

COLT FOLLOWING



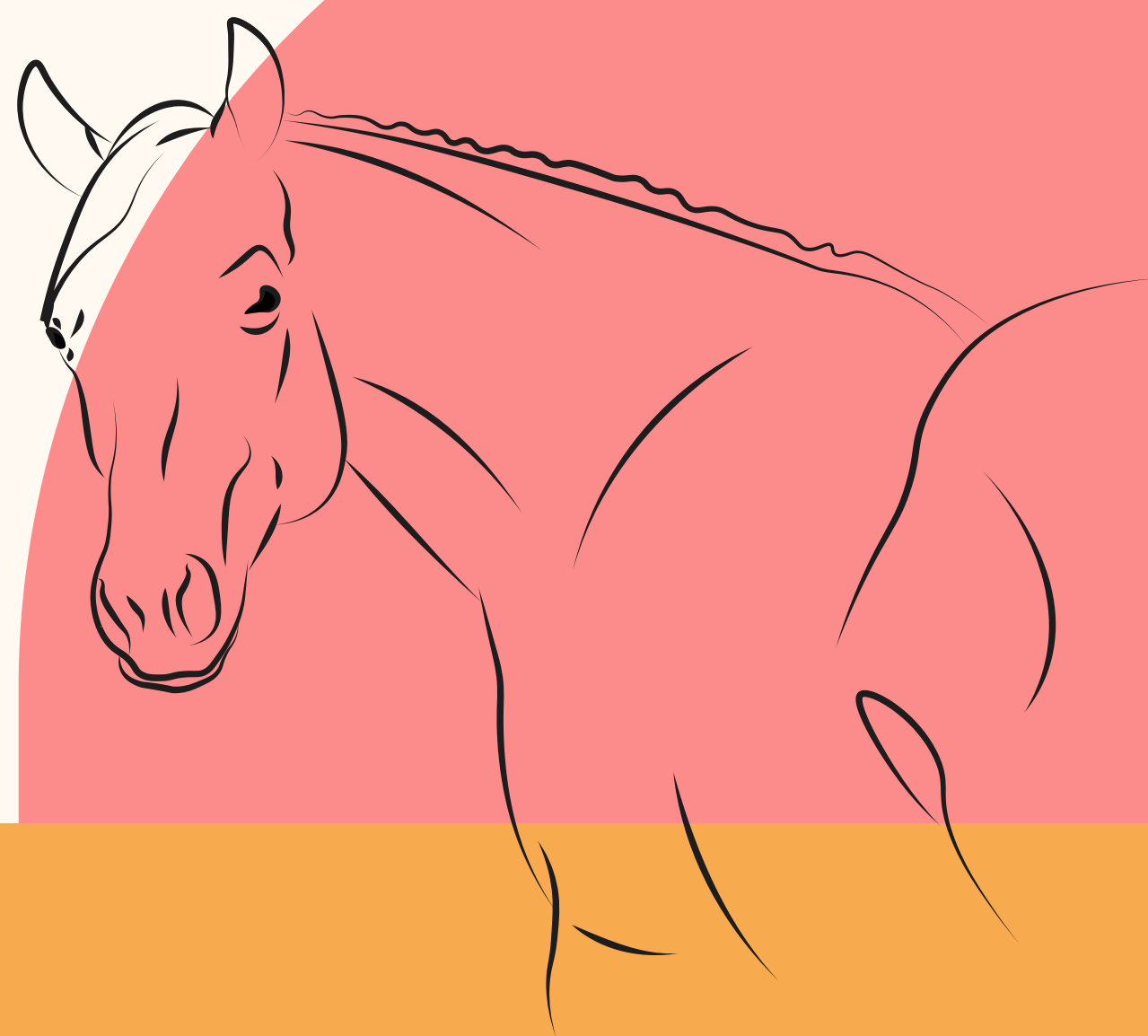
**A NEWSLETTER FOR EQUINE LOVERS
BY STABLE HOMES**

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WEATHERING THE STORM

UNDERSTANDING EXTREME WEATHER CARE FOR HORSES

Hay! It's Getting Hot!

It's burning hot outside and soon it'll start to matter what you are feeding your horses. Horses are extremely sensitive to heat and are prone to get stressed out once the temperature starts to rise. The main goal is to keep your horses as cool as possible; when the temperature starts increasing, horses have to expend more energy to cool down their bodies. Their main cooling mechanism is sweating, which requires a lot of muscular activity. This additional burden has to be offset with a proper nutritional diet that provides the horse with enough energy to regulate its body. If the horse isn't well-fed, it will impact its performance outside of the stables and you'll find it harder to get them to train. Here are a few things you can do to keep up with the nutritional needs of your horses:

- Give Them Electrolytes!

