



# FACTSHEET

## **Five Stage Vettings**

A full pre-purchase examination can take up to two hours. This five stage examination/vetting entails all of the stages listed below:

### **Stage One: Observation and Clinical Examination**

The horse should ideally be rested in the stable for 3 hours prior to the vetting. This is to see the horse without the effect of a leg stretch or exercise out in the field. We will say hello to the horse in the stable, and assess its demeanour, temperament and conformation. We will confirm the horse's identity by checking the passport and scanning for the presence of a microchip. At this point we will have a thorough assessment of its head and mouth including checking the horses' teeth.

The lungs and heart will be listened to, this is important to rule out any cardiac abnormalities such as atrial fibrillation or a heart murmur. The horse will be palpated all over to identify any abnormalities, lumps and bumps, or old injury sites. With the horse in a dark area, the eyes are examined, before being taken outside and stood square so conformation can be assessed.

### **Stage Two: Lameness and Foot Examination**

This will take place on a hard, level surface, and the vet will watch the horse walking and trotting in a straight line to look for signs of gait abnormality or lameness. Flexion tests will be carried out on all 4 legs, as well as asking the horse to turn in a tight circle to watch how it moves on the turn. The horse will also be backed in a straight line to assess hind limb gait. Lunging on a firm/concrete surface may be performed; this is to help identify any subtle problems the horse may have that are not immediately apparent in a straight line. The vet will also look at the horses' feet for conformational faults and foot balance.

### **Stage Three: Strenuous Exercise**

This is preferably ridden, but unbroken horses can be loose-schooled. The horse is assessed for a "cold-back" during tacking-up and mounting, as well as any behavioural abnormalities. Once mounted the horse is assessed for soundness and co-ordination in walk, trot and canter under saddle, and dependent on the required purpose of the horse the vet may wish to see the horse galloped. The horses' wind will be assessed with the horse in canter, to check for any upper respiratory abnormalities such as laryngeal paralysis. Heart and respiration are listened to immediately after the exercise.

### **Stage Four: Rest Period**

Stage four is a rest period until the horse's heart and respiratory rate return to normal, where we assess the horses' heart rate and rhythm whilst it recovers from exercise. The horse's silhouette is often drawn and completed at this point.

### **Stage Five: Final Assessment and Trot Up**

Stage five is the final assessment of the horse, where we watch the horse walk and trot again. After the horses' rest period this will show up any stiffness that the horse may have. If any stiffness is seen, flexion tests or lungeing on a hard surface may be used to further investigate. A blood sample will also be taken. This is stored for 6 months as a safe guard, and can be investigated for any drugs such anti-inflammatories or sedatives should this later prove a concern.

## **Vetting Requirements**

In order to carry out a vetting there are a few things we require:

- 1) Full details of the seller – name, address, contact telephone number
- 2) The horses' passport – this must be present at the time of vetting, without this the vetting will not take place
- 3) The horse should be stables for 3 hours before the vetting, and should be clean enough for us to see markings clearly!
- 4) Dark area for the eye examination
- 5) Hard, level area to trot the horse up and perform lunging exercise
- 6) A school or area to watch the horse exercising.

**Please be aware that if the condition of the horse or the environment is not adequate then the Vet may not be able to carry out all areas of the vetting. If you have any concerns then please call the surgery to discuss.**

## **Westover Veterinary Centre (Large animals)**

Manor Farm, Chapel Road, Hainford, Norfolk NR11 8UP

Tel: 01603 899930 Fax: 01603 893640

Email: [adminla@westovervets.co.uk](mailto:adminla@westovervets.co.uk) Web: [www.westovervets.co.uk](http://www.westovervets.co.uk)