



CAN YOU AFFORD TO BOARD YOUR HORSE?

By Hannah Swanbom

Congratulations! After looking at many horses, you have finally found the right one; however, you are worried you shouldn't purchase the horse because you have a small lot without adequate pasture, there are housing association restrictions, or you live in town and developed your acreage.

Not to worry. Boarding may be a good fit for you!

Thoroughly investigating local boarding options and other likely expenses will help you make sound decisions about your investment.

Knowing where the horse will be boarded before your purchase is an essential first step. You can focus on other decisions – including how to best enjoy your horse.

Where do you start when shopping for a place to board? Contact any boarding facilities available in your community. For help finding a place to board, Craigslist, the phone book, the local feed store, or your local extension office can be great resources. Be sure to arrange a visit to the facility to meet the manager of the barn to discuss any concerns or questions you may have prior to signing a boarding contract. A visit beforehand helps establish expectations and responsibilities of all parties involved.

Once you have identified where you are going to board your horse, there will be ongoing costs that vary depending on your boarding agreement.

- **Monthly boarding fee:** On average, this can range from \$200-\$500 a month per horse. Rates can vary depending upon the community in which you live and each boarding facility. Keeping a horse on pasture can often be less costly than a box stall or pen.
- **Feed:** Providing hay for clients is common practice; however, there is a chance the boarding facility may require boarders to furnish their own hay. If hay is included in the price, be prepared for fees to increase if hay prices increase. Boarders planning to feed grain or additional supplements may be required either to supply their own or be charged an additional fee.

- **Horse maintenance:** Typically, horse hooves need trimming every four to six weeks. It's common boarding facilities will have a farrier or two that are used on a regular basis. Inquiring about the communication system and preferred payment option for contacting and paying the farrier is always a good idea.

If you have a horse, you will likely have tack that may need storing. Ask at the boarding facility if there is a place to keep tack and how secure the storage area is.

- **Mobility:** How do you plan to transport your newly purchased horse? Do you have a trailer or will you need to enlist the help of someone to haul your horse? Other boarders may be a great community that would be willing to share rides or help you with transportation.

Owning a horse is a wonderful experience, and boarding is a great option for those who can't keep a horse at their homes. Once you have found your horse a home, you can enjoy the shows, rodeos, roping events, or trail rides with your new companion.



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