

# How To Be a Good Full Moon Farm Working Student

*Hello Working Students! I'm Kt Allenbaugh.*

*I've ridden at FMF for 15 years, and was a Working Student for 6 years before heading off to college.*

*Being a Working Student is both fun and challenging, so below I've stated what is expected of each shift, as well as some pointers I picked up during my time at FMF.*

## **BEFORE YOU ARRIVE:**

- Clothes: Dress comfortably in clothes you're okay getting dirty/getting bleach on.
  - Shoes: Closed-toed and enforced (NOT steel-toed).
    - Some fields get extremely muddy, so get a pair of tall muck boots.
  - Winter: Dress warmly with lots of layers. You may warm up as you're moving, but always bring gloves!
  - Summer: Shorts must be finger-length. Shirts should be modest and with sleeves (though rolling up is fine).
- Food/Drink: Always bring water (and something warm in winter). Refill your water in the office sink. You may want a snack, depending on when/how long you're working.

## **WHEN YOU ARRIVE:**

**Check boards: Lesson Board, Update Board, In/Unused UFN list, Turnout Board, etc.**

- Are the horses' stall numbers all assigned on the Lesson Board? Does it say where they all need to go after their lessons?
- Do any horses now need a chain? or a muzzle in the Grooming Barn?
- Do you have any new riders?
  - Be extra-friendly and realize that they may be clueless!
  - Have a Release form on-hand. (The Lesson Board should tell you if they still need one, but always err on the side of caution! When in doubt, have them sign one.)
    - Releases are kept in the Office, on the desk on a large gray clipboard.
    - ALL RIDERS MUST HAVE A SIGNED RELEASE ON-FILE.
      - Riders under 18 yrs old: Parent/Guardian MUST sign before the rider can interact with the horses.
    - Leave the signed Release on/in the clipboard.
    - If we're getting low on Release forms, let an instructor/office staff know.
- Pay attention to the # of field horses you'll need for each lesson.
  - Give yourself 10-15 minutes to get the horse *before* the 30-minute tacking period (especially Black/White gate horses!).
  - If you need more than 1 or 2 field horses, you will need more time!
- Horses that need treatments: It's best to do treatments after they're ridden.
  - How many horses need treatments that aren't in lessons? When will you have time to do them?
  - *I left a note for myself on the Lesson Board next to each horse's name to remind myself to do their treatments.*
    - *If the rider is a Working Student themselves, you can have them do the treatments after they ride.*
- Before riders arrive:
  - Make sure the tack rooms are in working, clean order.
    - The tack room should never be a mess, but it always is.
    - Teach your kids how to properly put away bridles (browbands facing out), how to sort saddle pads, how to stack bounce-/half-pads neatly, etc.
- Before you sign out: Neaten up the tack room. Sweep the grooming barn.
  - *If you teach your riders properly, you won't even need to do this!*

## **GETTING THE HORSES:**

### **When bringing horses in for lessons:**

- Pay attention to how many horses are left in a field:
  - If two, it's fine.
  - If only one, make sure it's a horse that can be left alone.
    - Memorize which horses are/aren't allowed out alone ("Not out alone" list is on the Big Board in the Grooming Barn, and is also noted on stall boards).
    - If a horse cannot be out by itself, bring them in first.
      - If you've left a horse out alone and suddenly it is very unhappy (running around, screaming), bring it in.
        - *Horses are weird. Sometimes they're just in a mood where they can't be alone.*
- ALWAYS CHECK THEIR SHOES. Are they missing/loose/hanging awkwardly?
  - Let the instructor know of any hoof/shoe issues immediately.
  - If a shoe is coming off, stop the horse immediately, and get someone else to get the instructor/staff.
    - Horses can get injured by stepping on the clip/nails.
    - The instructor/staff will tell you what to do.
    - Usually, they'll ask you to duct tape the hoof; if you don't know how, ASK!
  - A horse that's missing a shoe/is injured shouldn't go back to the field (usually)
    - Horses that live in a field will need to stay in another horse's stall.
      - Ask the most knowledgeable person around whether the horse has special needs when it comes to stalls. For example, some horses break out of stalls easily (Fu). Some horses have panic attacks in stalls (Geof) and can only go in certain stalls.
      - Try not to use a boarder horse's stall (dictated by the "Boarder" label on their stall board).
      - When putting a horse in a stall, make sure the food bucket is completely empty. (If it's not— remove it!)
- Check horses for cuts, scratches, bites, rubs, etc.
  - If they have a boo-boo where the saddle/girth/boots go, and you're unsure if the horse is rideable or not, take a photo: show it to the instructor. *It never hurts to ask. Better safe than sorry.*
- IF YOU'VE MOVED A HORSE TO A STALL: Make sure that horse has water in the stall they're in. Do not forget that horse is in a stall! Make a note on the Lesson Board to remind yourself to put them back later.

