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WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN THEN
Sue Curry Shaffer: Finding the humor in outlandish requests

Q&A

WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN THEN

Taking It the Humorous Way

By SUE CURRY SHAFFER

After nearly four decades as a rider, trainer, clinician, barn owner and dressage judge, I'm rarely surprised by the questions and demands that come my way. But that was not always the case. When I first began my professional career, I was sometimes knocked off my feet by certain appeals—especially those I categorize as either hilarious or mind-blowing or both.

If I had known then what I know now, I would have answered such requests with a little more humor and a lot less anxiety. So here are some of my all-time award-winning actual inquiries about boarding and training, and the answers I wish I had given:

QUESTION: May I have four white water buckets hung in my stall in addition to the automatic waters?

ANSWER: Sorry, no. Our extra water buckets only come in pink and chartreuse.

QUESTION: Will you please turn out all my horses at 5 a.m. every day with one

flake of pure alfalfa?

Then I would like them brought in before noon and fed one flake each of timothy hay. After this I would like them all turned back out around 1:15 p.m. and each horse should have one flake more of timothy with one quarter flake of alfalfa. When they are brought in at 5 p.m., I would like them all to have two flakes of orchard grass with 10 percent alfalfa.

ANSWER: I know there are doctors who can help you.

QUESTION: Can we ride until midnight



Sue Curry Shaffer

is a USEF "S" dressage judge and an FEI 3-star Para Equestrian judge.

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- Theresa, Haneyville, West Virginia

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in the indoor with the lights on?

ANSWER: No. Do you see how beautiful your horse is? That's because I insist that every horse get his beauty sleep.

QUESTION: Is full training included in the board fee?

ANSWER: In your dreams.

QUESTION: May my horse have his own radio in front of the stall?

ANSWER: We're fresh out of extra radios, but we can install a baby grand in his stall. How does that work for you?

QUESTION: Can my horse wear his heavyweight blanket from 9 p.m. until 5 a.m., the medium white blanket from 5 a.m. to 12 p.m., his heavy sheet from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., and the light fly sheet from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.? Is this included in the board fee?

ANSWER: Would you like turn-down

service as well?

QUESTION: May I come to the farm at midnight each night to pick out my horse's stall?

ANSWER: Sure. On second thought, why don't we put a cot in the stall for you?

QUESTION: May I have only shavings imported from Canada for my horse's bedding? No American shavings?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: My horse hates men. Do you have any blonde girls who could clean his stall?

ANSWER: Would a brunette suffice?

QUESTION: I have a 15.4-hand horse who needs work.

ANSWER: I believe it would be best to wait until the horse is 15.6 hands before beginning training.

QUESTION: How long will it take to

teach my horse not to go to the bathroom when I ride him?

ANSWER: As long as it takes pigs to fly.

QUESTION: How long will it take to train my horse to put his tracers in?

ANSWER: The tracers section of a horse's anatomy is difficult to find and exceedingly difficult to "put in."

QUESTION: Can someone cut up six Fuji apples for my horse each morning?

ANSWER: No. We only provide Gala, Granny Smith and Pink Lady apples. 🍏

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT DRESSAGE?

Email it to DressageToday@aim-media.com. Ask the Experts is compiled by **Reina Abelshauer**.



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