

Equine Cold Weather Care

KENNETT SQUARE (Chester Co.) — How are you managing your horse during the cold weather? Horses can tolerate cold conditions much better than heat, provided we give them a little help. Dr. Mark Donaldson of New Bolton Center, the large animal facility of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, offers the following tips.

Although the barn may feel nice and warm to in the morning after the horses have spent the night inside with all the doors closed, the lack of ventilation can cause respiratory problems.

Poor ventilation concentrates ammonia from urine, mold particles from hay, and respiratory viruses. Adequate

ventilation is necessary even in the coldest months.

Most horses thrive outside when provided with a shelter from the wind and access to adequate water and feed. Being in a pasture provides cleaner air and the opportunity for exercise.

The winter coat is great insulation, so if you do not plan to exercise your horse in the winter forgo the blanket and don't clip his coat. As the temperature drops, the horse's nutritional requirements increase.

A good quality hay (rather than grain) best provides the additional calories needed to keep the horse in good health. Your veterinarian can help you obtain a nutritional analysis of your hay to ensure it

provides all the nutrients needed.

When feeding several horses outside make certain the social order of the herd does not prevent some horses from getting enough to eat. Although large round bales may be more prone to mold they are a reasonable source of nutrition provided they are under a shelter and off the ground.

Horses should eat about 1.5-3.0 percent of their body weight per day in hay, which is 15 to 30 pounds per day for a 1,000 pound horse.

Horses' metabolic rates vary just as people's do, and it is best to feed them according to body condition. Look and feel for fat over the ribs, on the top line, over the tail head, and



Bruce Rappoport, associate dean of Penn's Veterinary School and director of New Bolton Center, examines Joker and Promise, two of the school's three Morgan driving horses.

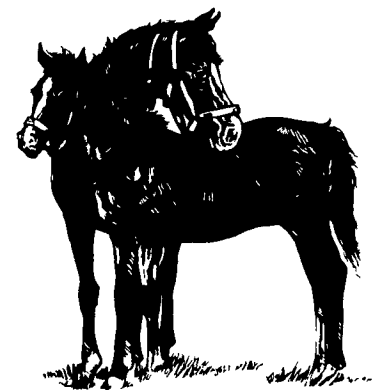
under the mane.

For horses that need a few extra calories, the diet can be supplemented with vegetable oil or rice bran. To ensure your horse is able to get all he can from his food regular dental maintenance and deworming are essential.

Closely monitor your horse's water source. Dehydration can lead to intestinal impactions and colic. Studies have shown horses drink less water when it is cold. Automatic waters that are insulated and obtain heat from the ground and bucket heaters are helpful in providing an adequate supply of water.

Equine senior citizens need some extra consideration and careful monitoring during

winter months. Older horses don't thermo-regulate as well as youngsters, and may require blankets to prevent heat loss. Many geriatric horses suffer from arthritis, and good footing is essential to ensure they are able to assess their food and water safely.



Pennsylvania Equine Council Scheduled To Conduct Riding Trail Update

GETTYSBURG (Adams Co.) — On Wednesday, March 19 at 7 p.m. the Pennsylvania Equine Council will conduct a current issues meeting at the Adams County Agricultural and Natural Resource Center located at 670 Old Harrisburg Road, Gettysburg.

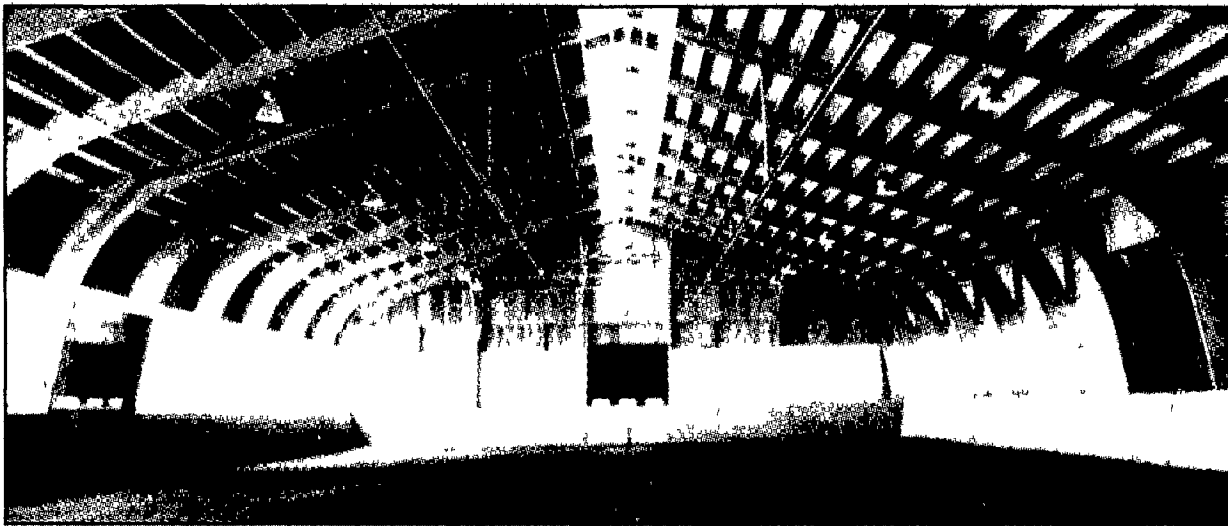
Topics will include equestrian access to public lands —

game commission lands, new regulations restricting equine access (effective Feb. 1), criteria used by the game commission to approve designated trails for equine use, access to other public lands, how to retain our access to public lands, the new Equine Liability Bill — what is it and how will it affect us, and upcoming manure

management regulations. Speakers will be Bud and Gwen Wills, Pennsylvania Equine Council State Trails Chairpersons.

For more information on this meeting please contact Amy Skvarka, Pennsylvania Equine Council, Region 8 Director at (717) 528-8588 or via e-mail at cloverbug@adelphia.net.

Riding Arena

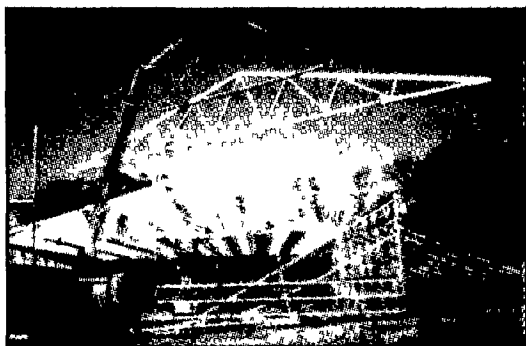


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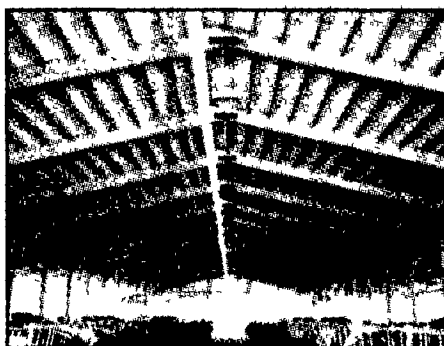
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