The Care & Handling of Your Horse
Supplement for the Light Horse

Revised 8/06
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Learning the Parts of the Horse

1. Poll
2. Ear
3. Forehead
4. Eye
5. Face
6. Cheek
7. Nostril
8. Muzzle
9. Upper Lip
10. Lower Lip
11. Chin Groove
12. Throat Latch
13. Neck
14. Shoulder
15. Point of Shoulder
16. Chest
17. Forearm
18. Elbow
19. Knee
20. Hoof
21. Barrel
22. Abdomen
23. Heart Girth
24. Chestnut
25. Cannon
26. Fetlock Joint
27. Pastern
28. Coronet
29. Crest
30. Withers
31. Back
32. Loin
33. Point of Hip
34. Rump or Croup
35. Dock
36. Buttock
37. Thigh
38. Flank
39. Stifle
40. Tail
41. Gaskin or Second Thigh
42. Sheath (♀) Udder (♂)
43. Hock
44. Fetlock
45. Ergot
46. Foreflank
FEEDING YOUR HORSE

The amount and type of feed your horse requires will vary according to his weight and how you use and manage him. A successful feeding practice provides the basic feed requirements for body maintenance, growth, work, and reproduction.

The first and important use of feed is for body maintenance. Additional nutrients are needed for growth, work, gestation, milk production, and lying on body fat (see table 1). Young animals need protein for building muscles, bones, hair, and hooves. Mature horses need less protein until pregnancy and lactation increases their needs.

Don’t overlook water in your horse’s diet. Water is necessary to all life processes. It carries nutrients and regulates body temperature. An animal can survive much longer without feed than he can without water. Always have fresh, clean, cool water available, except when a horse is hot from work. Permit a warm horse only a light drink to refresh him.

With proper supplements, most feeds, useful to farm animals make satisfactory horse feeds after the horse becomes accustomed to their odor and taste. Horses digest some types of feeds more easily than other types. Roughage’s (hay and pasture) are high in fiber and relatively low in digestible nutrients (50 percent). Concentrates (grain) are low in fiber and high in digestible nutrients (about 75 percent).

Daily Feed Requirements

Feeding for Maintenance

Energy: The nutrients required to maintain your horse vary with his weight and his work. The daily requirement per 1,000 pounds live weight for an idle horse is 1.5 percent of his body weight. This is approximately equal to 15 pounds of good quality hay per day. Grain can supplement the working horse’s daily diet.

Protein: Good quality pasture, or as little as 6 pounds of good quality alfalfa hay per day, supply the protein requirements of a 1,000-pound horse.

Vitamins: Green pasture, or 3-5 pounds of quality Green hay per day, usually will meet the maintenance requirements of 12.5 international units (I.U.) of Vitamin A per 100 pounds of body weight. Levels of 18 I.U. per 100 pounds of body weight are adequate for weanlings. Pregnant and lactating (nursing) mares require Vitamin A, 25 I.U. per 100 pounds of body weight.

Minerals: Twenty-five grams per day of calcium and 17 grams per day of phosphorus are required to maintain a mature 1,000-pound horse. Pregnant and lactating mares and young growing horses need more. Provide salt-free choice, particularly when animals are sweating heavily. A trace mineral salt will supply other minerals needed unless there is an unusual deficiency.

Feeding working horses, pregnant and lactating mares.

Your horse needs more food for energy when his work is increased. However, he will not need more protein than is required for maintenance, so the food supplied for energy will give him an ample amount of protein.

The pregnant mare requires nutrients for maintenance, development of the fetus, increased body heat during gestation, and for any work she performs. A lactating mare may produce 3-4 gallons of milk (25 - 32 pounds) per day. Milk production requires additional nutrients for protein and for energy. Also, a lactating mare requires two to three times her maintenance requirement of Vitamin A and calcium-phosphorus.
Feeding the growing foal

The growing foal may gain one-half his adult weight in one-fourth the time (12 months) it takes him to reach maturity. A well-balanced ration and adequate nutrition are particularly important during this stage of development. You may supplement the diet of the nursing foal with a very small amount of concentrate mix when he is 2 to 4 weeks old. Gradually increase this amount to 1/2 to 3/4 pound concentrate per 100 pound of body weight.

You can control the amount and kind of feed the foal receives with a creep feeder. This enclosure has a feed opening just big enough to admit the foal. A satisfactory creep ration may be a combination of oats, wheat bran, and protein meal. Be aware that overfeeding of extremely high protein or high-energy diets can cause epiphysitis (inflammation of joints of the leg) of young foals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: Feed Required Daily for Light Horses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work or condition of horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idle Horse (maintenance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Work</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Work</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant mare (last quarter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lactating Mare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lactating Mare (4 gal/day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Pasture or legume hay recommended - if other than legume hay is used, include a protein-rich feed, such as linseed oil meal, in the concentrate ration. National Research Council says that a maintenance ration provides nutrients for up to 1-hour work per day.

After weaning, increase the amount of a ration that is palatable, high in digestibility, proteins, and minerals, ad low in fiber. Total daily intake should be 2.5 - 3 pounds per 100 pounds of body weight (see table 2).

The foal is still growing during his second year, and he should have good quality legume pasture and some concentrate feeding. In the third and fourth years, good quality roughage may provide most of the required nutrients. The concentrate requirement depends on the amount of work performed.

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**Abbreviations Used in Tables**

- gm: gram(s)
- gal: gallon(s)
- mg: milligram(s)
- lb: pound(s)
- cc: cubic centimeter(s)
- cwt: hundredweight
- oz: ounce(s)
- pt: pint(s)
- EC: emulsifiable concentrate
- qt: quart(s)
- WP: wettable powder

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TABLE 2: Daily Gains and Feed Requirements of the Growing Foal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body weight (lbs.)</th>
<th>Age (mos.)</th>
<th>Average daily gain (lbs.)</th>
<th>Daily feed (lbs.)</th>
<th>TDN (lbs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>880</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>990</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: SUGGESTED DAILY RATIONS FOR A 1,000-POUND HORSE AT MEDIUM WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ration 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa hay</td>
<td>15 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolled barley</td>
<td>6 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat bran</td>
<td>1 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ration 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oat hay</td>
<td>10 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa hay</td>
<td>5 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolled barley</td>
<td>4 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>3 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ration 3</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grass hay</td>
<td>10 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa hay</td>
<td>5 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>5 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolled barley</td>
<td>3 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ration 4</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oat hay</td>
<td>9 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass hay</td>
<td>6 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolled barley</td>
<td>4 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>2 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat bran</td>
<td>1 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carbohydrates are available from cereal grains such as oats, barley, and corn, which are low in fiber and about 75 percent digestible.

Fresh green roughage (grass or hay) is an excellent source of vitamin A. Grain hay or bleached, poor-quality roughage contains little or no vitamin A. Supplement these with a commercially prepared source of this important nutrient.

Legumes are relatively high in calcium; cereal grains are a source of phosphorus. In most cases you should supplement a prepared mineral mix with the calcium and phosphorus contained in natural feed to get the correct proportion.

Common California Feeds

The following are characteristics of more important feed sources in California.

**Pasture:** In California, non-irrigated pasture is adequate for horses during only a few months. Irrigated pasture can be used all year and, if not overgrazed, will keep an idle horse in good condition. A pastured horse at light, medium, or hard work should have the same grain ration as a horse on hay.

**Alfalfa hay:** This most nutritious of available hays in California is high in protein, calcium, and vitamins A and D. It can make up all or part of a ration, but make the change to alfalfa gradually if a horse has been on oat or grass hay. Alfalfa is highly recommended for foals and pregnant or lactating mares, but a protein supplement should be provided.