Horses sweat a lot. An inevitable consequence of this is the loss of essential minerals such as potassium, chloride and sodium. Collectively, these are known as electrolytes because they regulate the muscular functioning of the body. Without them, the body can't function well as it causes fatigue and poor muscular coordination. So, if your horse is losing its essential minerals, make sure that you replace them by adding a couple of ounces of these salts into their usual diet.

- Stay off the Protein!

Protein is essential for building muscles, but sadly it's also really hard to break down. The additional energy required to break it down means that the body can't fix muscular tissues that are in need of repair. A horse doesn't generally require too much protein – a healthy diet should only include 10% protein, which can easily be found in the usual horse feed and the hay that is given.

- Manage Body Weight!

Fat helps the body retain heat. This is great in cold weather, but during the summer fat can come in the way of helping the horse maintain the right body temperature. Fat would come in the way of the body's attempt to cool itself down by getting rid of heat. The best way to study the horse's bodily statistics is to use a weight tape instead of just relying on observation. Use the tape to take a measure of the horse's weight every thirty days and adjust the diet accordingly.

Sources:

<https://www.equestrian.org.au/news/tips-feeding-horses-hot-and-humid-climates>

<https://castlehorsefeeds.com/caring-horses-hot-weather/>

Trotting Territories

Horses have the astounding ability to cool themselves through sweating. Taking care of horses during hot temperatures usually involves helping enhance their natural ability to regulate their body temperature. Horses that aren't getting enough physical training and have thick coats especially require external resources to fend off the heat.

Controlling the horses' environment by adding external coolants can help them be more comfortable during particularly hot hours of the day. When the sun is at its peak, the hot air accumulates within the closed environment of the stable, so it's important to make sure that the air keeps moving around and isn't stagnant. A nice breeze will help the sweat to evaporate so that the body can keep cooling itself. Place a couple of fans around the stable to keep a steady gust of wind flowing. Additionally, you can use a mist system to help the horse absorb some of the water, which will aid them in rapidly shedding off the excess heat. Do make sure that the water is immediately getting scraped off with the help of fans otherwise it can accumulate and block their sweat glands.

It's essential to take horses out from time to time, to give them a run in the hay so they can maintain their physical health. During the summers, you do need to change the schedule of the horses so that their outside time falls during hours when the temperature isn't that brutal. You should ideally take them out in the early morning or the night. This way they can rest during peak sunny hours and get some exercise when the weather is more conducive. Always make sure that your horse has quick access to shade just in case the air is too stagnant even during hours when the sun isn't out.

Another important tip is to always keep your horses hydrated! Water can become extremely hot during high temperatures and most horses will avoid hot water because it just simply isn't enjoyable to drink. So, encourage your horses to hydrate by giving them access to clean and cool drinking water. It's common for horses to feel too fatigued during the summer and this might discourage them from drinking water. You can encourage your horses to consume more water by putting some salt blocks near the water bucket. This extra treat will motivate them to keep hydrating on their own.

Trotting Territories

Here's some other quick tips on how to keep your horses more comfortable during the summer:

- Schedule veterinary visits right before the summer season begins. Hot temperatures can exacerbate underlying health conditions and having a vet check the overall vitals of your horse will ensure that any serious illness or issue is caught in time.
- A common disease that some horses have is called anhidrosis - a condition that makes it harder for horses to sweat. This can have catastrophic consequences because the body temperature of the horse will keep rising along with an increase in the breathing rate. You need to make the requisite adjustments in the horse's nutrition and training schedule to account for this illness. Also, immediately reach out to your vet to come up with effective solutions tailored for your horses' specific needs.
- Horses can easily get too hot because of the amount of material that is put on their body. Investing in light, airy and breathable material will ensure that your horse is able to sweat better. Low-quality material can trap too much heat, making it harder for your horse to cool down.

Sources:

<https://extension.umn.edu/horse-care-and-management/caring-horses-during-hot-weather>

<https://equusmagazine.com/horse-care/10-facts-horses-hot-weather-25168/>

Mare Wash: Washing and Grooming Horses

Sweltering summers are tough for all of us, and our friends from the ranch are no different. Horses require significant amounts of care during warmer months. The reason is again understandably similar to what we observe with humans - excessive sweating, heavy breathing, and dehydration.

