

## Fight Fuel Costs

**While prices at the pumps rise, these tips may help keep the cost of traveling with your horses under control.**

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The Energy Information Administration (EIA) forecasts that the average monthly motor gasoline prices will increase by nearly 40 cents per gallon from February through June this year. Although the projected average high for the upcoming driving season (April-September) will be about 20 cents per gallon less than last year's driving season average, the rising prices will still place additional strain on budgets.

Rising crude oil prices and seasonal demand are the reported reasons for this expected increase. With gas prices on the increase, conserving energy and lowering overall fuel costs will be particularly important to people traveling with their horses.

You can improve your fuel economy, as well as your safety and the safety of your horses, by following these simple tips, courtesy of USRider:

### Vehicle Maintenance

**Keep Engine Properly Tuned** Depending upon the kind of repair done, this can result in an average 4 percent increase in fuel efficiency. For example, replacing a faulty oxygen sensor can improve fuel mileage as much as 40 percent. **Check and Replace Air Filter** Replacing a clogged air filter can improve your vehicle's mileage up to 10 percent. **Keep Tires Properly Inflated** Proper inflation can increase mileage by around 3 percent. An added benefit is that properly inflated tires are safer and last longer. **Use Recommended Grade of Motor Oil** Using the incorrect weight can increase fuel consumption by 1-2 percent. Look for motor oil that says "Energy Conserving" on the API performance symbol to be sure it contains friction-reducing additives. **Vehicle Operation**

**Drive Sensibly** Aggressive driving can lower your fuel mileage by one-third. Sensible driving is also safer for your horse(s). **Observe the Speed Limit** The Department of Energy states that each 5 mph you drive over 60 mph is like paying an additional \$0.21 for each gallon of fuel. An added benefit is that observing the speed limit is also safer for your horse(s). **Avoid Excessive Idling** Idling gets 0 miles per gallon. **Use Cruise Control** Using cruise control (where applicable) helps you maintain a constant speed and, in most cases, will save fuel. Do not use cruise control if you are tired or fatigued. In fact, if you are tired or fatigued, you shouldn't be trailering horses. **Use Overdrive Gears** When your engine speed goes down, your mileage goes up. An added benefit is that using overdrive gears reduces engine wear. Vehicle maintenance and safe operation also helps the environment. A properly tuned vehicle with correct tire inflation, driven at the correct speed, reduces the detrimental impacts automobiles have on the environment. Numerous Internet resources are available to help in the hunt for cheaper fuel: [www.gaspricewatch.com](http://www.gaspricewatch.com) uses volunteers to report prices at over 100,000 fuel stops all over the country. Simply enter your zip code. [www.gasbuddy.com](http://www.gasbuddy.com) works by zip codes and compiles information from other websites that track local prices. Additional fuel economy tips are posted on [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).