



Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.

EquineFACS

Health

- Vaccination is an essential component of equine health care, talk to your veterinarian about a vaccination program for your horse. Available vaccines include:
 - Tetanus
 - West Nile
 - Equine influenza
 - Rabies
 - Encephalomyelitis (“sleeping sickness”)
 - Rhinopneumonitis (EHV-1 and EHV-4)
 - Strangles
- Horses need a comprehensive dental exam before they are three years old, and a yearly exam thereafter; this can be combined with vaccination appointments. Dentistry procedures such as floating should only be carried out by a licensed veterinarian.
- Your veterinarian can help you set up a regular deworming program for controlling internal parasites.
- Consult with your farrier and veterinarian to set up a hoof care program. Hooves should be trimmed and shoes changed every six to eight weeks, on average.
- Check your horse from head to tail every day for injuries and abnormalities so that you can catch health problems early. Clean feet daily with a hoof pick.
- Older horses often need specialized care and nutritional supplementation to maintain optimal health and improve longevity; consult your veterinarian regarding specific geriatric health programs.

Nutrition

- Horses under light work need to eat approximately 2% of their body weight per day, and at least half of this should be roughage (pasture grass and/or good quality hay). For the average 450 kg (1000 lb) horse, this is about 9 kg (20 lbs) of hay per day. Most of the diet should be hay and/or grass, with grain fed only when needed for extra energy. Feed grain in two or three small meals spread out throughout the day, rather than one large meal, to help prevent colic. In winter, it is better to raise hay rations rather than grain to meet increased energy demands.
- Provide three to five acres of good pasture per horse during summer for grazing; avoid overcrowding pastures to prevent problems with injuries, parasites and over-grazing. When feeding hay, spread piles at least 10

horse-lengths apart and put out one extra pile to ensure low-ranking horses will be able to get their share.

- Purchase good quality hay, and feed within a year of harvest to preserve its nutritional value. Square bales are preferable to round bales, which often contain more mould spores and dust that can cause respiratory problems like heaves.
- Do not feed your horse lawnmower grass clippings.
- Ensure that your horse always has a clean source of drinking water. Water intake varies depending on feed intake, activity level, and temperature. The average 450 kg (1000 lb) horse needs from 18L (5 gal) to 36L (10 gal) per day. Provide heated water troughs to ensure that water sources do not freeze in winter, or bring out warm water two to three times a day. It is difficult for horses to meet their water consumption needs by consuming snow alone—there should always be an alternative water source available.
- Provide a trace mineral salt block.

Horse Management

- Provide exercise or pasture turnout for your horse every day. Establish a routine feeding and exercise schedule, and avoid sudden changes to help prevent colic.
- Provide adequate shelter from the wind, such as trees or a shed. For open-front shelters, allow at least eight square feet per horse. The ceiling should be at least nine feet high, and the shelter should be wide rather than deep to prevent dominant horses from blocking the entrance to low-ranking horses. Build on well-drained land, or build up the floor to ensure it stays dry.
- Ensure that pasture fencing is safe and secure. Make regular maintenance a priority—you are less likely to have injuries with properly maintained fencing.
- Store hay in a dry, sheltered area protected from rain, snow and sun. Store grain in horse-proof bins to prevent accidental over-consumption.
- To help control parasite populations in the pasture, mow and harrow regularly to break up manure piles and rotate pastures with other grazing animals (cattle, sheep, etc.) if possible.
- Keep your corrals as clean and dry as possible; excessive moisture can lead to hoof and skin problems such as thrush and scratches.



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FACS represents the livestock industry in advancing responsible animal care and handling practices in agriculture.

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