**Oat hay:** Oat hay is the most common horse feed in the state, although it varies considerably in energy content and total digestibility. It is not recommended as the

Sources of Nutrients

Many different feeds can supply the necessary nutrients for your horse. Protein-rich feeds include legume hay or pasture (alfalfa, clover, vetch), cottonseed meal, linseed meal, and soybean meal. (For sample rations, see table 3.)
only feed for colts, growing horses, or broodmares unless supplemented by legume or legume mix, alfalfa hay, or alfalfa meal. Oat hay is lower in protein, vitamin A, and calcium than is alfalfa.

**Sudan and grass hay:** All may substitute for oat hay. They may vary considerably in protein and energy content.

**Oats:** The most commonly fed grain for horses throughout the world, oats, may be fed alone or mixed with barley, bran, alfalfa meal, linseed meal, or other supplements. Oats may be whole or rolled.

**Barley:** You may substitute barley for part or all of the grain ration. It is slightly higher in energy and lower in bulk than oats and is best combined with a bulky supplement, such as bran or alfalfa meal. Barley must be rolled or ground to be an acceptable horse ration.

**Wheat bran:** Excellent as part of the grain ration, it should not make up more than 25 percent of it. Fairly low in energy and high in bulk, wheat bran, supplies protein and phosphorus, but is slightly laxative. Occasionally it is fed as a hot-water mash after a day of heavy work. It is excellent for mares after foaling.

**Alfalfa meal:** When good alfalfa hay or pasture is unavailable, this is an excellent supplement. When mixed with molasses, it is sold as alfalfa molasses or a “sweet feed.” You can feed this free choice gradually if your horse is accustomed to it. It is excellent for putting weight on thin horses.

**Mixed grain rations:** Most of those on the market are well balanced and usually include salt, vitamins, and minerals. You can use mixes as the only grain supplement, but they are expensive and rarely more nutritious than a home mixture.

**“All-in-one” feeds:** Pellets or meals that include the required hay and grain proportions are ground and mixed. If they are the only rations fed, use at same or slightly lower rate than good quality hay for horses at light and medium work. This is excellent feed where good hay is unavailable or hay storage is a problem; it is desirable also for horses that tend to be constipated on a hay ration. Usually it is higher priced than hay or grain rations, and some horses may still need a small amount of hay to prevent them from chewing fences or developing other bad habits as a result of restlessness or boredom.

**Suggestions for good management**

A few general rules will help you avoid some common difficulties:
- Know your horse’s age and what his weight should be when he is in good condition.
- Have a regular feeding time – two or three times daily, if possible.
- Avoid sudden changes in type of food.
- Never give your horse moldy or dusty feed.
- Keep the feedbox clean
- Feed your horse as an individual – learn his special requirements and preferences.
- Do not overfeed, but be sure to feed your horse adequately.
- See that your horse gets adequate exercise regularly.
- Have a veterinarian check your horse’s teeth for soundness yearly.

For further information see *Feed Requirements of the Light Horse, Publication 4005.*
Keeping Your Horse Healthy

Keeping your horse healthy is a very important part of your project. First of all, remember that the veterinarian is a valuable friend when your horse shows disease symptoms. Give him the chance to prevent serious trouble when your horse first shows signs of illness. Don't put off calling him. Here are a few things you should know about keeping your horse in good health.

Diseases

Equine Encephalomyelitis (sleeping sickness): This brain disease affects both horses and mules. It can be transmitted to humans. In the early stages, the infected animal may walk aimlessly about, sometimes in circles, and may appear depressed and sleepy. Grinding of the teeth often occurs; later, paralysis may develop in the throat, lips, and bladder, as well as blindness. Death may occur within 4 or 5 days after symptoms are noted. Some animals recover; others live but cannot react to normal stimuli and are referred to as dummies.

The disease is caused by one of three filterable viruses and is transmitted by mosquitoes. All horses should be vaccinated annually prior to the mosquito season. (See table 4, Vaccination Program for Horses.)

Colic: This is another term for gastrointestinal upset in the horse. In most cases, colic is caused by failure to control internal parasites as well as by errors in feeding and management. It can result from such things as: overeating; coarse indigestible feed; sudden changes in feed; working too soon after eating. Common signs of colic are pawing, stretching out like a sawhorse, looking at his side, getting up and down, rolling, and kicking at the abdomen.

A horse that is throwing itself and rolling should be walked until the veterinarian arrives. Any case of genuine colic should receive immediate veterinary attention.

Thrush: Proper cleaning of your horse's feet helps keep him healthy and well groomed. The most frequent cause of thrush is lack of proper foot care, particularly failure to clean out thoroughly the depths of the commissures and cleft of the frog. Other contributing causes may be a lack of frog pressure, insufficient exercise, filthy stables, dry feet, and cuts or tears in the horny frog.

You can detect thrush by the presence of cracks, depressions, or fissures in the horn of the frog containing a thick, dark-colored discharge with a very offensive odor. Thrush usually infects the cleft of the frog and the sides of the frog at the depths of the commissures. Thrush gradually destroys horny tissue, which may be underrun and loosened some distance back from the edges of the external opening. Horses usually do not become lame until the destruction of horny tissue reaches the sensitive tissues. Consult your veterinarian for treatment of thrush.

Colds: Upper respiratory infections in the horse are common problems. They often are accompanied by coughing and a runny nose. These signs are also present in equine rhinopneumonitis, equine arthritis, equine influenza and strangles, as well as other diseases. Consult your veterinarian if your horse is obviously sick and off feed or if symptoms persist. Working an animal with an apparent mild cold often leads to more severe diseases, such as pneumonia.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Organism</th>
<th>Spread</th>
<th>Vaccination</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influenza</td>
<td>Virus (myxovirus A-equ 1 and A-equ 2)</td>
<td>Contact (direct or indirect, i.e., food, water, utensils)</td>
<td>Bivalent killed vaccine. Initial vaccination with a booster in 6-8 weeks. Follow with 2 to 5 injections annually depending on exposure.</td>
<td>Give booster vaccination in spring, as disease is prevalent in spring and summer or 2-3 weeks before start to show. Show and race horses may be vaccinated every 2-3 months. Vaccinate animals prior to showing signs of strangles or having recovered from strangles. Administration of more than a single booster injection annually is dangerous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangles</td>
<td>Bacteria (Streptococcus equi)</td>
<td>Contact (direct or indirect)</td>
<td>Killed vaccine. Series of 3 injections at weekly intervals. 1 yearly booster. Not routinely recommended.</td>
<td>Pregnant mares may be given booster within 60 days of foaling to supply colostral antibody to foal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetanus</td>
<td>Bacteria (Clostridium tetani)</td>
<td>Wounds (not contagious)</td>
<td>Tetanus toxoid. Initial vaccination with a booster in 4-8 weeks. Yearly booster. An EEE, WEE, TAT combination is available.</td>
<td>Virus is responsible for abortions in mares, and colds and coughs and a mild fever in young horses. Vaccinate weanlings and yearlings with an initial vaccination and a booster in 4-8 weeks. Two annual boosters. Show and race horses may be vaccinated every 2-3 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viral Abortion</td>
<td>Virus (Equine Herpes-Virus I)</td>
<td>Contact (direct or indirect)</td>
<td>Killed vaccine. Pregnant mare: Vaccinate at 5, 7 and 9 months gestation. Immunity of short duration.</td>
<td>Not for use in pregnant mares, Vaccinate as soon as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Equine Encephalomyelitis</td>
<td>Virus (arboviruses of Group A)</td>
<td>Biting insects (mosquitoes)</td>
<td>Killed vaccine. May use WEE/EEE and tetanus toxoid combination.</td>
<td>Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis has not been diagnosed in California. Vaccinate just before mosquito season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE)</td>
<td>Virus (arboviruses of Group A)</td>
<td>Biting insects (mosquitoes)</td>
<td>Killed vaccine. May use WEE/EEE and tetanus toxoid combination.</td>
<td>All of these equine encephalitides: 2 initial vaccinations, with yearly boosters thereafter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis</td>
<td>Virus (arboviruses of Group B)</td>
<td>Biting insects (mosquitoes)</td>
<td>Live vaccineC1 injection. May use a killed triple vaccine WEE/EEE/VEE. Not routinely used.</td>
<td>Annual vaccination for horses in a high risk area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabies</td>
<td>Virus</td>
<td>Bile or saliva entering wound</td>
<td>Not routinely used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Nile Virus Encephalitis</td>
<td>Virus(Arbovirus, Short for arthropod-borne)</td>
<td>Biting insects (mosquitoes, which have drawn blood from infected birds)</td>
<td>Series of 3 injections, for yearlings 12 months and under. Booster every three to four weeks, then, one annual booster. Adults, 2 injections 30 days apart, then annually.</td>
<td>Not for use in pregnant mares, Vaccinate as soon as possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Age to vaccinate foals is not well established. Colostral immunity has probably lost its inhibitory effect on the antigen in a vaccine by 3 months of age (the half-life of an antibody is 16 days, so that gradually the immunity acquired from the dam recedes).

