

As the barn manager, I am very particular about new potential boarders. For every one that comes in, I have turned down three before them. There are a lot of factors I look at when deciding on a potential boarder, some issues are more important than others, but generally I consider the following:

- Are they able to accept and abide by the guidelines put in place to protect the land owner?
- Are they a credit risk? Will they pay their board on time; will they pay for winter hay, etc.?
- What type of personality do they have?
- Will they fit in with our existing, diverse, group of boarders (our barn family)?
- How do they handle conflict?
- Are they a responsible horse owner?
- Are they eager and willing to put in the time and effort it takes to care for a horse?
- Why are they leaving their current boarding facility?
- Are they looking for short term or long term boarding?
- What is their standard of care for their horse? Does it vary a great deal from ours?
- Will their horse pass our "clean bill of health" requirements for new boarders?
- What is their experience with horses – owning, riding, handling, showing, etc.?
- Do they have any common sense and forethought? (yes, this is a legitimate question).
- Do they have a basic knowledge of horse care and illnesses?
- Are they able to recognize signs of colic, founder, laminitis, or other signs of distress?
- Are they able to halter and lead their horse through a gate with other horses standing close by, safely and without letting any other horses out in the process?
- How many horses do they have, what are their ages, breeds?
- Does their horse have any health conditions?
- Does their horse have any bad vices – kicking, pawing, rearing, charging, unable to catch, tie, etc.?
- Do they have a lot of personal issues that would cause problems at the barn?
- Do they have children, if so, how many and what are their ages?
- How often do they ride? Do they trail ride or just ride in the ring?
- How often will they come to the barn, daily, several times a week, weekends?
- Are they able to drive in bad weather? Do they own or have access to a 4wd truck?
- Are they able to lift square bales of hay, 45+lbs?
- Have they ever fed hay to a herd of 10 or more horses in an open pasture environment?
- Are they willing and able to do their fair share of barn chores?
- Do they have experience mending barbed wire fencing?
- Are they able to walk long distances in a rolling pasture environment to check fence lines?
- Do they have a problem with me checking references – vet, farrier, current boarding facility?

All horses and horse owners are different with different needs, a complexity that must be considered when making a decision that is in the best interest of everyone, whether that decision is accepting a new boarder into the group or terminating the boarding privileges of an existing boarder.