

HORSE AMOUR BOARDING 2018

As you know, caring for horses is a passion and rarely a viable profit. The board check for us is like a farmer's milk check; it comes in and goes right back out to cover expenses. Taxes, utilities, maintenance, equipment costs, feed, and groundskeeping are endless! Operating a for-profit boarding facility with amenities is a constant battle to keep abreast of. Horse Amour needs to strive hard to keep our costs down, while providing personal care and a healthy, happy, laid back and friendly facility for our loyal boarders. Sometimes it is hard for everyone to remember, that our income is generated solely by the services we provide here on this property. Our overhead is high, and the property is not ideal for pasturing horses by it's very nature. It was built as a show barn, with no turnout area constructed at the time that this facility was built. In addition, we do not produce any of our own feed, everything must be purchased and hauled in.

Going into the New Year, we are making plans to be able to continue this without raising our basic boarding fees and have plans to implement some changes that although already in place, have not been effectively communicated, or managed, and in the future will be governed by monthly billing on paper to keep abreast of our expenses. During the past 25 years, our board has gone up \$5/year, not enough to keep up with increased costs, or inflation and make a viable profit, but enough to keep our business going, and with the additional, and more profitable income from lessons and well attended activities, we are still going fairly strong. However, there is never enough profit to make many improvements that we wish to the boarding amenities. We have blurred the lines between basic board and luxury board, and hope to clarify that and offer our boarders appropriate choices.

We are fortunate to have a wonderful group of boarders this year, who are generally prompt with board payments, and attentive to their horse's care and comfort. We are grateful, and appreciate your loyalty over the years. We hope to be here for you for generations of horse lovers in the future!

However, during the past year we have found ourselves providing more services to boarders than we have budgeted in the board fee. Often basic services provided are not in line with a customer's ideals, therefore we are offering some additional alternatives to help you choose the right boarding plan for your horse, and that will allow compensation for us when we provide extra services to accommodate your horse's individual needs.

Entering the new year 2018, we hope to have everyone revisit their boarding contract and let us know what services you would like to have, and what you would like to do yourself.

*All board includes:

*one graining per day, AM, to include up to 3lbs Mane Menu Pellets, 1 lb whole corn and any supplements provided by owner (additional or alternative feed will be supplied by owner, in a rodent proof container)

*Sentinel Performance premium feed is an available option at \$30/month but is not included in basic board (this is a management problem that we have lost control of, and basic board does not cover the extra expense of feeding it daily)

*premier grass hay, two times daily

*barn supplied water tub in turnout paddock, to be filled daily and cleaned weekly by Horse Amour staff

*reasonable area for tack storage in aisle, please no more than 1 vertical saddle stack, (up to 3 saddles) and one tack box. Neatness, and keeping area contained is vital for the comfort of your neighbors and barn safety.

*Basic board DOES NOT include blanketing/unblanketing, fetching for farrier, holding for vet, stall rest, extra bedding, deworming, salt, putting on fly masks, boots, etc, stall cleaning on days when all horses are out, wound care, leg wrapping, hoof soaking, application of medicine, fly spray, hand walking, or specialized turnout. Many of these services are included in the Luxury Board.

Of course we will occasionally be happy to do any of the above in case of emergency, and do not have unreasonable expectations that the above won't

happen sometimes, but TIME IS MONEY, and we will not provide any of the above, ongoing, without collecting a fee for each service.

We have come up with a reasonable fee chart for “extra” services. Although most of these have been posted for some time, they are rarely remembered by boarders, therefore we are going to institute a monthly billing system for services used. We want you to be happy, and your horse well cared for, so please let us know what we can do for you, and what you would prefer us not to do.

*Blanketing. Please use waterproof, breathable sheets and blankets. If your horse is roasting in his winter blanket at 50 degrees, and you can't make it out to the barn, yes, we will pull it off. But we do not want to be doing this every day, unless it is a service you have made arrangements for. With 15 boarders here, it would take an extra hour to blanket and unblanket twice daily. \$6 per blanket change, or twice daily for \$10

*Fetching for farrier. Happy to do this for \$10, and we or the farrier will turn your horse out after. Holding for farrier not included, assumption is that all horses will cross tie.

*Holding for vet. \$20. This involves occasional physical injury. And occasionally much more time than planned. No exceptions!!!

*Stall confinement. When your horse is in, and all the rest are out, it makes a lot more work. Additional stall cleaning, shavings and hay are the obvious, but there are extra water buckets when he/she isn't drinking from his outside hose filled tub, and he is bored and lonesome. We often throw him/her extra sympathy feed, or have to listen to him/her whinny for his buddies when we are trying to teach. We also try to give him/her private arena time in the winter, or dressage ring grass turnout in the summer. We will have to clean his/her stall at 4am on a day when we are trying to get off the hill to compete our own horses. Stall rest is welcome, we love to care for your horse! But please, please acknowledge us for the extra work with money. Stall rest is well worth the extra \$7/day we charge for it.

*Fly masks. Every boarding barn's nemesis! Well intentioned, but often seen on the ground in your horse's paddock, or caught on one ear and

wrapped around his neck with flies caught inside. We are happy to put them back on if we have time, but very often we are hurrying to the next responsibility and often see that mask on the ground for days. If it MUST be on—let us know or consider upgraded board.

*Bell boots for turnout. Please use boots only if necessary, and be able to check them regularly. If we see one missing, and we don't see it anywhere obvious, we are not going to search your paddock for it and put it back on.

*Standing wraps, icing, soaking, application of medicine, wound treatment and hand walking are all the responsibility of the owner. Of course we will happily do ALL of the above for you in case of emergency, but are not able to do any of these tasks outside of an emergency, or long term, without compensation. Leg wrapping \$10, icing \$10, hoof soaking \$20, medicine application, wound treatment, bandaging and hand walking all can be negotiated, we are happy to do it for you for minimal compensation.

*Salt. Salt is necessary, and every horse needs free choice access to it. Some time ago we switched to the pricier Himalayan salt licks, which last much longer and do not require a holder that needs occasional replacing. In the long run they are less expensive. However we can't supply the barn with \$10 salt licks and continue to absorb that cost into the board. Many owners like a different brand as well, and you can supply whatever you wish. If you wish us to supply the salt, we will. It will be billed as needed to you. Paddocks also need salt. We have been providing the mineral blocks which are not working, the horses destroy them or the rain does. Block holders are in every paddock now, but they are all empty. Boarders will need to let us know if they would like to supply their own, or have us bill you. Or if anyone has a good idea for the paddock salt issue, please let us know.

In addition to the above, we are always happy to offer extra services for your convenience such as:

- *clipping
- *mane pulling
- *stall cleaning/bedding for run-ins
- *exercise (riding or longing)

- *training
- *trailerling
- *deworming
- *tack cleaning
- *grooming
- *blanketing

With myself, Stephanie and occasional additional staff members in the barn 7 days a week, we are at your service! We are looking forward to 2018 being a better year than ever, without an increase in basic boarding costs, while offering some extras for a fee. With a little compensation for the extras we will be happy barn owners rather than barn witches! Thank you for your understanding!

There will be a notebook on the lesson desk, with a section for every boarder, and a monthly sheet to record any extra services. Extra services, if accrued, will be billed at the end of each month. Please be up front with any suggestions, needs, requests or things you wish us NOT to do. We are hoping that this will be a great new arrangement for everyone.