*John P. Hughes, Professor, Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis.
LIVESTOCK
PESTICIDE USE WARNING CREAD THE LABEL

Pesticides and drugs are poisonous and must be used with caution. READ the label CAREFULLY BEFORE opening a container. Precautions and directions MUST be followed exactly. Special protective equipment (as indicated) must be used.

Storage: Keep all pesticides and drugs in original containers only. Store separately in a locked shed or area. Keep all pesticides and drugs out of the reach of children, unauthorized personnel, pets, and livestock. DO NOT STORE with foods, feeds or fertilizers. Post warning signs on storage areas for all chemicals, pesticides, and drugs.

Use: The suggestions given in this publication are based upon best current information. Follow directions. Measure accurately, to avoid residues exceeding established tolerances. Use exact amounts as indicated on the label, or lesser amounts as specified in this publication. Use a pesticide or drug only on animals listed on the label.

Container Disposal: Consult your Agricultural Commissioner for correct procedures for rinsing and disposing of empty containers. Do not transport pesticides or drugs in vehicles with foods, feeds, clothing, or other materials, and never in a closed cab with the vehicle driver.

Responsibility: The livestock owner is legally responsible for proper use of pesticides, including drift to other crops or properties, and for excessive residues. Pesticides should not be applied over streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, run-off irrigation or other aquatic areas, except where specific use for that purpose is intended.

Permit Requirements: Many pesticides require a permit from the County Agricultural Commissioner before possession or use.

Animal Injury: Certain pesticides or drugs may cause injury, or give less than optimum parasite control if used: (1) at the wrong animal age; (2) at the wrong time of year; (3) on animals under extreme stress or sick; (4) with the wrong formulation; (5) at excessive rates; or (6) in simultaneous use with incompatible materials. Read the label to be sure you are using the chemical properly.

Personal Safety: Follow label directions exactly. Avoid splashing, spilling, leaks, spray drift or clothing contamination. Do NOT eat, smoke, drink, or chew while using pesticides. Provide for emergency medical care in advance.
Parasites
Permanent parasites, such as lice and ticks, are discovered by frequent examination of animals. It is important to control these parasites before large populations occur. Control of lice is important during the winter. It is suggested that horses be individually treated by hand washing or brushing; retreat in two weeks to kill young lice hatching from eggs. Saddle blankets and other equipment of lice-infested horses should be soaked in boiling water or rubbed down with an insecticide.

Tick control is chiefly encountered during late fall and spring. Horses should be inspected after trail riders or exercise in grasslands and brush-covered “tick country”. Take special care to treat body areas where the skin rubs together (fore flank, inner surface of rear flanks, and between the thighs).

Fly Control: The common house fly, biting stable fly, blow fly, and others often become a nuisance around horse stables and other areas where livestock are kept. Unlike other pests mentioned in this publication, these flies cannot be controlled solely by chemical treatment of the animals.

The most effective control is sanitation aimed at the disposal of fly production sources such as manure, feed residues, and other barn wastes combined with application of insecticides as needed to the buildings and surrounding areas.

Chemical treatments seldom give satisfactory results, if flies are developing in nearby manure or other wastes. Flies can move into the treated area from such sources faster than they can be killed by the fly sprays.

When fly production material is eliminated by spreading and drying, pit composting, or immediate off-ranch removal, the remaining flies usually can be satisfactorily controlled by insecticides.

Apply surface-spray insecticides to inside and outside walls of stables, barns, outbuildings, and nearby corral fences. Supplement the surface sprays with dry and liquid baits, space sprays, and lastly, larvicides. Do not spray animals with these materials at the dosage levels recommended for fly control.

Fly control on horse ranches requires special care because of the possibility of contaminating feed and waters with insecticides. For more detailed information, see *Fly Control on the Horse Ranch* (Leaflet 2335). This may be obtained from your local University of California Cooperative Extension farm and home advisors office.

Intestinal parasites
Intestinal parasites can seriously harm your horse. They do great damage by interfering with your horse’s growth, thriftiness, development, performance, and resistance to disease. Young animals are more susceptible and suffer the greatest damage.

The most common and dangerous intestinal parasites in horses are bloodworms (strongyles), roundworms (ascarids), and bots.

Bloodworms (strongyles): The most dangerous internal parasites of the horse, they affect old as well as young animals. These parasites are bloodsuckers and often cause anemia, weakness, emaciation, and diarrhea.
**Roundworms (Ascarids)** These are the long white worms sometimes seen in the horse’s droppings. They occur mainly in young horses and can cause unthriftiness, loss of energy, and digestive disturbances, particularly in colts.

**Bots:** For this larval form of the botfly a good preventive measure is to remove the small yellow eggs sometimes seen on the long hairs of the legs and belly.

**Control of internal parasites**
Consult your veterinarian for proper treatment of parasites. Some important rules to follow are:

1. Worm at 2-month intervals and don’t worm foaling mares within 1 month of foaling.
2. Alternate classes of anthelmintics to combat parasite resistance to specific drugs. Example: Benzimidazoles or pyrantel or the organophosphorous drugs or the piperazine phenothiazine combination. Using trade names can be misleading. Rotating Telmin to Equizole to Camvet to Panacur to Benzelmin to Equivet T utilizes only benzamidazole class drugs, and thus rotation is not achieved.
3. Treat for bots by removing bot eggs when they appear and by worming after the first hard frost in the fall.

For more detailed information see *The Common Parasites of Horses*, Publication 4006.

**Management Practices**
Horses are subject to many different species of stomach and intestinal worms. All of these worms go through a life cycle, which includes time spent outside the horse.

Worm eggs are passed in the feces and these, as well as the larvae, which hatch, are again infective for the horse when it ingests these forms with contaminated food or water.

It is important, therefore, to practice good animal management, which can help, reduce worm burdens present or help prevent new worm infections. The following recommendations will help in this respect:

1. Do not feed on the ground nor allow horses to drink from stagnant water holes, particularly those on pastures that receive manure drainage.
2. Do not overstock pastures. Move horses from one field to another at frequent intervals.
3. Provide proper drainage in pastures to avoid low spots and allow pastures to dry after irrigation before stocking.
4. Clean stables and stalls daily and re-bed twice a week in summer and weekly in winter. Good sanitary methods of these wastes will help control worms as well as assist in fly control.

