EquiMart
Connecting horses and riders

BUYING GUIDE

EquiMart's guide to buying.

Horses, saddles and tack, rider gear, horseboxes and trailers, services and products. Most sellers are honest; these habits protect you from the few who aren't, and make any purchase go more smoothly.

IN THIS GUIDE

01 Whatever you're buying

02 Buying a horse

03 Buying a saddle or tack

04 Buying rider gear

05 Buying a horsebox or trailer

06 Choosing a service or product

EVERY PURCHASE

Whatever you're buying

1

See it before you pay anything

View the horse or item yourself, or send someone you trust. If it's too far, ask for a live video call, not a video made earlier. Never pay a deposit to hold something you haven't seen.

2

Know who you're dealing with

Speak to the seller on the phone, and make sure they own what they're selling. Yards, studs, dealers and shops have their own page on EquiMart, with what they sell and what they've sold.

3

Pay safely, and only once you're sure

Pay by EFT into a bank account in the seller's name, or their business's name. Be careful of being asked to pay someone else, to pay in cash or vouchers, or to pay a transporter you didn't choose. Keep the proof of payment and ask for a receipt.

4

Put it in writing

We suggest a written agreement for every sale or lease. It sets out the price and any deposit, the vetting, what's included, and when it changes hands, and you both sign it. It protects the buyer and the seller alike. Need an agreement?

WALK AWAY IF

Signs something isn't right

- ✕ The price is far below what the same thing usually sells for.
- ✕ You're rushed: someone else is coming tomorrow, pay now to hold it.
- ✕ The story, the details or the papers keep changing.
- ✕ The seller won't let you visit, won't do a video call, or only messages and never phones.
- ✕ It's somewhere else and someone else will deliver it, once you've paid.
- ✕ The photos look like they're from another advert or website.

HORSES

Buying a horse

1

See the horse ridden, and ride it yourself

Watch it ridden first, then ride it, or take your trainer. Ask to see it caught, tacked up and loaded if those matter to you.

2

Check the papers match the horse

Ask to see the passport or studbook papers. Check that the name, markings and age match the horse in front of you and the advert, and whose name it's in. If someone is selling for a friend, speak to the owner too.

3

Get your own vet

Book a pre-purchase vetting with a vet you choose, not one the seller arranges, before you agree to buy. A seller with nothing to hide is happy for you to vet.

4

Ask about commission

It's normal for a trainer, coach or agent to ask for a commission when they introduce a buyer or help sell a horse, and either side may pay it. Ask whether the price includes one and who pays it, and put it in your agreement. Some listings show "Includes commission" under the price. EquiMart never takes commission.

5

Leases and loans: agree the details

Agree who pays the vet, farrier and livery, where the horse lives, what happens if it's injured, and when it goes home, and sign it.

SALE AND LEASE AGREEMENTS

Need an agreement?

STORK LAW On The Frontline

EquiMart works with Tamara Stork of Stork Law, who drafts agreements for selling or leasing a horse. A proper agreement covers the price, the vetting, what's included and what happens if something goes wrong, so the buyer and the seller both know where they stand.

CONTACT TAMARA

SADDLES AND TACK

Buying a saddle or tack

1

Make sure the saddle fits your horse

A saddle that doesn't fit hurts your horse. Try it on your horse before you pay, or ask a saddle fitter to check it.

2

Check the tree and the panels

Ask to see the underside. The panels should be even and firm, with no lumps, and the gullet straight. A broken or twisted tree can't be fixed well; if in doubt, a saddle fitter can check it.

3

Make sure a big name is real

For a well-known make, ask for the serial number and the original papers or receipt. A price far below the usual is a warning sign.

4

Check sizes and stitching

Bridles come in pony, cob, full and extra full; rugs by length. Ask for measurements, and look at the stitching, leather and buckles in the photos or in person.

RIDER GEAR

Buying rider gear

1

Only buy a helmet that hasn't had a fall

A helmet that has taken a knock may not protect you, even if it looks perfect. Ask the seller, and check the label for a current safety standard (such as VG1, PAS 015 or ASTM F1163) and the date it was made.

2

Check a body protector's standard and fit

Look for the safety standard on the label (such as BETA level 3), and make sure it fits snugly. Ask how old it is.

3

Ask for measurements, not just a size

Sizes differ between makes. Ask for the measurements of boots, jackets and breeches, and check the zips, soles and seams.

HORSEBOXES AND TRAILERS

Buying a horsebox or trailer

1

See it, and look underneath

Lift the mats and check the floor: a soft or rotten floor is dangerous. Look at the ramp and its springs, the partitions, the tyres (and the spare), the lights and the brakes, and drive or tow it before you agree.

2

Check the papers

The registration papers should be in the seller's name and match the number plate and the VIN on the vehicle. Ask whether there's any money owing on it.

3

Roadworthy, licence and towing

A vehicle or trailer needs a roadworthy certificate to change owners. Make sure you're licensed to tow it (a trailer heavier than 750 kg needs a Code EB licence) and that your vehicle can tow it fully loaded.

4

Have a truck checked

Before you pay for a horse truck, ask a mechanic you trust to look at it.

SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

Choosing a service or product

1

Read the reviews

Businesses on Services & products have reviews from riders, and we read every review before it goes up.

2

Ask about qualifications

Vets are registered with the South African Veterinary Council. Ask other providers what training and registration they have, and whether they're insured, for example for transport.

3

Get the price in writing first

Ask what's included, and about travel or call-out fees, before you book.

4

Read the label on products

Look for a registration number on remedies and feeds, use a product as its maker directs, and ask your vet before using anything new on your horse.

NOT SURE?

Ask an Expert before you buy.

Kelly O'Connor has 20 years in top-level show jumping. Book an online consultation for a second opinion on a horse's price, its advert and video, and what to ask the seller, or ask her to see the horse with you. Book at equimart.co.za/ask-an-expert.

Something doesn't look right?

If an advert on EquiMart worries you, tap Report this listing at the bottom of its contact box, or email hello@equimart.co.za with the link to the listing. We look at every report and take down listings that shouldn't be here. The seller isn't told who reported it.