. Skilled riders can often find owners with horses needing more exercise.
 - e. Apprenticeship with professional horsemen is a time-honored method to master horsemanship.
 - f. Closer to ownership, one can lease a horse, or even “try before you buy.”
- 6. A match between owner and animal** will make all the difference in having a successful experience.
- a. An inexperienced buyer may want to consult a few resources for advice in selecting a horse.
 - i. county agricultural extension agent
 - ii. boarding barn manager
 - iii. public library and internet
 - iv. BEST: an experienced horse person to evaluate an owner’s unique situation with their horse.
 - b. Considerations for the right match include the animal’s age, gender, size, breed and specific training, plus temperament, conformation, and health history.
 - c. “Rule of 10”: The combined number of consecutive years of regular riding for both the horse and the rider should be equal to at least 10 years of experience.
 - d. A first time owner’s horse should be a well-broke horse for its intended purpose(s).¹ What is “well-broke”?
 - i. easy for the rider to ride and control
 - ii. responsive to the rider’s cues
 - iii. go where ever the rider directs him to go
 - iv. not prone to spooking at ordinary objects in the environment the owner expects to ride
 - e. A pre-purchase agreement by an equine veterinarian will assess the animal’s general health and suitability for the intended purpose; the buyer pays the vet fee.
- 7. Letting Go**
- a. Circumstances change, and every owner should accept that reality: The owner’s health, financial or time resources may alter or decline, or the horse may no longer be appropriate for the owner’s desired purposes.
 - b. Planning ahead for an exit strategy is a necessary part of responsible horse ownership and should be faced squarely.
 - c. When a horse becomes unwanted, there are three primary ways to handle the disposition of the animal: It can be sold; it can be given away (relinquished) (Many potential outlets for relinquishing unwanted horses were discussed in Lesson 5.); it can be euthanized.
 - d. Sale: The sale of an unwanted horse can be handled as a private treaty under which the owner has more control and might offer the buyer a trial period to assure the new owner has made a good match. Horses may also be sold at livestock auctions; this type of sale does not offer the seller much control over who buys the horse.
 - e. Sellers, breeders and some breed associations offer programs to give the new owner a chance to return the horse.
 - f. Euthanasia is the third means of disposing of an unwanted horse.
 - i. It is an emotional and difficult decision for most owners, but often the most humane for a horse that cannot be made comfortable or safe to handle. (The term euthanasia is derived from the Greek terms eu meaning good and thanatos meaning death.)





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

- ii. The American Veterinarian Medical Association (AVMA) recognizes three methods of euthanasia as humane: chemical euthanasia, with pentobarbital or a pentobarbital combination (administered by DVM); gunshot (performed by someone skilled in the method and in a safe environment); and penetrating captive bolt (administered by someone trained in the method)
 - iii. The method of euthanasia will dictate the options available for carcass disposal; these include burial, bio-digestion, cremation/ incinerating, composting, landfills, processing for food, and rendering.
 - iv. A chemically euthanized carcass represents a bio-hazard if the drugs are ingested by wildlife or decomposes into water sources. Gunshot and captive penetrating bolt do not create bio-hazards.
 - v. All living things die; it's as much a part of life as being born; the wise owner understands that the time may come to end a horse's suffering.
- 8. The Ultimate Responsibility:** The horse's well-being is without question the first and most important responsibility a person accepts when entering into the agreement to take on horse ownership. Honoring that commitment to the animal is the only fair return for the deeply satisfying joys and rewards of horse ownership.
- 9. Herd Time and Pasture Time Exercises**
- a. Ask the students to complete **Herd Time Exercise #2: The Pros and Cons of Horse Ownership**. After most of them appear to have completed their list discuss what they found and where they see themselves in future as owners or not.
 - b. Review how you want them to handle the Pasture Time Exercises 1 & 2. Discuss when and where to return the exercises.
 - i. The cost exercise has a chart students can use to find the costs of owning a horse. **If you contact an online horse supply company in advance of teaching this lesson and explain the exercise you are doing with the students, the supplier will likely send you enough catalogs to distribute one to each of your students so they can find current costs for the Equipment, Tack, and Supplies expenses on their charts.**
 - ii. Encourage the students to write out their answers to the exercise on keeping a horse at their home.