It is best to have a veterinarian treat or recommend the correct anthelmintic drug for internal parasites. All drugs used to treat parasites in horses are potentially poisonous and must be used with extreme care to avoid side effects. Mis-use can result in an overdose or poor parasite control.

**Teeth Care**
A horse’s back teeth or molars often develop jagged edges which cut into his cheeks and bother him during eating. This problem is especially serious with horses under 6 years and with horses older than 12 to 14 years. A veterinarian should inspect and float the teeth once a year, if necessary.
SAFETY

Beginners should learn to ride under the guidance of a competent instructor. If no instructor is available, the next best choice is to get the advice of a good, experienced rider who knows and follows safe riding practices.

No child should be given a horse or pony which is too headstrong for him/her to handle. If the horse is too spirited or has too tough a mouth it will not respond to the rein readily and may cause trouble for the young rider. The same is true if the horse is too strong for the rider. Either case may be the cause of a dangerous, and possibly fatal, runaway.

Handling, Mounting, and Dismounting

Never approach a horse from the rear, either in the barn or in the open. Approach the horse from the left side and speak gently to warn him of your presence.

Do not bridle a nervous or skittish horse in close quarters, and to avoid injury, keep your head in the clear; in avoiding the bridle the horse may throw his head violently. Keep your feet well back so the horse cannot step on them.

Check the bridle, girth, and saddle attachments before mounting to see that they are secure, and adjust the stirrups to the proper length for you.

Never mount a horse in the barn. The danger of being crushed up against the stall or some other part of the barn is too great. Mount the horse in the clear – not near fences, trees, or overhanging projections. Otherwise the horse could sidestep and injure the rider.

Mount from the left side of the horse and keep the reins taut in the left hand.

Before dismounting, bring the horse to a complete stop in the clear. Handle the reins the same as when mounting.

Safe Riding

To be a good rider, the rider must also be a safe rider. The safe rider follows certain basic rules which will prevent accidents:

1. Keep the heels down so the feet can’t slide through the stirrups – where they may be caught just when the rider must be able to disengage his/her feet quickly.

2. Keep to the right-hand side of the riding path except when passing another horse, or horses, going the same direction. After passing on the left side, return to the right-hand side at once.

3. When passing other riders, always hold the mount approximately the same speed as that of the horses being overtaken or passed. Pass slowly to avoid exciting the horses, and don’t gallop immediately after passing. The other horses may attempt to follow and possibly throw some of the riders.

4. Never ride within kicking range of another horse, the other animal may kick and injure you or your horse.

5. Slow the horse when turning a sharp corner or coming around bushes or trees.

6. When going up or down a steep hill, hold the horse to a walk for the safety of both horse and rider.

7. Do not ride on pavement if it is at all possible to avoid doing so. In addition to the danger from traffic, the horse may slip and fall on pavement. If a person must ride on pavement, the horse should be kept to the right as far as possible and held to a walk. Ride single file if there is more than one rider, and be on the lookout for approaching cars.

8. Do not ride at a fast pace on rough or rocky trails or in sand or mud; the horse
may slip, stumble, or fall and throw or crush the rider. In such terrain it is wise to let the horse pick his own way.

9. Be alert at all times for overhanging branches or ground obstructions, such as holes or tree roots. In the first case eye injuries or face cuts may be caused, and in the latter the horse may trip and injure the rider. While moving, don’t try to hold back branches for the person following. When the branch must finally be released, it may injure rather than help the rider following.

10. Be especially alert for barbed wire fences. While riding they are sometimes not easily noticed.

Saddling and Bridling

Saddling Your Horse

The following steps should be followed in saddling your horse:

Make it an automatic procedure to brush your horse before saddling. Get rid of any grime, caked dirt, or other rough spots that might cause sores. Brush with the lay of the hair, and pay special attention to the horse’s belly and cinch area.

Shake out the blanket and inspect both the blanket and saddle lining for matted spots or foreign matter that could cause sores. Place the saddle blanket upon the horse’s back, several inches forward, then pull it toward the rear—with the lay of the horse’s hair. See that the blanket is balanced on the horse—not long on one side and short on the other.

Place the right stirrup, cinches, lace string, etc. over the seat of the saddle and hold the saddle with your left hand in the gullet and your right hand on the rear skirts and housing. Then swing and lift the saddle into position easily. If you lift more than swing, and don’t make it the first try, the saddle still won’t bang into the horse and tend to make him nervous.

Walk around to the right side of your horse and pull the stirrup and cinches down and see that nothing is twisted.

Go back to the left side of your horse. The saddle should be just slightly forward of where you want it, so grasp the horn and pommel and “shake” it back into position.

Next, put a couple of fingers under the saddle blanket right over the horse’s withers and lift it up. This lets air in under the blanket and gives the horse some “working space”.

Put the left stirrup over the horn or the saddle seat and reach under the belly with your left hand for the cinch. With the front cinch strap in your right hand, run the strap through the cinch and then back through the Dee ring two or three times. Tighten the cinch strap until the cinch is snug and then tie the strap with a girth hitch.

Next, fasten the rear cinch if your saddle is double-rigged. Draw the rear cinch up snug but not tight. If the rear cinch is left hanging down several inches below the horse’s belly, the horse can get a rear foot caught in it if the horse kicks at a fly or should fall.

The horse is saddled now, but there is one more point that should be considered part of the operation. Untrack your horse by leading him out a few steps. Frequently you can take up another notch in the cinch after walking him a few steps. If not, check the cinch anyway, then check again after riding a short distance. Many horses take in air when being cinched and after walking them a few steps the saddle is loose enough to turn with you.

To unsaddle your horse, the most important thing to remember is to unfasten the rear cinch, if you have a double-rigged saddle. This procedure will protect your horse and saddle if the horse moves suddenly during the unsaddling. Failure to unfasten the rear cinch first could result in a horse running loose with the front cinch unfastened and the rear cinch rubbing and causing the horse to
buck and act up until the saddle is thrown off or damaged.

The other point worth stressing in unsaddling. Your horse will appreciate it if you learn this lesson in good horsemanship. Lift the saddle above the horse’s withers before you drag it over his back. Lift the saddle with both hands. Place the saddle on a rack or on the ground so that the wool lining is not in contact with the dirt. Then remove the saddle blanket and place it bottoms side up over the saddle so that it can dry.

**Bridling your Horse**

There are two things to keep in mind on bridling a horse that the experienced horseman does automatically. First, you must have confidence.

The second important thing is—don’t let your horse get away! There is a simple solution, of course, but it isn’t always simple to a beginner the first time he/she tries it and doesn’t know the answer.

Stand behind the horse’s head, unfasten the halter, and let it drop below his muzzle, pull the halter back and refasten it as a neck strap.

**The proper way to bridle your horse is as follows**

Holding the crownpiece of the bridle in the left hand, move straight up the horse’s face until the bit is against the horse’s lips. Then with your right hand, elbow, or forearm over the horse’s crest reach forward between the horse’s ears and take the crownpiece. Many horses will open the mouth when the bit comes in contact with the teeth, others may need a thumb and finger pressure near the corners of the mouth (in the gap where there are no teeth). Use the necessary pressure with the left hand and with the right hand, pull the crownpiece back over the ears of the horse. This method will have to be altered for high-headed horses or small children.