### **Who's leading the horse?**

- KIDS THAT AREN'T WORKING STUDENTS **CANNOT** GET HORSES FROM THE FIELD.
  - Unless it is their horse AND they are a "big kid", **you** must get the horse.
  - They can stand at the gate and (maybe) lead them from there, but students cannot go into the fields. Ever.
- More experienced students can lead horses to/from their stalls, but you **must** go with them.
  - When letting kids lead them back, it's especially important to make sure that horses have chains/muzzles if they need them.
    - *Just because you think you can bully the horse around doesn't mean that the tiny tot can. (And you need to be using the chain/muzzle anyways.)*

## **GROOMING AND TACKING: Save yourself the hassle!**

- When putting horses in the Grooming Barn:
  - Arrange them in an order that reduces any problems.
    - Put the feisty horses (*Ben, Chuck, Roxy, Lacey...*) in the far end stalls. Put a more laid-back horse (*Ruckus, Joey, Obie...*) next to them.
- Kids aren't going to notice when they mess up: They will forget to clean the girth area, won't notice a lost shoe, will forget a bounce pad...
- Walk around & keep an eye on them.
  - If you're focused on the students (instead of munching Doritos and talking to your co-workers/friends), the kids are more likely to ask you questions!
  - If you don't pay attention, you'll be the one running back up the driveway when the instructor notices a martingale is missing.
- Learn your kids' habits.
  - If they're usually a little late (~20 min before the lesson), brush the horse off if they're super dirty.
  - If a student begins to arrive repeatedly late (less than 20 min early), remind them to arrive 30 minutes before the lesson.
  - If they're late twice in a row or more, tell the instructor/office staff, so they can talk to the riders' parents.
- Keep track of what belongs to who!
  - Make a mental note of each horse's halter, lead rope/chain, blankets, flymasks, etc.
    - Students **will** forget. Double-check them, too.
- Bridling time. Ask yourself:
  - Which/how many students will need help?
  - How many horses are difficult to bridle?
  - *I typically began bridling 10 min before the lesson start time (@5:20 for a 5:30 lesson). If there are a lot of younger/less-experienced students, start even earlier so you can get them to the ring on-time.*

## **AFTER THE LESSON:**

- Arrive early to pick up the students from the ring: Head up 10 min before the end of their lesson (@6:10 for a lesson that ends @6:20), especially when icy/dark/etc.

### **When untacking:**

- Make sure all horses' feet are picked, horses are properly cooled down, properly clothed (blankets, flymasks, etc.).
- Show your riders how to appropriately sponge off a sweaty horse.
  - Do not put away a horse that's soaking wet.

### **When putting horses away:**

- When putting a horse in a stall, make sure all water buckets are filled.
  - Pay attention to whether Last Water has been done yet.
    - If it hasn't, then the buckets probably won't be completely full; that's okay. Just make sure they have some water, especially if they're very thirsty.
    - If it has, then the water should be clean and buckets should be full (filled ~2-3in from the top).
  - If their water is really dirty (has poop, tons of hay/grain, a dead bird in it): Dump the bucket, scrub it with a brush, rinse it, and then refill.
    - NEVER DUMP THEIR WATER BUCKETS IN THE STALLS OR THE WASH STALL (drain=clogged easily!).
    - Dump in the following places:
      - At the holly tree (between Upper Red, the Fulton's yard, and A barn)
      - In the grass adjacent to the Feed Room (by Upper Orange/Gold gates)
      - In front of the blue truck across from Pony Barn
- Make sure all horses have the proper equipment on (heavy vs. lite weight blankets, bell boots, flymasks, fly sheets, etc.).
  - If bell boots are muddy and won't stay on, clean them off in a bucket of water (and then dump the bucket!), or spray them with a hose outside of a barn.
  - If you're unsure what the horse needs, check their personal stall board, the Big Board, the Lesson Board, and/or the Turnout Board (will have listed what blankets/flymasks/sheets everyone needs).

