

# Management Tips

Proper grazing and manure and mud management will help keep horses healthy and streams clean.

## STREAMS

Vegetation along streams helps protect water from getting too warm, filter out potential pollutants, and stabilize banks. Horse activity near streams can trample the banks,



send manure into the water and cause horse injuries. Protect your stream and your horses' safety and health by maintaining an un-grazed vegetated buffer next to streams and an off-stream drinking water source.

To avoid stream contamination, fence out horses and provide them safe access to clean drinking water with an off-channel water trough or nose pump.



## PASTURES

Over-grazed pastures lead to bare soil and thus, erosion, water and nutrient run-off, more noxious and potentially toxic weeds,

poor forage and dust that horses can inhale. Healthy pastures produce more economical forage: estimated at \$30/ton vs. \$270/ton for hay.



A simple rule of thumb for pasture management is to "graze at 8, no more at 4." This means graze when grass is about 8" tall and take horses off when the grass is 4" tall to allow the grass to re-grow. Also, keep livestock off wet pastures, which are easily damaged.

Cross-fence to divide your pasture into at least three smaller parcels and rotate horses through them. This provides at least three weeks of rest for each pasture allows the parasite larvae in manure to die in the sun.

## MUD MANAGEMENT

An all-weather paddock or "heavy use area" is a key part of most well-managed horse properties. This is a dry area where you can keep your horses over the winter. It allows pasture grass to re-grow, protect the saturated ground from compaction and erosion, and manage the amount of green grass your horses are eating. Think of it as a horse's "living room," with the pasture as the "dining room."

Replace dirt with gravel, geotextile fabric and sand to provide adequate drainage and reduce mud and dust. Regularly rake your all-weather paddock of manure for pollution control and horse health.

Maintain clean water by collecting roof water in gutters and downspouts and diverting it around the heavy use area. Leave a vegetated buffer between manure sources and surface water. Applying gravel to animal trails and paths will keep mud and weeds at bay.

## MANURE

The average 1000 lb. horse produces 50 pounds of manure every day! That's six pick-up loads a year, and about \$1,250 in fertilizer value.

Harrow fields regularly to incorporate standing manure into the soil. This keeps valuable nutrients on your pasture and prevents bacteria and excess nutrients from entering water. It also disperses manure with parasite larvae for solar sanitation, encourages horses to graze pastures more uniformly, and protects horse health.

Keep your horse on a regular worming schedule to avoid a cycle of disease.

## COMPOST

Compost manure to reduce the volume of waste and produce great fertilizer. A compost pile that gets hot enough will kill weed seeds and parasites.

Cover the pile during wet weather to keep nutrients from leaching.



Give away compost or apply to fields after about six months.

# Check List for Healthy Horses & Clean Water

- Pasture/grazing management
- Manure management
- Composting
- Off-stream watering
- Dedicated all-weather paddocks
- Stream bank and riparian vegetation
- Gutters & downspouts
- Horse trails and paths



## Conservation

Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were formed in response to the massive soil erosion crisis of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, which undermined the value and productivity of agricultural lands.

Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private lands. Oregon responded by creating districts which work hand-in-hand with private landowners, as well as state, tribal and federal agencies and local organizations to meet the needs of the landowner and to achieve local, statewide and regional conservation objectives.

SWCDs are governed by a locally elected board of directors and accountable to citizens.

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Soil & Water Conservation District

# Horse Health & Water Quality



Keep pastures  
green & water  
clean