Another approach to bridling your horse is to hold your right arm under your horse’s throat latch, the bridle cheek pieces in your right hand centering between the horses eyes. With the left hand raise the bit to the horses mouth, left hand thumb in corner of mouth, insert bit. Most horses will open their mouth to accept the bit. When you get to this point, do not pull the ears forward. Pull the crownpiece back over the natural fold of the right ear with the right hand, flip this ear up. Do the same with the other ear and hand. Pull the forelock through so that it lies outside the brow band. Buckle the throat latch and adjust the chin strap.

**Mounting and Dismounting Your Horse**

**Western Riding - Mounting**

The following procedure should be followed in mounting your horse:

1. Mount from the left side of your horse
2. Face the saddle, not the rear of the horse

Two noticeable advantages are:

1. You can watch the horse’s head
2. You can put your foot in the stirrup with the toe of your boot pointing forward

A well trained horse should stand while you mount and remain standing until you signal him to move. Therefore, if your horse should start to move, you will be helping his training if you check him with the reins immediately, rather than just swinging into the saddle.

Take the reins in the left hand, and place the left hand just forward of the saddle. The reins should be just tight enough to check the horse from movement—not loose enough to permit him to move out, and not so tight as to cause him to back up. If your horse moves before you are completely set in the saddle, check him!
Put your left foot in the stirrup with your toe pointing slightly forward instead of into the horse’s ribs. Take hold of the saddle horn with your right hand and use the muscles of your right leg to push you body up to an almost vertical position.

Swing your right leg easily over the horse’s loins, sit smoothly in the saddle, and put your right foot into the right stirrup. Keep your horse checked until you are completely settled and ready to move out. Now place the reins and romal on the off side of the horse.

**Western Riding - Dismounting**

Before dismounting, switch the reins to the near side of the horse. Then, with the left hand just forward of the saddle and the right hand on the saddle horn, put your weight on your left foot and swing your right leg easily over the horse’s loins. Pause with your weight balanced over the horse for a fraction of a second and then step or slide down, facing your horse. Stepping down should only be used where there is no chance of you getting into an awkward position of danger of your foot getting caught in the stirrup. A good practice is to take your foot partly out of the stirrup before stepping down. To slide down, place your left hand on the withers and your right hand on the cantle, take your foot completely out of the stirrup and lower yourself to the ground.

**Western Seat and Hands**

Rider should sit in the saddle with knees slightly bent and weight directly over the balls of the feet. Body always should appear comfortable, relaxed and flexible. In repose, arms are in a straight line with body the one holding reins bent at elbow. Only one hand is to be used on reins and hands shall not be changed unless riding with a snaffle bit. Hand to be around reins. Fingers between reins not permitted unless riding with split reins. Reins to be above pommel and as near to it as possible.

A good position in the saddle will consist of: chin in, shoulders square, body position straight and relaxed, reins low and just loose enough so there is not constant contact with the horse’s mouth, feet well under the rider’s balance, stirrup length so that about three fingers can get between the saddle and rider when standing in the stirrups, good leg grip possible with thighs and calves, heels low, toes slightly out but almost straight ahead, and weight in the stirrup at the break of the instep. Both elbows are close to the rider’s side, and the free hand rests naturally on the upper leg of the rider.

**English Riding - Mounting**

The procedure for mounting is very similar to the one followed in western riding with a few very important differences. Read the Western section carefully and then note the differences.

To mount, pick up the reins with the right hand, being sure that you take hold of them at the exact middle. Slide your left hand down the reins until you have the proper amount of tension on the reins to check the horse from movement. Place the left hand just forward of the saddle.

Face the rear of the horse, grasp the stirrup leather with your right hand and insert your left foot in the stirrup.

Take hold of the pommel of the saddle with your right hand and use the muscles of your right leg to push your body up into an almost vertical position. Pause here for a fraction of a second. Swing our right leg easily over the horse’s loins, sit smoothly in the saddle and put your foot into the right stirrup. Do not allow your horse to move out until you are ready.
English Riding - Dismounting
Before dismounting, switch the reins to the near side of the horse. Then, with the left hand just forward of the saddle and the right hand on the pommel, put your weight on your left foot and swing your right leg easily over the horse’s loins. Pause with your weight balanced over the horse for a fraction of a second and then step or slide down, facing your horse. Stepping down should only be used where there is no chance of you getting into an awkward position or danger of your foot getting caught in the stirrup. A good practice is to take your foot partly out of the stirrup before stepping down. To slide down, place your left hand on the withers and your right hand on the cantle, take your foot completely out of the stirrup and lower yourself to the ground.

Hunter Seat - Seat and Hands
Rider should have a workmanlike appearance, seat and hands light and supple, conveying the impression of complete control should any emergency arise.

The eyes should be up and shoulders back. Toes should be out at an angle best suited to the rider’s conformation; ankles flexed in, heels down, calf of leg in contact with horse and slightly behind girth. Iron should be on the ball of foot.

Hands should be over and in front of the horse’s withers, knuckles thirty degrees inside the vertical, hands slightly apart and making a straight line from horse’s mouth to riders elbow. All reins must be picked up at the same time.

A the walk, body should be vertical; at slow trot, slightest possible forward inclination of the upper body; posting trot, inclined forward; canter, halfway between the posting trot and the walk; galloping and jumping, same inclination as the posting trot.

The Natural Aids
The natural aids, which the rider possesses, are the hands, legs, voice, and body weight. Some of the artificial aids are spurs, whips, martingales, corrective bits, etc. The more skill a rider possesses in using the natural aids, the less he will have to depend on artificial aids.

The rider’s hands are his means of communication with the horse through his mouth. The rider uses his hands to guide the horse, stop him, and collect him. When pulling back, the hands are the means of stopping propulsion in the horse. The hands are used to control the forehand of the horse.

The legs are used to affect propulsion in the horse or make him go forward. The legs are also used, to a certain extent, in guiding the horse by controlling his hind quarters. For instance, if a horse has a tendency to “throw” his hind quarters out when turning, the outside leg of the rider may be used as far back as possible to keep his hind quarters in position and keep his body in balance while making the turn.

The shifting of body weight is an important aid to horsemen. Shifting the weight forward is an indication for the horse to speed up. Shifting the weight back is an indication to slow down. Shifting the weight to either side is an indication to turn in that direction. When not desiring any change in the horse, the weight should be placed in the middle of the saddle over the horse’s center of gravity.

The voice is a natural aid, which should be used with discretion; some riders tend to use it too much. The voice can be used effectively to steady a horse and some riders like to have a horse trained to voice commands such as to stop on the word “whoa” with no rein pressure necessary. The voice is a very valuable aid in training a horse from the ground, either on a longe line or in harness. It should be remembered that the horse does not understand human words so much as the tone of the voice. For instance, a hysterical
person can scream “whoa” at a horse and the
horse will have a tendency to bolt, or at least
move off faster. Or a person can say “get up”
in a very slow, quiet, soothing voice and the
horse will have a tendency to slow down and
become quiet. It is the TONE—not the
WORDS that have an effect upon the horse.

HANDLING YOUR HORSE

However, you need not fear horses if you use
common sense precautions. The reverse of
this is also true; if you are over-confident or
careless around horses, you may be injured.

TAKE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Here are some basic safety rules that should
be part of your daily habits when working or
handling horses.

