

Choosing a Horse Property Wisely

Whether you already have a horse to move with you or you're looking to have the capacity to buy one after you settle into your new home, there are several important factors to consider in seeking a "horse property." Ask your real estate agent and the seller of the property these questions:

- How many acres is this property? (Two horses will require at least five acres – *thirty-five* acres is optimal for their health and happiness.)
- What are the local rules and regulations regarding horses? (Some counties, such as Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson, enforce certain restrictions on the number and location of horses, due to climate and soil conditions.)
- How is water available, and is it from the city or fresh? (Some properties may have wells, other more modern plumbing in the horse pasture near the house. Check on this, because no one wants to be dragging two and three heavy buckets of water three acres out every day.)
- What's the type of soil, and how does it drain? (You'll want reasonably fertile soil to keep growing grass and, if you'd like, hay under the abuse of running horse hooves. You'll also need to make sure that, after a heavy rain or melting snow, your entire pasture drains and *doesn't* turn into a temporary marsh.)
- What fencing is already in place? (Despite common choice, barbed wire fencing is a very poor choice for use with any livestock, especially horses. The height of the fence, the location of the gates, and the type of fencing are very important to keep in mind.)

Your Realtor® should be able to answer all of these questions, as should the person selling the property that you're looking at, be it another real estate agent or the owner him- or herself. Always thoroughly inspect the property and get a copy of any and all local laws or regulations pertaining to livestock.