1. Fran Devereux Smith, *First Horse, The Complete Guide for the First-Time Horse Owner*, chapter "What You Want In Your Horse", Western Horseman, Inc. 1995





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

Answer Key - “Herd Time” Student Handouts

1. Horse Housing: Finding the Hazards and Seeing What Works

Evaluate Barns Examples based on information presented in the lesson and the student’s own ideas and observations about the pictured barns. This lesson builds critical thinking and evaluation skills. Encourage students to notice both positive and negative features in each barn.

Possible observations about safe and efficient or hazardous and inefficient features on barns

Barn 1:

- Safe vinyl fences for larger turn out
- Easy access to water in turn out
- Safe metal panels as runs on stalls
- Shade overhang extending from stalls over the run
- Skylights to bring natural light into stalls
- Raised monitor roof for increased ventilation
- Metal surfaces that are kick- and fire-proof in horse areas
- Wood surfaces out of reach from horses



Barn 2:

- Safe vinyl fences for larger turn out
- Safe panel fencing for stall runs
- Large center aisle for work space and easy access to stalls
- Roof raised for additional ventilation
- Metal surfaces that are kick- and fire-proof in horse areas
- Turnout is over-grazed





Lesson Six

Barn 3:

- Automatic waterer (Fresh water all the time)
- Large Turnout
- 3 sided shed tall enough for horse
- Feeder keeps forage off ground (less dust in feed)
- Safe panel fencing
- Horses not separated in shed
- Hay storage secured from access by horses



Barn 4:

- Large turnout area attached to stalls
- Welded pipe fencing (reasonably safe)
- Easy access to water
- Horses not separated in stalls – no doors on stalls
- Wood barn has been chewed on



Barn 5:

- Safe panel fencing
- Shelter from sun with awning on front of barn
- Feeders keep forage off ground (less dust)
- Very small pen (1 panel wide and 1 panel long)
- Divider between pens appears to have sharp ends



Barn 6:

- Unsafe fencing and shelter (barbed wire, broken boards, sharp tin)
- Roof secured with tires
- Difficult to access water (small tub, not secure to prevent tipping)
- Small turn-out area
- Equipment and hazards in turnout area





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

Answer Key - “Herd Time” Student Handouts

2. Pros and Cons of Owning a Horse

List the items presented in this lesson that you consider to be positive aspects of owning a horse and also list those you consider to be negative aspects of owning a horse. Include additional items that apply to you personally. Compare lists with the other students and use the group input to discuss whether or not you now think you should be a horse owner or not.

Example Answers:

Positives

- Ride when it fits my schedule
- Participate in the equine activities I want to
- Ride with friends who have horses
- Show responsibility by caring for horse
- Increase fitness
- Increase communication skills
- Increase compassion and empathy
- Share activity with family
- May win in competitions with my horse (prizes and recognition)
- Eligible for certain scholarships and programs for horse owners

Negatives

- Daily time commitment for care of horse
- Expense of feed
- Requirement for enough space for horse
- Expense of health care and hoof care for horse
- Expense of professionals to assist with training or selection





Lesson Six

Answer Key - "Pasture Time" Student Handouts

1. How Much Does It Cost to Have a Horse?

Tell student if this will be done in group or individually. After the students have completed the research, check the math on their answers. The numbers the students put down are going to vary based on location and the specifics of the item priced, but the ranges provided should be useful in looking at the students' cost charts.

Purchasing Expenses:	Costs	#/First year	Cost 1st Yr
Horse purchase price	\$0-\$5000 and higher	1x	
Pre-Purchase Exam	\$100 (or \$500+ with X-rays)	1x	
Transportation to get horse to owner's barn	Free - \$1.00 /mile +	1x	
Horse Care Expenses:			
Board at full care prices (includes feed)	\$250-\$2000	12x	
Board at self-care prices	\$70-\$175	12x	
Cost of hay and grain per month (if self-care)	\$60-\$150	12x	
Deworming (ask vet # of times/year)	\$3-\$12	?x	
Hoof care: Trimming only	\$25-\$60	3-6x	
Hoof care: Shoeing	\$70-\$175	3-6x	
Dental work	\$50-\$150	1x	
Vaccinations (ask vet # of times/year)	\$25-\$100	?x	
Equipment Expenses:			
Stable forks	\$15-30 each	1-4x	
Brooms	\$10-\$25 each	1-2x	
Wheel barrows	\$60-\$125each	1x	
Hoof Pick	\$1-\$10 each	1-3x	
Mane comb	\$1-\$5 each	1-3x	
Brushes	\$3-\$20 each	2-5x	
Tack Expenses:			
Good used tack can often be found at 50% or less of new prices. Tack should last more than 1 year.			
Prices for new tack	New price ranges		
Saddle	\$300-\$2500	1x	
Bridle	\$25-\$250	1x	
Halter	\$10-\$200	1-2x	
Lead Shank or Rope	\$3-\$15	1x	
Blankets	\$45-\$200	1x	
Leg Bandages	\$12-\$100	1x	
Supplies Expenses:			
First-aid items	\$5-\$100	1x	
Grooming products	\$10-\$20	3x	
Fly spray	\$10-\$20	4x	





