

ACQUIRING RENTAL HORSES:

THE MAIN THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND ARE: THE HORSES MUST BE ABLE TO BE RIDDEN BY A WIDE RANGE OF RIDERS, AND THEY MUST BE ABLE TO GO THE DISTANCE AND PASS THE VET CHECKS.

The following venues have proven to be able to supply these needs.

A college or school that teaches equestrian skills as a course

A person (or company) that supplies mounts for a bird dog field trial

A 'hunt barn' which has mounts for guests that visit and join in a fox hunt

When making contact try to speak directly with the person who will make the decision about supplying the rental horses. Someone else might not deliver your request the same way you would.

Make sure that the owner understands that the riders have ridden and are able to ride for 12 to 25 miles. Most of the riders own their own horse, or if they don't, they have ridden enough under instruction to handle themselves. The owner should also be informed that this is NOT a race, and that the exhibitors know that they will be penalized for finishing too early, or for any mistreatment or any animals.

Once the owner knows that his horses will not be mistreated, and that the riders can, indeed, ride; then you need to address the importance of the horses' condition. This would be like a 'competitive ride'. (That's a term that horse people seem to understand.) It translates to a walk/trot pace that goes for a certain distance.

Another concern is that of the horse's safety with "these dogs". You can usually

put their mind at ease by saying that the Dalmatian is by nature a companion of horses, and that in training for this event, the dog is schooled with a horse. Then you should add that the dog owners have an even bigger concern that the horses will be calm with a dog near it. After all, some of these exhibitors have at least a year's training, and in many cases much more than that, and to have a horse kick out at a dog could mean a serious injury, or an emotional trauma to our valued dogs. It helps to have some photos and articles to back up the quiet way that a trained Dal works when around a horse.

Once the owner is willing to do this, explain that we start the afternoon before the actual trial. This is when the riders, dogs, horses, and the stable manager all get used to one another. If the horses must be transported to the trial site (a) the 'try-on' may take place where they are stabled, or (b) the horses are brought to the trial site the day before for the 'try-on'.

Then the financial negotiations begin. Realize that the exhibitor has already paid the entry fee, and has the expense of owning his own horse, or of many hours of lessons, and travel expenses. Try to get a one time fee that will cover the try-on the day before and the trial ride. If trailering the horses is involved, the fee may be higher. In the past, fees have been from \$65.00 to \$125.00.

COURTESYS AND GOOD RELATIONS:

When deciding on how many mounts to secure, check with the chairperson for this trial to find out how many interested people have expressed this need. Then add four. One for the mounted judge, one for the exhibitor you didn't plan on, and at least one more just in case a horse does not pass the mid-point vet check. If the exhibitor's dog is OK to go on, but the horse is not, the exhibitor may get another mount to finish the trial. The only exception to this is if the vet feels that the horse has in any way been pushed too hard by the rider. In that case the exhibitor has failed and may not continue.

You might also ask about accommodations for those who wish to bring their own horse. They will need to rent a stall, so be willing to do this, too.

Information Provided by:

Peggy Ann Strupp

1224 Creek Road

Soda Spring