



DVS EQUINE

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Equine Winter Basics

Here are some good practices to keep your horse healthy environmentally and medically:

Geriatric horse (18 years or older) -

They are usually less flexible and have an increase in dehydration which can lead to more colic while the GI gets use to less water. Make sure the horse is getting 0.3 – 0.8 gallons of water for every 100 lbs.

In older horses with joint stiffness we have found that one or two Adequan® injections before Nov. really help reduce the need for anti-inflammatory medications, such as phenylbutazone, naproxen, and firocoxib.

Diet changes and dehydration can also lead to impaction colic. Offer at least 5 gallons of warm water (45-60° F) twice a day in the winter, in addition to offering free access to cold water. Feed a mixture of 1-2 lbs. of beet pulp and ½ - 1 lb. of bran soaked in 1-2 gallons of water. Add 1-2 ounces of salt to the feed, but only if the horse has unlimited access to water. Abrupt switches from pasture to hay can also cause problems.

Water- the most important nutrient.

1000 lb. horse should drink at least 5-6 gallons of water per day (need 3 gallons to keep up with saliva production). Make sure it is available at all times, non-frozen, preferably a heated source and MONITOR!

Tips for increasing water intake are keeping as the water as ice free as possible, add salt to grain, and have water tested for iron and sulfides (both reduce palatability).

“Cold Snap Anticipation” (below 35°)

The day before try to give the horse 1oz salt or increase the hay. The day of the cold snap, mix concentrate (any Equine Senior product is good) with a gallon of water per feeding and allow it to sit for 10-15 minutes. Increase hay (fiber) by 5-10% and 1 cup corn oil or stabilized rice bran supplementation.

Vaccines for the winter months.

Booster influenza and Rhino immunization especially if in a multi horse facility. Even if only there are a few horses in pasture it may be a good idea because it primes the immune system non-specifically for the stress of the weather changes.

Skin problems.

Ringworm comes from infected tack and incubates for 4 days to 1 month. It can be prevented by sunlight, heat, isolation, antifungals, and disinfected tack.

Lice are prevalent in long hair. It can spread like ringworm. Treat with spray or dust two times around two weeks apart.

Mites can come in different forms. Grain mites are natural rodent hosts and horse's face becomes itchy and scaly when infected. Mange mites are in the mane and tail can cause hair loss. Leg mange in the long hair of lower legs cause stomping.

Ultra Boss® purchased at Fleet Farm seems to work the best as it has the highest concentration of permethrin (active ingredient) that is still safe for horses.

Hoof Care

– do not skip regular farrier visits just because the feet grow slower in the winter. Be careful when turning out a horse on uneven ground after shoes have been pulled. Shoes should be fitted with Borium (tungsten carbide) for traction especially on front feet. Snow pads are a must if shoes left on.

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Blanketing—

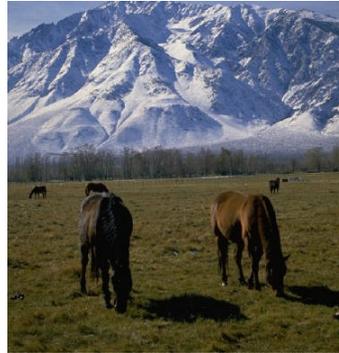
It is a convenience for people on the show circuit because hair coat is always short. However, the horse does not have adequate insulation to be turned out for 24 hours per day. Most pasture horses will not need a blanket. Decision to blanket a geriatric horse is based on its body condition score (BCS). Check every day to make sure horse is not losing weight, or blanket is damaged or the horse is damp underneath.

Barn environment -

Proper ventilation is taking old stale air out and bringing in fresh outside air. Re-circulating fans above stalls alone just blow dust and pathogens around to all the horses. Please call if you have concerns,

especially if there are condensation problems and dead air spaces by the stalls. We will help to find a least cost solution to this problem and design a ventilation system to ensure the health of your horses.

- Matt Schaefer, DVM



REMEMEBER TO BRING IN YOUR FALL FECAL SAMPLES FOR EVALUATION!

DEWORMING is very important in the fall! Remember October is the month to submit a fecal sample for your horse. Many of you did this last year and we were able to reduce a lot of unnecessary anthelmintic use. For accurate assessments you must take 2 fecal balls that have fallen directly and almost immediately from your horse. Refrigerate (keep cool) the sample and analyzed in 3 days. It is very important that you have not dewormed the horse up to 2 months before sample was taken.



Last year we had quite a few horses losing excessive body condition during the winter months. This was due to poor hay quality. In addition to fecal testing it would be a real good idea to have your hay tested by a forage lab for energy and protein content. By doing this you can get a good idea of how much should be fed per day and in some cases, to determine whether or not the hay is even adequate to support the needs of your horses.

