



Pre Purchase Examination of Horses at Public Auction

Traditionally the pre-purchase examination of horses at public auction has consisted of a 2 stage veterinary examination. This is necessarily a less thorough examination than the 5 stage veterinary examination as defined by the RCVS/BVA joint memorandum. Potential purchasers should be made aware of this fact.

The first stage of the examination is an examination within the stable of the heart, eyes, limbs and external genitalia with a thorough palpation of the head, neck, limbs and truck. The second stage of the examination involves viewing the animal out of the stable. It should be examined on a firm, level surface from all sides at rest. The animal is then seen moving in-hand. This may include trotting (broken horses) or at the walk (unbroken animals).

Additional ancillary examinations may be carried out with the permission of the owner or vendor. These include upper respiratory examination, radiography, ultrasonography and internal examination of the genital organs in mares and fillies.

As with all veterinary examinations prior to purchase, it is essential that the veterinary surgeon carrying out the examination records all abnormal findings at the time of the examination and reports clearly to potential purchasers these findings and any possible effects that they may have on the future use of the animal, whether it is being purchased for athletic use or reproductive purposes. The limitations of the veterinary examination should be made clear to the prospective purchaser and any part of the examination which is omitted for any reason should be reported. Veterinary surgeons working at public auctions should be familiar with the conditions of sale at each public auction and especially the conditions under which animals may be returned after purchase.

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