Horses primarily cool off through the process of sweating - sweat accumulates on their skin and is evaporated in the presence of heat, which leaves behind a cooling effect on the skin. During summer-time, cooling off becomes important for the horse's body and it sweats profusely. In this manner horses end up with two major bodily issues. They lose significant amounts of water from their bodies. Further, the water accumulates on the skin, and traps further body heat, if not washed.

Along with issues associated with dehydration, excessive heat also causes skin diseases, sunburns, West Nile virus (WNV) and even Potomac Horse Fever (PHF). Some preventive action steps include ensuring that the horses are provided with an accessible water source at all times - they are likely to consume 22- 55 liters per day. This source of water needs to have a clean composition as standing water is likely to attract fungus and harmful bacteria. Maintaining ventilation and flow of cool air is also critical as it ensures that excess water evaporates off the surface of the body and adds to the cooling effect. It should be ensured that excess sweat is wiped off them so as to not let the heat remain trapped on the surface of the body.

Horses should be fed food such as mash potato along with a timely consumption of electrolytes which promotes more water intake. It is important to be attentive with your horses and ensure that most activity happens in the cooler part of the day. The horses' stables should also be constructed to ensure shade and protection from direct sunlight.

In case the heat impacts a horse adversely and one can observe the effects of the sun on the horse's skin, it becomes important to spray its entire body with cool water. This should be continued till the horse is visibly relieved. It is also advisable to use ice in case of extreme discomfort, however, only on the exposed parts of the body - back, head, sides. Some experts also advise using body covers in the form of - cool rugs or thick layers of hay and straw - a process that is referred to as thatching.

Mare Wash: Washing and Grooming Horses

Grooming and breeding animals requires attention to details related to weather conditions, age, past history, and other determinants related to horse's quality of life. Any adverse reactions to heat can hence also be prevented by making your horse eat healthy, maintaining its deworming schedule, and ensuring regular checkups.

Sources: <https://extension.umn.edu/horse-care-and-management/caring-horses-during-hot-weather>

<https://horseandcountry.tv/summer-horse-care-how-to-protect-your-horse-in-hot-weather/>

Snow Bite! Equine Nutrition for Cold Climates

As the weather changes, so do the nutritional needs of horses. While different horses have different tolerance levels, some general guidelines must be followed. In short, adequate calorie intake and water are a must. Why? This is because horses need extra energy in the winter months. This is because horses need to maintain the temperature of their body without getting thinner or weaker. An average horse would need about 25% more energy during this time. When it comes to their diet, you must consider your horse's lower critical temperature. This refers to the temperature below which your horse will have to expend more energy to produce heat than is normal.

During cold, windy, or wet weather, non-working horses require an additional one-quarter pound of grain for 100 pounds of body weight every day. Working horses, on the other hand, require one-half of grain for 100 pounds of body weight.

How can you tell if your horse needs more energy?

Piloerection is a good indicator; it means the condition wherein the hair on your horse's coat stands on end instead of being flat. Other signs of inadequate energy intake are dry feces, reduced appetite, weight loss, and an increase in wood chewing. Your horse might also start shivering or displaying other kinds of muscular activity- like running- in order to generate heat in their bodies.

If you are concerned about your horse's winter nutrition, here are some pointers to keep in mind:

- In the winters, give your horse at least 1.5 to 3 percent of their body weight in fodder.
- They should be able to freely access salt at all hours.
- Horses kept outside have higher energy needs. So make sure you give them forages that provide them with higher energy.
- Feed your horse good quality hay. This is the easiest way to supply additional energy.
- Horses in groups might compete with each other for fodder. In such situations, it is better to provide food in a way that reduces competition, so that even timid horses get enough food.
- Another thing to remember is to use fodder that is easily digestible. Avoid coarse hays since they are low in energy.

Snow Bite! Equine Nutrition for Cold Climates

- If your horse needs vitamin supplements - such as vitamins A, D, and E - choose the appropriate mineral-vitamin mixes ones.
- Water helps maintain the horse's appetite. If possible, try to provide heated (2-10°C) water.
- To protect horses from the chilly wind, arrange a bedding area that is among a group of trees or in a coulee or bluff.

Overall, feeding your horse grain (concentrates) might lead to digestion issues. That is why, stick to increasing the amount of hay you provide to your horses. If this is not adequate, resort to supplements that help gain weight or oil. For older horses who have poor teeth, provide chopped hay or feed them pellets. In short, hay generates metabolic heat over a longer period than other concentrates. Therefore, increasing its portion is crucial to maintain your horses' weight in winter months.

Sources: https://esc.rutgers.edu/fact_sheet/winter-feeding-for-horses/
<https://www.purinamills.com/horse-feed/education/detail/how-to-care-for-horses-in-winter>