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Six

Answer Key - “Pasture Time” Student Handouts

2. Room At Home?

- Do you have adequate space on your property to keep your horse at home? Why or why not? Use the information provided in the Student Background to determine the amount of space.
- Is your home zoned to have a horse? Help the students discover zoning for their homes (have them ask parents, call city or county land planning department, etc.)
- What would it cost per month to board a horse at a facility near you? Call a facility close to your home and ask for their monthly boarding rates, for full care and for self care. Prep the students for finding facilities and calling them for rates.
- If you have a horse at home or boarded, make a list of safe and efficient features of your barn or stable. The student can reference the barns examined in Herd Time for ideas on what they would need if the horse was on his/her property.
- Review their list of the changes on their property that would be needed to have a horse.
- If a student already has a horse have him or her write what features their barn has that are safe and efficient and what he or she might like to change.



Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: **Lesson Six** **To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner**

Student Background Information

“Closeness, friendship, affection—keeping your own horse means all these things.” Bertrand LeClair, who said this, appreciated the pleasures of horse ownership, as have countless other people through the centuries. Horse ownership deserves high praise; it can be a truly joyful experience when a person is prepared and able to meet the responsibilities that go along with ownership.

The average person who wants a horse wants it simply for fun and recreation, but **science shows that there are many other rewards** that come with horse ownership and riding. Riding can improve coordination, balance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, posture and cardiovascular endurance. Communicating with a horse provides a mental challenge that improves cognitive skills, attention span, concentration, cooperation, confidence, and boundary setting. Relating to a horse creates a bond that develops empathy and compassion, two fundamental components of socio-emotional development.

Beyond the physical, emotional and mental benefits, owning a horse gives you freedom and new opportunities. It allows you to set the time and places you want to ride, offers possibilities for friendships with other horse owners, and gives you ways to develop and show talent. You can even earn equestrian scholarships.

The rewards of any activity are proportionate to the quality of effort invested in it; this is true with horse ownership as well—and with those rewards come responsibilities.

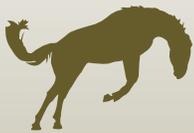
The Agreement You Make as a Horse Owner

Domestic horses are totally dependent on their owners for all of their basic needs. Horses require the owner commit both money and time. Food, water, and shelter are obvious requirements; health care, training, exercise and mental stimulation are also necessities. Responsible ownership means taking the costs for all of these elements into consideration.

Horse ownership is also a big investment in time and often involves the whole family. Prospective owners should consider the time required to care for horses, measured with all the other commitments they have to their family, careers, and/or school. Yet a horse crazy kid and an interested parent can make for a very successful experience in horse ownership, well worth the investments.

Absolute Necessities

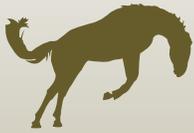
Horses are grazing animals and anatomically designed to eat for many hours a day. Today, land is less available so it's more common to house horses in stables with limited access to pasture grazing. This confinement may be more convenient for owners, but it has changed horses' natural feeding patterns from free grazing to two or three meals each day. A horse's nutritional needs must be evaluated individually and monitored routinely. Typical programs should include





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org



Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: **Lesson Six** **To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner**

forage (hay or grazing) in an amount equal to at least **1 to 1.5 % body weight (10 to 15 pounds for a 1000 pound horse each day)**. Many horses have all their nutritional needs met with only a high quality forage diet; however, concentrates such as **grain** are often used to supplement the diet when additional calories are needed. All forms of feed must always be free of mold and dust.

The horse's digestive system is one of its weakest points; changes in diet must be made gradually to avoid founder, colic and possible death. If you are putting a horse on pasture for the first time, for example, you must introduce it slowly, building from a few minutes to an hour, then two hours each day, gradually increasing the time. Horses also require **free access to water**, consuming on average **10 to 12 gallons each day**, more in high heat or with heavy exercise.

Where to house one's horse and under what conditions are major considerations, whether housing is provided at a boarding stable or at the owner's premises.

