

FARRIER CERTIFICATION: The Myth Of Competence

Living in today's educated, modern world, people have been trained to look for titles of accomplishment -- in those we pay good money to for their professional services. We want to see our doctor's office wall covered with diplomas and certificates. We expect our airline pilots to have the latest ground school and flight certification. And we expect our farriers to be well-educated and certified to a high level of competence before "he" touches our Horse.

The trick here is to remember the old joke, "What do you call a person that graduates medical school with a D average?" "DOCTOR."

Farrier Certification is even more suspect than those of the medical field. The demands of Farrier Certification vary from school to school and organization to organization. What this translates into for the customer is that they really do not know what they are getting. If lucky, they may get a competent, experienced farrier. But more than likely, they are going to hire an individual who was sold just enough information to nail a shoe on a foot. Over my Horse involved career I have seen "Certified Master Farriers" that couldn't tell the difference between Quarter Horse mare and a Paso Fino gelding, let alone how to correctly balance the foot. What they did know is how to hand-make shoes like nobody's business. While being able to hand-make any shoe is a very talented skill (one I have not mastered yet) it is not the skill a Horse owner needs for the best health of their Horse.

As the "Owner Info" page of this web site states, I am a Certified Journeyman 1 Farrier. I was very proud of this certification. I worked very hard to achieve this level of certification. I paid \$10,000 to get this certification, and therein lies the problem: I paid for it. I wrongly thought I had earned this certification. The fact was the school I attended will hand out certifications to anyone, as long as the tuition check clears the bank. I have been fortunate enough to meet other farriers certified from other schools affiliated with different farrier associations. Sadly, they tell the same story.

So, just how do you tell if your farrier is competent? This is a very simple question to answer, "Listen to your Horse". Just because a farrier has a nice web site or can "talk up a storm about Horses" does not indicate he is a gifted hoof manipulator, only the Horse can tell you this. Being certified can display a willingness to learn. However; it does not guarantee anything was, in fact, learned -- just paid for.



David Qualls
Shoe - Less Farrier Services
678-314-0381
www.davidqualls.net