

HORSE AND PONY MANAGEMENT COURSE with SUSAN McBANE

HESBERT HALL FARM at Tosside in the Gisburn Forest, north-east Lancashire, is a recently-established venue for courses in animal management. I have been asked to present the first equestrian course on Sunday, 31st July, from 9am to 4pm. The cost is £65 including refreshments and lunch. Prior booking is essential.

The first course, which is partly class theory presentation and partly practical, is entitled *Horse and Pony Care and Management: the basics*, and is designed for beginner and novice owners and potential owners. The course content is as follows:

HORSE and PONY CARE and MANAGEMENT: The Basics

1 WHAT ARE WE DEALING WITH?

Nature's horse: how evolution has made horses the kind of animals they are - social, grazing, running, prey animals - and how this affects our care and management practices.

The need for company: discussing conventional versus group housing and turnout.

Nutrition and feeding: the best types of feed and how to provide necessary nutrients for different equine types and lifestyles.

Movement, exercise and work: natural patterns versus domestic routines.

Equine psychology and behaviour: why horses behave as they do, why they can appear to us to 'misbehave' which is really survival tactics, and what to do about it.

2 FACILITIES and EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Stables and shelters: equines are active, strong animals. They need strong, safe fences or hedges and strongly-constructed stables and shelters. Sizes, materials, fittings and equipment, bedding materials and mucking out.

Land requirements: grazing, freedom and exercise. Grassland types and management.

Feed and water containers: buckets, tubs, mangers, haynets and 'haybars', automatic drinkers, troughs. Feed storage.

Grooming: brushes and other kit.

Yard equipment: brushes, shovels, wheelbarrows, bedding forks.

Tack: saddles, bridles, harness and training equipment. Clothing.

First aid kits: a basic kit of essentials.

Exercise areas: indoor, covered and outdoor arenas, off-road riding, hacking. How much exercise and what type?

3 SKILLS AND TIME REQUIREMENTS

Your attitude: calm, firm and positive.

Handling: leading a horse in hand, moving him around, picking up feet, putting on and taking off headcollars, rugs, saddles and bridles. Boots and bandages.

Grooming: a basic grooming routine.

Health checks: what to look for, vital signs and when to call the vet. Insurance.

Mixing feeds: giving your horse his feed. Feeding in stable and field. Giving hay and haylage.

Mucking out: how to manage different bedding systems and materials.

Cleaning tack: make sure you can put it all back together before you take it apart! Products and methods.

After each session, there will be time for questions. There will also be some practical sessions and a quiz. Students will receive a pack containing course notes plus other relevant information.

To book your place, and for information on Hesbert Hall Farm itself, go to www.hesberthall.co.uk.