

# Boarder Handbook for 2011

At Hunter Valley Farm, we embrace an old-school work ethic: with hard work, good organization, and excellent horsemanship we can be extremely successful and have immense fun while being frugal and practical. This handbook is given to you with the purpose of defining the reasons behind policies (to supplement the stable rules form you have already been given) so that you will be able to fully enjoy your time spent with your horse and at the stables, and so that your horse will be given the best care and respect that we can collectively offer.

**Board prices** are set at an extremely competitive price for the area and amenities provided. The new Premium Board has been inspired by the changing seasons--holiday travel, multiple days of inclement weather, etc. making it more difficult for boarders to tend their horses.

## **\$550/month Basic Board includes:**

- Premium grain and hay fed 2x/day
- Two water buckets always fresh and clean
- Daily turn-out weather permitting
- Stall cleaned at least once daily
- 2x/day health check
- Blanket on/off AM and PM\*
- Supplements fed AM\*

## **NEW: \$700/month Premium Board includes:**

- All of the features of Regular boarding, plus
- Coat brushed\*, ears/nostriils cleaned, and hooves picked after turn-out
- Fly spray before turnout\*
- Hand-walked if turn out is not possible

\*indicates that boarder provides supplies, and HVF completes services. Please have on hand for your horse a minimum of one non-insulated turn out sheet and one mid-weight turn out blanket.

It is frequently asked, “**what goes into the price of board?**” and the answer is that the boarding operation’s hope is to **break even**. Just some of the main costs involved in stabling a horse include use of a stall, wear and tear on the pasture land, utilities, labor, shavings, hay and grain. None of which items are inexpensive.

## Work Exchange Program

In a financial environment where every penny counts, we realize that sometimes it is helpful and enjoyable to work with the horses in exchange for services. There are limited opportunities (sought after by many) to help out around the farm in exchange for a reduced board/lessons/training bill.

**Starting January, 2011** the work exchange program will be structured so that any work done during the month is logged, and the following month's board bill will reflect the discount. The table below shows the amount of money each regular farm chore pays. There are sometimes additional chores available, ask if interested. (If you are not involved in the work-exchange program, you will not receive a bill unless you have used a la carte services the previous month).

Chore	Payout
Stall Cleaning	\$1/stall
Paddock Cleaning	\$5/paddock
Scrub and fill all water buckets and pasture troughs	\$15
Feeding AM/PM (including blanketing and turn in/out)	\$10/feeding

Work exchange opportunities are given on a priority and first come-first serve basis. Priority is given to those in extreme circumstances such as a long-term layup which is incurring hefty veterinarian bills. Preference is always given to someone who is able to commit weekly. If you have committed, and something more fun or an emergency gets in your way, the staff at HVF is seriously effected. 48 hours notice must be given if you are unable to fulfill your duties unless you have such an emergency that it requires urgent medical care. If you cancel your obligation to work more than once in a 4-month period, you will lose the privilege of working in the work-exchange program.

In order to offer this program, HVF forfeits the ability to hire full time, regular barn help. If it becomes too difficult for staff to rely on, it will disappear.

**Boarders are required to take one lesson per week.** Firstly, to ensure that horses and riders are riding in a safe and productive manner. Secondly, as boarding is a break-even business, instruction and training is your instructor's source of income. It is detrimental to your trainer's livelihood when a boarder does not fulfill their lessons requirement. To continue to provide the same excellent boarding services at lower than standard prices, the lesson program must remain in effect. In the event that your horse is laid up with an injury or illness, you will be provided with another horse/pony to take your minimum weekly lesson on.

### **The Full Training program**

is for the serious rider, especially during a competitive season, or for a rider with a new or green horse. **\$500/month** includes 2 weekly lessons and 2 weekly training rides, or any combination of 4 rides/lessons.

**The basic training package offered by Hunter Valley farms is an exceptional value at \$300/month and includes:**

- One weekly lesson
- One weekly training ride

**Lessons only package \$160/month** includes:

- One weekly lesson

**Lesson payment for the month in advance is due at the beginning of each month along with board.**

**Lessons must be cancelled by riders 48 hours in advance for non-emergencies**, verbally either over the phone or in person (not by e-mail or text message), at which time a make-up lesson will be scheduled. 2 lessons/month are allowed to be made up for any reason other than when HVF cancels lessons. **In the event of an emergency (needing medical attention or more serious) you must give one hour notice. In the event that HVF needs to cancel lessons, you will receive a phone call.** If you don't hear from us, we're planning on seeing you for your lesson.

It is very possible that you will have a ground lesson once in a while to learn horsemanship skills, advanced grooming, mane pulling, clipping,

wrapping/bandaging, tack care, parts of the horse (inner and outer), etc. If you try to call and check on lessons being held or not, and don't get an answer, assume lessons ARE being held and your instructor is busy teaching.

**Keeping your horse healthy and fit** is important. It is suggested that your horse be exercised at least 4 times weekly and that you stick to a specific program. **Your riding lessons will typically last 30 minutes to an hour, so it is only fair to arrange regular exercise for your horse so that they are able to focus and enjoy the lesson as you do.** Because of a horse's natural instincts to be an accepted member of their herd, and their innate ability to sustain speed when their life depends on it, a horse will generally do what you ask them to even if they are not fit for it. They might be uncomfortably sore for days after. You might run into behavior issues down the road if your horse begins to associate your irregular visits with pain. If you are on a time-restricted schedule, it is recommended that you do any combination of the below to ensure your horse is properly conditioned:

- 1) Opt to schedule a training ride for your horse in between a block of days that you cannot ride
- 2) Ask your trainer if there is the possibility of a lesson student exercising your horse either in a lesson, or during a practice ride
- 3) Buddy up with another boarder and exchange rides/lunging sessions

When horses are in a regular routine, they thrive. The exercise your horse learns and enjoys in HVF's specific program not only feels good during the exercise, but creates a better supportive musculature. It is likened to a human doing a varied exercise program of aerobic/running work to strengthen the heart and lungs, yoga to stretch the body, and pilates to strengthen the core and elongate the muscles. Your instructor wants you, the rider, to be thrilled with your riding and get the absolute best value from your investment into a riding career and owning a horse.