## THE OTHER STUFF:

**Apart from lessons, there are many things that must be done during your shift.**

- Treatments: Sign off on the sheet for the treatments you did.
  - To make more Thrush treatment:
    - Fill the spray bottle half-way with water (use sink in office) and half-way with bleach. (Don't overfill... the sprayer tube has to fit in there.)
  - When doing Scratches treatment: Make sure the leg is completely **clean and dry** before applying it, or you've done nothing but waste the lotion.
  - If we're running low on Scratches treatment (Equiderma, MTG, Zinc Oxide, etc.) or Bleach, text Ms. Karen or another responsible adult (Ms. Audra, Ms. Christine, Ms. Ashley, etc.) right away!
- Clean the Grooming Barn!
  - Not just sweeping the stalls... Clean the aisles, walls, grooming stall dividers, basket underneath the Lesson Board, tidy up!
  - If your students are not sweeping, get after them about it! The better they sweep, the less you'll have to do.
- Trash: the trashcan in the office and in the barn need to be dumped at the dumpster up by E and Pony barn.
- Spring/Summer/Fall:
  - Water flowers. Ms. Karen loves her plants.
    - Use the sprayer attachment, so water doesn't pelt the flowers to death.
    - For hanging baskets: Keep watering until it drains from the bottom
    - Plants on the ground: Use good judgment.
  - Empty all sponge buckets at the end of the shift, squeeze out the sponges/rags and place them in the Wash Stall to dry. *That water gets very nasty very quickly!*

## BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- Check the boards again.
  - Did all horses that needed to be turned out get to the right field?
  - Did any horses get put out when they weren't supposed to go out?
  - If a student didn't show up:
    - Did you mark it as "NS/No Show" on the Lesson Board?
    - Is their horse where it needs to be & wearing what it needs?
- Empty BOTH muck tubs.
- Check that all lights are off at all barns.
- Check that all fans are off (unless told/written otherwise)
- Check that C Barn stall guards are taken completely off, are hung up, and that their doors are closed.
  - NEVER leave the stall guards inside with the door closed.
- Were you asked to do anything extra? Last Water Feed? Last Hay/Water? Check on a horse? Put something away?

## **THE GREATEST MYTH: “THERE’S NOTHING TO DO”**

There is always something to do. Do not be on your phone (unless contacting an instructor) or standing around. Instead:

- Sweep, rake, dust: Grooming Barns, Office, aisleways, driveway, outside the barns/fields.
- Hayloft: Stuff haynets, rake up the loose hay, sweep everything to the back of the Hayloft.
- Tack Rooms: Tidy up, sweep, dust, sort boots/pads, fix labels, etc.
- Grooming Barn: Put away abandoned tack/crops/helmets, clean the brushes (hair goes in the trash, not muck tubs!), pick out trash from the dividers.

## **HELPFUL HINTS:**

- Get shift coverage ASAP. Mark it on the calendar in the Office.
  - If you respond to people when they ask for coverage, they’ll be more likely to respond to you and help you out.
- How to work with very little kids:
  - Ask yes or no questions. This works the best with quiet ones.
  - If they love to talk, give them direction. They’re fine to talk as long as they’re grooming while they talk.
  - Have them carry over the saddle pad and/or bridle while you carry the heavy things.
  - Walk them through the process while having them do things they can manage (you tighten the girth while they put the notch in, you hold the hoof while you take turns going back and forth cleaning it).
  - Go after them with a brush when they groom.
  - Get the student to the point where they can tell you how to put on the saddle/bridle even if they can’t yet physically do it.
- How to work with adults:
  - Use more directions and let them do more.
  - The first ride you can go ahead and show them “this is how to pick up and pick a hoof, this is how to use the different brushes,” etc.
  - After their first few lessons, stand back and watch: Correct what they’re doing if they go astray.
  - For the most part, adults catch on very quickly. But not always!
  - Be polite, but don’t be shy. Even if they “know how to ride,” they need help to learn how to do things the FMF way and stay safe!
- How to deal with difficult/rude/mean parents/adults:
  - Tell the instructor. Have an adult speak to them. Go through the proper authorities if an adult is being at all difficult for you.
  - The same goes if a student is being difficult.
  - Don’t feel like a tattletale; speak up whenever you feel the need!

*If you have any questions, email Ms. Audra at [audraburns779@msn.com](mailto:audraburns779@msn.com).*

*If you ever are confused or don’t know what to do, speak up and ask!*

Developing your own workflow and methods is all part of learning how to do your job the best way possible!

Good luck!