• Never approach your horse directly
from the rear. Even in a single stall it is
possible to approach from an oblique
angle at the rear
• Always speak to your horse before
approaching or touching him. Some
horses are likely to jump and may kick
when startled.
• Always walk around the rear of your
horse; never walk under or step over
the tie rope.
• Always work close to your horse. If
you are near his shoulder you won’t be
struck by his feet. Nor will you receive
the full force of a kick when you work
about the haunches or pass behind
your horse
• When working around horses, wear
boots in case a horse steps on your
foot.
• When riding, wear boots with proper
heels to prevent your feet from
slipping through the stirrups.
• Keep your head clear when bridling or
clipping the horse. He may throw his
head or strike. Avoid working with
nervous animals in close quarters.
• When leading your horse, walk beside
him – not ahead or behind.
• Use a long lead strap and both hands
when leading. If the horse rears up,
release the hand nearest to the halter
so you can stay on the ground.
• The horse is stronger than you are, so
don’t try to out pull him.
• Never wrap the lead strap, halter
shank, or reins around your hand,
wrist, or body.
• Never tie your horse by the reins, as
he may pull back, injure his mouth
and/or break the reins.
• Never let your horse eat when wearing
a bridle; he may step on the reins or
get his feet tangled in them. Also, feed
(hay) may get caught in the bit and
injure his mouth.
• Keep bridle, reins, stirrup leathers, and
cinch straps in the best possible
condition. Your safety depends on
them.
• Stand with your feet well back in the
clear and reach forward when saddling
the horse.
• Never mount your horse in a barn,
ear fences, trees, or overhanging
projections.
• Adjust the saddle carefully, and then
pull cinch or girth tight enough so that
the saddle will not turn when
mounting. Soon after starting the ride,
dismount again and tighten the saddle
girth. A horse will often expand his
ribs when first saddled, and failure
to tighten girths later can result in
serious accidents.
• If your horse is frightened by an
obstacle, you may want to dismount
and lead him past it. If possible, allow
the horse to see and smell the object
in order that he does not acquire a bad
habit.
• Keep your horse under control and
maintain a secure seat at all times. Horses are easily frightened by unusual objects and noises. Anticipate these and steady your horse.

- When your horse is frightened and tries to run, turn him in a circle and tighten the circle until he stops.
- When riding in groups, do not ride closer then one horse’s length to the horse in front of you, and be alert for overhead tree branches.
- Hold your mount to walk when going uphill or down.
- Reduce speed when riding on rough ground or in sand, mud, ice, or snow, or where there is danger of the horse falling or slipping. (For more information see Horse Behavior, Leaflet 21002.)
- Avoid paved roads. Slow your mount to a walk when crossing such roads. If he is a spirited or young horse, dismount and lead him across.
- Never tie your horse in the trailer before the tailgate is closed. Always untie him before he tailgate is opened.
- Know your horse, his temperament and reactions. Control your temper at all times, but let him know that you are his firm, kind master.

**Prevent Vices**

The old adage, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” is true. It is much easier to develop habits that prevent vices in horses than it is to try to break bad habits. Some common vices to prevent are: kicking, biting, striking, pulling back, and cribbing. Careful handling of your horse can prevent some vices. Kicking is frequently caused by handlers teasing, abusing, tickling, or pinching. Some horses kick only at other horses. Before kicking, a horse usually will put back his ears. This is the time to touch him with a spur, or give him a sharp tug at the reins. Other horses kick only at human beings; you must exercise care around these animals – they never can be trusted. A sharp rap with a whip at the instant of the kick sometimes is helpful. A careful groom sometimes can educate a kicker out of his vice.

Biting is another vice. A confirmed biter should be muzzled or fitted with a large wooden bit. A rap on the nose at the instant of biting will help cure an occasional biter. Never tease a horse to make him bite, even in play.

Striking is a vice where the horse throws one or both front feet forward to hit a person or another horse. Injury to horses and handlers may result. Seek advice from an experienced trainer before you attempt to cure this vice.

A horse that pulls back is likely to break equipment, particularly halters. Always be sure the horse is securely tied with a strong halter and rope to a stout post, so that he is not apt to break loose when pulling back. Getting loose only encourages this bad habit.

Cribbing and wind sucking usually are associated, although a horse may be subject to one vice without the other. Cribbing involves chewing boards in fences,
paddocks, corrals, or feedboxes. This may damage his teeth as well as the wood he chews. To prevent cribbing, nail metal strips on the tops of gates, fences and feedboxes in stalls. Wind sucking is a practice in which the horse bears down on the manger or other projecting object with his upper teeth, flexes his neck, and sucks wind into his stomach. Seek advice from an experienced trainer before you attempt to cure these vices. Patience pays off with a balky horse. Do not whip him; speak gently to him, pulling him to the right and left alternately with the reins. Be patient, and do not try to hurry him.

For more information see *Training Horses: Tips and Procedures*. Leaflet 21088.

**GROOMING YOUR HORSE**

Grooming means not only cleaning your horse but also improving his health. It means he will look better, eat better, feel better, and, as a result, act and perform better.

Vigorous grooming massages the underlying body muscles and improves fitness. It cleans the hair. It stimulates the pores to produce natural oils that bring a shine to your horse’s coat. You won’t need to apply artificial oils if you groom your horse regularly, properly, and thoroughly. Grooming gives you a chance to go over the entire body of your horse. In doing so, you can discover parasite eggs, lice, mange, or skin disorders. If you find any, control them immediately.

**USE PROPER EQUIPMENT**

Grooming equipment may include:
- Rubber or plastic currycomb
- Dandy brush – a stiff-fiber brush used for the mane and tail and the extreme lower portion of the legs
- Body or finishing brush – a soft-fiber brush
- Sponge
- Grooming cloth, such as Irish linen, salt sack, or even burlap which will shake out readily
- Hoof pick to clean horse’s feet. Keep this equipment clean. You would not wash your face with a dirty cloth or comb your hair with a dirty comb or brush. This also applies to your horse; you can’t do a clean job with dirty tools

**FOLLOW PROPER GROOMING PROCEDURE**

Follow these steps in grooming:

1. Take your horse out of the stall and cross-tie him securely. If you cannot take him from the stall, tie him before you start grooming. This is a must for your safety. There are four accepted ways to secure a horse for grooming direct tie, crosstie, rope-in-hand, and hobble.
2. Remove the stable sheet or blanket properly. This is another must for your safety. Release the back strap first, then the middle strap, and finally the front strap. Pull the blanket off your horse along the lay of the hair. Turn it inside out, shake it, and hang it where it will air while you are grooming. When you put the blanket back on your horse, be sure you fasten the front strap first.
3. Start on the left side. Take the currycomb in the right hand and the body brush in the left. Start with the currycomb and follow along with the body brush. Begin on the neck immediately behind the head. Then work the chest, the withers, the shoulders, and foreleg down to the knee. Then work the back, the side, the belly, the rump, and the hind leg down to the hock. The motion for the currycomb should be irregular, back and forth, or in a small circular motion. Remember, never use it about the head or on the legs from the knees and hocks down.
4. Clean your currycomb by tapping it against the heel of your boot. Clean your brush every few strokes with the currycomb.

5. Now groom the right side in the same order as you did the left, changing your brush to the right hand and currycomb to the left.

6. Finally, brush the head and face, using the body brush.

7. Put your body brush aside. Take your dandy brush and brush the mane and tail. Start at the bottom or ends and work gradually toward the roots. Free any entanglements with your fingers.

8. Wash the tail occasionally with warm water and soap. Be sure to rinse thoroughly.

9. Use the grooming cloth or rub rag to wipe the ears, the face, the eyes, the nostrils, lips, sheath and dock, and give a final polish to the coat.

10. Soak the sponge in water and press out as much water as possible. Your sponge should be damp, but not dripping. Stroke the eyes with an outward circular motion, the ears with an upward motion. Clean the nostrils and the lips with your damp sponge. Then go to the rear of your horse, raise the tail and clean the portion of the dock where there is no hair. This is where sweat and dirt collect and often cause a sore tail.

11. Give extra care to his knees and elbows, or hocks. These places are abused when your horse lies down and gets up. Use a damp sponge to straighten out the hair.