Boarding a horse may be a good idea if the owner does not have adequate facilities at home, or has little experience with horses, or hasn't enough time to do daily horse care. Boarding may also be good for the horse when the owner only has one animal, as horses are herd animals and greatly prefer the company of other horses. Boarding can be a full-care, partial-care, or self-care arrangement. These details, including costs and expectations for health and hoof care, are described in a legal agreement between the facility and owner. The owner is nevertheless the person ultimately responsible for the horse, and so must ensure that the facility to which he entrusts this horse provides a safe and healthful environment.

Keeping the horse at home means the owner assumes the complete responsibility for shelter, water, feeding, and all care. Maintaining adequate, safe facilities is an ongoing task. Depending on the facility set up, daily care can take an hour a day, with demands varying seasonally.

Adequate shelter will vary widely depending on climate, geography, local materials and customs, and even the purpose of the horse. A grove of trees in a large pasture may suffice for mustangs in long term holding facilities while a show horse in a cold climate may thrive in an enclosed stall in a heated barn; there are plenty of shelter options in between. Horses are highly adaptable to a wide variety of environments; however, horses without shelter from cold weather need more feed and water to maintain health and body weight—this is a less than optimal situation.

In all cases, a **horse's housing must be evaluated for safety**. Pastures and turn-out areas should be **free of toxic weeds** (including poisonous trees); **fencing should be highly visible to the horse** and adequate to keep them in. An animal kept in a stall also needs a **turn-out area** for exercise or it will need to be ridden regularly. The typical stall is 10'x10' or 12'x12' and needs to have at least 8' of head clearance for a full sized horse, higher for larger breeds. **The area around the barns should be free of debris and clutter to reduce fire hazard**. Shelters should **not have sharp edges or broken boards on which the horse could be**



Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: **Lesson Six** **To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner**

injured. Many horses will chew wood especially if confined in small spaces, which is both bad for the structure and the horse. Barns and stalls should have **good ventilation and adequate light.** Stall walls and enclosure fencing should be arranged so that it is difficult for a horse to catch a hoof or leg underneath. Where multiple horses are kept together, proper introduction and in some cases **separation of aggressive horses** may be needed to prevent injuries.

An experienced **equine veterinarian (DVM)** is an important contact for all horse owners. Routine healthcare includes deworming, vaccinations, and dental care; there will also be veterinary care required for injury or illness. Another important industry professional is the **farrier**, or shoer. Hoof care is vital to the horse's health and performance, and consists of trimming or shoeing every 4-8 weeks, depending on the individual's use and hoof growth.

The horse's health and well-being is critical to the horse owner's ability to use and enjoy the animal for its intended purpose. So is its level of training along with the owner's knowledge and skill. In some cases **trainers or instructors will be needed to help an inexperienced owner** learn the fundamentals of horse handling, care and management, and to help the horse learn the skills necessary for its appointed purpose. Many owners consider their own improvement as horsemen a pleasure to accomplish, but also part of their responsibility to the horse; they continue to hone their skills throughout their lifetime with horses.

Expenses

Often the purchase price of the animal is merely a fraction of the overall expense. Predictable expenses include feed, shelter and turnout, farm or stable equipment, hoof and veterinary care, management or disposal of manure, and transport to veterinary care, shows, competitions, or recreational riding trails. Less frequent or unexpected expenses occur, too: emergency veterinary care, property maintenance, feed cost increases, replacement or repair for tack and equipment. The American Association for Equine Practitioners estimates that **the minimum yearly cost to care for a single horse, not including veterinary and farrier expenses, is \$1,825.** Yearly cost for keeping one horse can easily reach \$5,000 if the animal has special needs for farrier and veterinary care or professional training. Costs can vary according to region, availability of resources, and the purpose for which the horse is used.

Alternatives to Ownership

Fortunately there are a number of options available to people not currently ready or able to own a horse. These include commercial trail rides, riding lessons, private stables, horse camps, horse adventure vacations, equine sports programs, 4-H and FFA programs, horse councils, horse expos and more. One can volunteer with therapeutic riding programs, horse rescues and sanctuaries. College or high school students may have opportunities to participate on equestrian teams. Riders may enjoy equestrian sports like polo, rodeo, and pentathlon without actually owning the horse they ride. Skilled riders can often find owners with horses needing more exercise. Apprenticeship with professional horsemen is a time-honored method to master horsemanship.



Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Six To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner

For those ready to take it a step further, another option might be a **lease**, which is a use agreement (usually written as a contract) for a particular horse that specifies privileges and responsibilities between the person leasing (lessee) and the horse's owner. A step past leasing, just shy of ownership, is to "try before you buy." This is a smart approach, giving the prospective horse owner time to determine whether the horse is an appropriate choice.

The perfect match

A good match between owner and animal will make all the difference in having a successful experience. Finding the right horse can be a tricky process, and an inexperienced buyer will be wise to consult a few resources. General information and guidance on horse ownership and management can be found in many places, i.e. county agricultural extension agent, boarding barn manager, public library and internet. Best of all is to get an experienced horse person to evaluate the owner's unique situation with their horse.

Considerations for the right match include the animal's age, gender (**stallions have many additional requirements**), size, breed, intended purpose and specific training. Experienced horse people encourage the "**Rule of 10**": the number of consecutive years of regular riding (or horse driving) experience for both animal and human should add up to at least 10. So, for a child with one year of riding lessons, parents should look at horses that have at least 9 years of consistent riding in the type of riding in which the child participates. An adult rider with more than 10 consistent years in the saddle might have the experience required to accept the challenge of starting a young horse. While it has exceptions, this concept is really intended to discourage the idea of matching a young horse to a young rider; it may seem sweet to think the young child and yearling can "grow up together," but this combination is rarely successful.

The horse's training and primary purpose make a good starting point in horse selection, but the horse's temperament, conformation, and health history are equally important. Some horses have placid, easy-going temperaments; others are more excitable and energetic. A first time owner's horse should be well-broke for the intended purpose. The animal should be easy for the rider to ride and control, responsive to the rider's cues, go wherever the rider directs, and not be prone to spooking at objects commonly found in the environment the owner expects to ride in¹. A pre-purchase agreement by an equine veterinarian will assess the animal's general health and suitability for the intended purpose. Expect to pay the vet fees for **pre-purchase exams**.

Exit Strategies, or Letting Go

Circumstances change, and every owner should accept that reality. The owner's health, finances or time resources may change or the horse may no longer be appropriate for the owner's desired purposes. Parting with a horse can be so painful that it may prevent the owner from taking the better course of letting the horse go to a more appropriate place or use. For example, some owners reluctant to send a mare away may breed her without planning for training and caring for the baby, resulting sadly in two unwanted horses.





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: **Lesson Six** **To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner**

When a horse becomes unwanted, there are three primary ways to handle the disposition of the animal: It can be sold, it can be given away (relinquished), or it can be euthanized.

The **sale** of an unwanted horse can be handled privately between owner and buyer (“private treaty”); by this method, the owner has more control over where the horse goes and might offer the buyer a trial period to assure the new owner has made a good match. Horses may also be sold at livestock auctions; this type of sale does not offer the seller much control over who buys the horse, other than refusing the sale if the bidder’s offer is too low.

There are numerous options for **relinquishing** an unwanted horse, ranging from giving it to a therapeutic riding program to placing it in a sanctuary. Lesson 5 goes into more detail about options for relinquishing an animal.

Euthanasia is the third means of disposing of an unwanted horse. The term euthanasia is derived from the Greek terms eu (meaning good) and thanatos (meaning death). It is an emotional and difficult decision for most owners, but often the most humane choice for a horse that cannot be made comfortable or safe to handle. A veterinarian often helps in the process of euthanasia. Making this decision also requires planning for carcass disposal, the options for which depend somewhat on the method of euthanasia. More on this is covered in Lesson 5.

Regardless of the potentially painful prospect, planning for an exit strategy is necessary and should be faced squarely. Parting with a horse can be extremely painful, but **the horse’s well-being must be considered first** as part of the responsibility a person accepts when taking on the joys and cares of horse ownership.

¹ Fran Devereux Smith, *First Horse, The Complete Guide for the First-Time Horse Owner*, chapter “What You Want In Your Horse”, Western Horseman, Inc. 1995

Resources for further reading

1. American Horse Council. *Own Responsibly, Guidance for current and potential horse owners from the Unwanted Horse Coalition*. Washington DC 2007: <http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org>
2. American Youth Horse Council. *AYHC Responsible Horse Care*, resources page, cited at <http://www.ayhc.com/pdfs/Horseownership.pdf>
3. AVMA website. http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf, cited June 13, 2012
4. Devereux Smith, Fran. *First Horse, The Complete Guide for the First-Time Horse Owner*, Western Horseman, Inc. 1995
5. eXtention. “Options for horse carcass disposal”, cited June 18, 2012: <http://www.extension.org/pages/20164/horse-disposal-options#Burial>
6. Montgomery, Jill and Nancy Fell. *Colorado Unwanted Horse Environmental Assessment Report*. Denver: Animal Assistance Foundation 2008
7. Montgomery, Jill. “The Horse and Human Connection – Why Kids and Horses Equal Magic,” 2010
8. Ralston VMD, PhD, dACVN, Sarah. “Responsible Horse Ownership”, cited at http://www.esc.rutgers.edu/downloads/Responsible_Horse_Ownership.pdf





