

THE FACTS ABOUT CHEAP HORSES

The horse industry is certainly going through some changes. I get calls every day from people who tell me they can buy really cheap horses and so they are looking for something under \$1000 because they have heard how cheap horses are. They explain to me that hay is high and people can't afford to feed them. These are USUALLY people with little or no real horse experience. Then they explain ALL they want is a nice quiet horse to ride out on the trail. That is what EVERYONE wants!!!

I am also getting a half a dozen calls a week from people who have purchased cheap horses that they can't ride and can't sell. They are willing to GIVE them to me. Sometimes they have purchased them because they think they are getting nice quiet horses. Sometimes they didn't realize what they were getting. They say, "He's a nice horse, he just needs steady work." Or "He's a great horse, he is just too much horse for me."

Finally there are the horror stories people have of driving for hours to find horses that aren't what they were suppose to be. One guy had a separated shoulder from a horse that the owner wouldn't ride first!!!

The reality of the horse industry is that when they closed the slaughter houses, those sick, old, lame, mean, green, or just downright NASTY horses were stuck just going around and around in circulation. Yes, you can buy horses all day long for \$30 each. But they are young, unregistered, mean, old, infirm, or something you don't want. *It costs just as much to feed a good one as it does to feed a bad one.*

The hay shortage and \$10 a bale hay just isn't a reality. We've got hay for \$7 a bale, and the price of hay will drop in another month or so. The new hay stretcher products mean that you may have to change your feeding habits, but you can still afford to feed your horses. People with GOOD horses, that are used on a regular basis, aren't turning loose. In fact, good horses are harder than ever to find because there is so much junk out there, that it is getting more and more time consuming to FIND the good horses. I'm paying more for good horses now than I did two or three years ago!! High end catalog sales are setting record prices every sale on good horses...but these are horses with TRAINING, not "prospects." You can always SELL a good horse. There will always be a market for good horses. But the junk just keeps going down in price. No one wants it.

Add to that the price of gas. If you drive two hours and see a horse that isn't what it is suppose to be, you've spend \$40 or \$50 in gas for nothing. Buying from a private person is getting harder and harder. The person represents that he has a nice horse and just can't afford to feed it. In reality, he has a horse that has behavioral problems, or is too green or too hot to be enjoyable. In this market, he is going to be even more inclined than ever to represent that horse in a favorable light because he WANTS to get rid of it. If you don't buy it, he has to find someone who will. Depending on how desperate he is, he will tell you ANYTHING about the horse to get a sale and get the horse off the feed bill. So, more people than ever are getting "burnt." And now THEY can't get rid of the horse.

We don't have to try to sell you something that doesn't fit. We have many horses, one will fit you, and if it doesn't, it will fit the next person who comes out. We are having a great year. But we can't afford to sell horses for the mythical \$1000. They cost me a LOT more than that to BUY...but again, I don't buy from sales where I get surprised by what I have when I get home. I don't buy from private individuals because I CAN'T AFFORD TO DRIVE ALL OVER THE PLACE AND LOOK AT HORSES THAT PEOPLE CAN'T RIDE! And people will lie to me quicker than they will lie to you because they figure I'm a professional and can handle it!! I don't ever get "stuck" with horses that I have to try to "stick" on someone else to get ride of it. I buy from guys I know, who know what I want, and if I don't like it I don't ever have to worry about getting some fool to buy it to take it off my hands, I just take it back and trade it in!!! Safer and CHEAPER for you in the long run.

I offer the same to my clients. But the customer service involved in providing guarantees is real. It means a lot of talking with clients, coaching and supporting new owners, if the horse needs to be vetted, I have to be available for the vet check and have a rider ready. Sometimes I don't get a lot of notice and I have to re-arrange my schedule the last minute. If a horse comes back, I have to spend more time, first with the client to find them a new horse, and then with the horse to get it back to where it should be...it all takes time, it all costs money because time I'm spending with customer service, I'm not taking care of something else. So, for those who want to pay less, we simply eliminate the guarantees...it doesn't mean the horse CAN'T be guaranteed, or SHOULDN'T be guaranteed, in fact, for \$400 more we will add a guarantee to any horse selling "As Is." It simply means we are trying to find ways to get you a good horse and save you some money in a tight economy.