Your horse has feelings. Don’t abuse him by severe grooming. Be careful with the thin-skinned or short-haired animal. Don’t apply so much pressure that you irritate the skin. To do the best job, stand erect, an arm’s length from your horse so that when your arms are extended forward you will just touch your horse with the palm of your hand. Then, when working, you’ll have to lean forward. Your body leaning toward the horse should give you enough pressure. Apply just enough so that there is movement between the skin and the underlying muscles. It is this massaging action in grooming that is most effective.

CLEAN YOUR HORSE’S FEET

Nothing is much more important in grooming and caring for your horse than properly cleaning his feet.

Lack of proper grooming of his feet, particularly failure to clean the depths of the commissures and cleft of the frog thoroughly, can cause thrush most frequently.

If your horse is shod, replace or reset shoes every 6 to 8 weeks. Unshod horses, broodmares, and colts need their feet trimmed every 8 to 10 weeks.

Hoof dressing and oils improve the appearance of the horse’s feet for show, but most of them do little to soften hard and brittle hooves. Standing the horse in mud for a few hours on a regular basis will do this best.

Remember that cleaning your horse’s feet is a part of grooming, and do it regularly. This means that you should know how to pick up your horse’s feet (figure 1, page 19).

When you have a clean horse, remember to put the stable sheet or blanket on your horse and fasten the buckle in FRONT first. Then adjust your sheet or blanket, then the front body strap, and finally the rear body strap.
How to Clean Your Horse’s Feet

1. PASTERN
2. CORONET
3. HOOF
4. BULB
5. FETLOCK
6. WALL
7. SOLE
8. LONG PASTERN
9. SHORT PASTERN
10. CORONARY BAND
11. SENSITIVE LAMINAE
12. WHITE LINE
13. COFFIN BONE
14. CLEFT OF FROG
15. FROG
16. BUTTRESS
17. COMMISSURES
18. CANNON BONE
19. DEEP FLEXOR TENDON
20. PLANTAR CUSHION
21. SENSITIVE FROG
22. INSENSITIVE FROG
23. LATERAL CARTILAGES

1. Always work in order—near fore, near hind; off fore, off hind. Stand on the left side of your horse, facing his rear. Place your left hand on the horse’s shoulder. Bending over, run your right hand gently but firmly down the back of the leg until the hand is just above the fetlock. Press against the horse’s shoulder with your left hand, forcing his weight onto the opposite foreleg. Grasp the fetlock with the fingers.
2. When the horse picks up his foot, support it on your left knee.

3. With the hoof hook, clean out the hoof from heel to toe. Clean around the frog—the triangular growth in the center of the hoof. At the back of the frog is a depression which goes up into the hair. This is called the cleft. The depressions on each side of the frog are the commissures. It is important to clean thoroughly both of these areas, as thrush and other foot infections occur in these places. Inspect the feet for rocks, nails, injuries, loose shoes, and thrush.

4. Again working from the left side, stand well forward of the horse’s hindquarters, facing his rear. Gently stroke the back as far as the point of the hip, against which your left hand is placed. Stroke the leg gently but firmly with your right hand down as far as the middle of the cannon. Press against the horse’s hip, forcing his weight onto the opposite hindleg. Grasp the cannon just above the fetlock with your right hand, lifting the foot directly toward you so that the leg is bent at the hock.
SHELTER AND CORRAL

Planning a Shelter

You don’t need elaborate shelter for your horse, but some protection from the weather is desirable. Simple three-sided buildings with shed-type roofs are adequate if the open side is away from the prevailing wind and rain. Your farm advisor can supply plans for horse barns. These plans may be more elaborate than you want, but they will give you ideas on how to make a shelter for your horse.

Horses may be kept in box or tie stalls. Box stalls should be at least 10 by 10 feet with solid walls of smooth planks at least 7 feet high. A well-drained earth floor is preferable to wood or concrete. If you use concrete flooring, cover with rubber mats or bed very deeply. Ceiling should be at least 8 feet high, and 4-foot doors are desirable. Doors should be divided horizontally at about the halfway point so you can open the top half for ventilation and light. Place metal or wood feedboxes and hayracks at a convenient height for your horses. A horse should not have to raise his head or “reach-up” to get his food.

Tack and feed storage should be a part of shelter plans, and give thought to preventing rodent damage. Proper hangers will keep equipment off the floor.

Building a Corral

When horses are kept in box or tie stalls, clean these stalls daily to prevent thrush. Dispose of manure promptly to prevent fly problems.

Remember that a horse confined to a stall must have exercise, so plan a daily program of exercise for your horse. Corrals are desirable for handling your horse. When space is available, they should be located adjacent to the stall and be large enough to provide an exercise area. Wood and pipe are preferable fencing materials. Barbed wire is undesirable because of the danger of cuts. Horses also can catch shoes in woven wire and damage their feet. Sometimes horses push fences out of shape by leaning on them. You can prevent this by placing a smooth strand of wire at the top of the fence and energizing it with an approved electric fence charger.

Include plenty of clean, fresh water in plans for shelters and corrals. Locate tanks and automatic devices where they may be drained and cleaned easily.

Caring for Tack and Equipment
Your tack and equipment are as much a part of your horse’s care as your horse. It’s important that you know how to care for them and use them properly. Learn to identify the parts of your saddle and bridle. Learn how to halter, tie, saddle, and bridle your horse properly.

At home, always hang your saddle and bridle on suitable racks in a dry room. A 1-pound coffee can nailed to the wall makes an excellent bridle hanger. (Never hang a bridle on a nail!) Mice like leather, so watch out! Air and dry saddle and stable blankets immediately after use. Occasional washing are necessary.

Regular cleaning and care keeps equipment looking well, and adds greatly to its life and usefulness. A thorough cleaning technique for all equipment automatically provides a safety check, an important factor in horsemanship.

First, take the equipment apart, then wipe it as clean as possible with a dry rag. Brush the lamb’s wool under the saddle with a whisk broom to remove all foreign material. (Also spray with a moth repellent once a year.) Then wash all leather parts thoroughly with castile soap and water to remove all dirt and sweat. When leather is extremely dirty, a small amount of soda in the water will help to clean it.

Then apply saddle soap, using an almost-dry sponge to further clean, soften, and replace the natural oils in the leather. The sponge should be dry enough so there is no lathering. Rub a generous amount of saddle soap into the leather. Let the leather dry thoroughly, then rub it vigorously with a clean, dry cloth to obtain a shine and to fill the pores and cuts on the surface. You may want to use neat’s-foot oil or other leather finish material on parts that constantly come in contact with the horse. This replenishes the natural oils.

An old toothbrush is helpful in cleaning the bit and other metal. After washing the metal parts with soap and water to remove all saliva, grass, dirt, etc., dry and apply a cleanser or metal or silver polish to remove stains and tarnish. Always be careful to remove all of the polish from the bit.

For shows or fairs, you need a water bucket (at least 16-quart size), a feed pan or feedbox for grain, a second bucket for washing your horse and equipment, a box for your grooming equipment, and preferably a tack box or trunk for your saddle, bridles, and other equipment. Well-kept equipment makes a good horseman. Keep yours so you can take pride in it always.