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Six To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner



1. Horse Housing: Finding the Hazards and Seeing What Works

Examine the barns in the 6 photographs (here and on page 2). Try to list 4 items in each picture that show the safe or efficient features or the hazardous or inefficient features. When everyone has had a chance to identify features, share your discoveries with the group. See the different elements that other people saw.

Barn 1



Barn 2





ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Six To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner

Barn 3



Barn 4

Barn 5



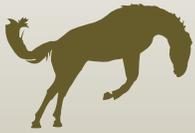
Barn 6





Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Six To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner

ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL



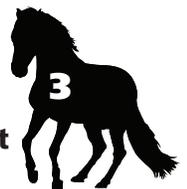
2. The Pros and Cons of Horse Ownership

List the items presented in this lesson that you consider to be positive aspects of owning a horse and also list those you consider to be negative aspects of owning a horse. Include additional items that apply to you personally. Compare lists with the other students and use the group input to discuss whether or not you now think you should be a horse owner or not.

Positives



Negatives





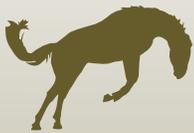
ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Six To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner



Field Exercises:
group activity or
independent take-
home exercise



Field Exercise

1. How Much Does It Cost to Own a Horse?

Find out some basic care and maintenance costs for horses in your area. (This can be done in group or individually.) Fill in the chart on the next page with your answers.

- Find out how much it costs to have a horse’s vaccinations, deworming, hoof care, and teeth floated in your area.
- Call around to find out what the local boarding stables are charging per month and what services come with the fee.
- Check local stores or catalogs for current prices for supplies. (Remember to include tax and shipping or transportation!)
- Use the chart on the next page to fill in your answers.
- Remember, some services and items are purchased more than once each year. For each item, multiply the cost by the number of times per year you would spend that money, and enter that on the proper line in the “Cost First Year” column.
- Then add all the numbers in the Total First Year column and place your answer at the bottom.

How much does it cost to have a horse for just the first year? _____

What costs do not recur? _____

How much would it cost for the second year? _____



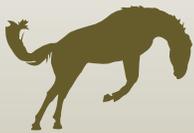


ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Six

To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner



Purchasing Expenses:	Costs	#/First year	Cost first year
Horse purchase price		1x	
Pre-Purchase Exam		1x	
Transportation to get horse to owner's barn		1x	
Horse Care Expenses:			
Board at full care prices (includes feed)		12x	
Board at self-care prices		12x	
Cost of hay and grain per month (if self-care)		12x	
Deworming (ask vet # of times/year)		?x	
Hoof care: Trimming only		3-6x	
Hoof care: Shoeing		3-6x	
Dental work		1x	
Vaccinations (ask vet # of times/year)		?x	
Equipment Expenses:			
Stable forks		1-4x	
Brooms		1-2x	
Wheel barrows		1x	
Hoof Pick		1-3x	
Mane comb		1-3x	
Brushes		2-5x	
Tack Expenses:			
Good used tack can often be found at 50% or less of new prices. Tack should last more than 1 year.			
Prices for new tack			
Saddle		1x	
Bridle		1x	
Halter		1-2x	
Lead Shank or Rope		1x	
Blankets		1x	
Leg Bandages		1x	
Supplies Expenses:			
First-aid items		1x	
Grooming products		3x	
Fly spray		4x	

Total costs for first year of horse ownership \$ _____





ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL

www.animalwelfarecouncil.org

Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Six To Be or Not To Be a Horse Owner

2. Room at Home?



- Do you have adequate space on your property to keep your horse at home? Why or why not?

- Is your home zoned to have a horse? _____

- Make a list of the changes on your property that would be needed to have a horse.

- What would it cost per month to board a horse at a facility near you? Call a facility close to your home and ask for their monthly boarding rates.

Full care \$ _____ Self care \$ _____

- If you have horse at home or boarded, make a list of safe and efficient features of the horse's barn or stable.

- Make a list of things you would like to change or improve.

