



The Vetting Examination of a Horse on Behalf of a Purchaser

Veterinarians have developed a general routine of examination which has been found to be satisfactory as a means of detecting signs of disease and injury. This examination is conducted in five stages and ALL the stages should be completed. If this has not been possible, it should be made clear on the certificate in what way the examination has been varied and that any opinions are based upon this restricted examination.

The full five stage vetting examination consists of:

Stage 1 – Preliminary examination

This is a methodical examination of the animal's body to assess general appearance and condition. It includes examination of the teeth, resting heart, the eyes by ophthalmoscopy, the skin, the limbs and feet, and flexion of the limb joints to reveal pain or limitation of movement.

Stage 2 – Trotting up

The horse is walked and trotted on hard, level ground to detect gross abnormalities of gait and action. A flexion test is carried out, followed by a sharp turn to the left and right at walk and a few backward strides are requested.

Stage 3 – Strenuous exercise

The horse is given sufficient exercise to:

1. Make it breathe deeply and rapidly so that any unusual breathing sounds may be heard;
2. Increase the action of the heart so that abnormalities may be more easily detected;
3. Tire the horse so that strains or injuries may be revealed by stiffness or lameness after a period of exercise.

Stage 4 – A period of rest

The horse is allowed to stand quietly for a period. During this time the breathing and heart are checked as they return to their resting levels. A 'mark up' of the horse may be taken at this point as might a quantity of blood for VDS storage.

Stage 5 – The second trot up

The horse is walked and trotted again in order to reveal abnormalities exacerbated by the strenuous exercise stage.

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