USE AND IDENTIFY EQUIPMENT PROPERLY

Every horseman should know how to identify and use his equipment. You should be familiar with these basic knots and pieces of equipment. The knots include the slip-knot, the bowline, the manger tie or clove hitch, and the half-hitch. Study the sketches and practice the knots until you can tie them rapidly.
HALF-HITCH INTO TIMBER HITCH

TWO HALF-HITCHES

SLIP-KNOT

SLIP-KNOT WITH RELEASE LOOP

BOWLINE

CLOVE HITCH

HOBBLIES
ENGLISH SADDLE

1. Cantle
2. Seat
3. Pommel
4. Skirt
5. Stirrup Bar
6. Panel
7. Stirrup Iron
8. Flap
9. Stirrup Leather

BREAST STRAP

WESTERN STOCK SADDLE

1. Horn
2. Pommel
3. Rope Strap
4. Front Jockey and Seat Jockey, One Piece
5. Sheep Wool Lining
6. Stirrup Leather
7. Front Tie Strap or Cinch Strap
8. Fork
9. Seat
10. Cantle
11. Skirt
12. Back Jockey
13. Dee Rings
14. Fender
15. Lace Strings
16. Leather Flank Girth
17. Stirrup
SPLIT-EARED BRIDLE WITH HALFBREED BIT
1. Split-ear Headstall
2. Port
3. Strap
4. Roller or Cricket
5. Cheek
6. Reins

PELHAM BRIDLE
1. Browband
2. Cheek Pieces
3. Noseband or Cavesson
4. Curb Chain
5. Pelham Curb Bit
6. Crown-piece
7. Throat Latch
8. Lip Strap
9. Reins

SINGLE-REINED BRIDLE WITH SNAFFLE BIT
1. Browband
2. Cheek Pieces
3. Noseband or Cavesson
4. Snaffle Bit
5. Crown-piece
6. Throat Latch
7. Reins

WESTERN HACKAMORE
1. Headstall
2. Noseband or Bosal
3. Reins
4. Tie, or Lead Rope \{ Mecate
AGE DETERMINATION
FOR HORSES

First Period (birth – 2 ½ years)
1. At 2-4 days, the central incisors erupt.
2. At 6 weeks, the lateral incisors are well through.
3. At 10 months, the corner incisors are well through and are in wear at about 16-18 months.
4. From 1 ½ - 2 ½ years, the exact age is difficult to ascertain, except by consideration of the degree of wear of the temporary teeth.

Second Period (2 ½ - 5 years) - This is the most accurate of all periods.
1. At 2 ½ years, the centrals are loose.
2. At about 2 ½ years, the central permanents erupt.
3. At 3 ½ - 4 years, the lateral permanents erupt.
4. At 4 ½ - 5 years, the corner permanents and the canines erupt.
5. At 5 years, the corners have a short crown and do not come in contact with the uppers on the back border. They have a large, deep cup. The cups of the centrals are becoming shallow. A horse is said to have a full mouth at 5 years of age.

Third Period (6 - 9 years) - Age is now determined principally by changes in the size and shape of the cups of the lower incisors, the cups disappearing at quite regular intervals beginning the centrals
1. At 6 years, the table surface of the corners comes into wear all around and the cups in the centrals disappear.
2. At 7 years, the cups in the laterals are shallow or have disappeared. The 7-year notch appears in most horses on the upper corner incisor.
3. At 8 years, the corner cup is shallow and rounded but may remain as a shallow cup until about 11 years of age. The centrals are triangular in shape, with the apex at the back of the tooth. The enamel ring in the centrals is back of the center of the table surface, and the dental star usually appears in front of the enamel ring as a rather long, faint yellow transverse line.
4. At 9 years, the enamel ring is triangular and well toward the back of the tooth and becoming triangular in the laterals. Galvayne’s Groove may appear in the upper corners. The crowns of the teeth are longer and the angle of incidence is noticeably narrowing. The dental star appears in the laterals.

Every horseman should be able to tell something about the age of a horse by examining the front teeth.

This you can do fairly accurately until the animal has passed the eleventh year. With a little practice you will be able to determine whether the animal is in a certain age period. These four periods are: foal’s mouth, full mouth, smooth mouth, and old mouth.

The mature male horse usually has 40 teeth; usually the mare has 36 teeth. Twenty-four of these are molars and grinders, four are tushes or bridle teeth, and 12 are incisors or front teeth. The tushes usually are not present in the mare.
The young animal, whether male or female, has 24 temporary teeth, usually called “milk teeth.” These milk teeth consist of 12 molars and 12 incisors. They are much whiter than the permanent teeth, and are replaced by the permanent teeth as the animal reaches 5 years of age. It is this change from milk teeth to permanent teeth that serves to determine the age of young horses.

**FOAL’S MOUTH AT 2½-3 YEARS**

The central pair of milk teeth have been replaced by permanent incisors, two below and two above.

As the foal reaches 5 years of age, the change from milk teeth to permanent teeth usually is complete.

**FULL MOUTH AT 5 YEARS**

All the milk teeth have been replaced by permanent incisors. Tushes indicate that the animal is a male. The dental “cup” is well marked, showing little wear.

From the full mouth period on into the smooth mouth period, the age differences are shown by the degree of wear on the surfaces of the teeth.
You should know the horseman's language for describing the colors and markings of a horse. The following color guide is based upon the official rules of the Jockey Club for registering Thoroughbred horses. This guide will not only help you to describe your horse, it will assist you to fill out registration papers and competition entry forms.

**BODY MARKINGS**
The Jockey Club officially describes the following markings:

- **Black points** include a black mane, tail, and extremities.
- **Ray** is the line down the middle of the back of some horses, particularly dun.
- **Zebra marks** are the dark, horizontal stripes seen on the forearm, knees, and back of the cannon region.

**BODY COLORS**

- **Bay** varies from a light yellowish tan (light bay) to a dark rich shade, almost brown, and between these a bright mahogany (blood bay) with black points – mane, tail, legs and feet.

- **Black** can be determined by the fine black hair on the muzzle when in doubt between dark brown and black.

- **Brown** appears black with fine tan or brown hairs on the muzzle or flanks.

- **Buckskin** should be the color of a tanned deer hide. This animal also has black points – mane, tail, legs, and feet. Sometimes a buckskin horse has a black stripe down the
spine from mane to base of tail or he may have a dark cross/line over the shoulders.

**Chestnut** varies from a dark liver color to a light washy yellow, between which come the brilliant red-gold and copper shades. Chestnuts never have black mane, tail, or points.

**Dun** varies from mouse color to a golden dun, and generally is accompanied by black points and ray.

**Gray** is a mixture of white hairs and black, sometimes scarcely distinguishable from black at birth, getting lighter with age.

**Roans** have two classes – red or strawberry – produced by the intermingling of red, white, and yellow hairs; and blue, produced by the intermingling of black, white, and yellow hairs.

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**COLOR PATTERNS**

Not all horses can be described by the body colors given in the Jockey Club color guide. Horsemen also use other color combinations, called color patterns. Here are some of the more common ones.

**Appaloosa** combines dark roan or solid color foreparts with dark spots over loin and hips, or white with dark spots over entire body.

**Dappled** have visible spots, either light or dark, overlying the basic body color.

**Palomino** is a golden body color combined with white mane and tail.

**Paint or Pied** (Pintos). **Piebald** is a white and black combination; **Skewbald** is white with any other color but black.
SELECTION, CONFORMATION, AND JUDGING

SELECTION
A basic knowledge of conformation will help you select the right kind of horse. However, it takes many years to see the faults of conformation quickly. Until you have sufficient experience, have an experienced horseman help you choose a horse. Meanwhile, look carefully at the horses you see. Compare one horse with another. You may never see the perfect horse, but you will train your eyes to detect differences between animals.

CONFORMATION
Look for and recognize these conditions in horses. Then weigh the good points against the bad. The words used to describe these features will have more meaning for you as you gain judging experience.

DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
General Appearance

Form Well proportioned and balanced; Good example of breed; symmetrical, good appearance.

Quality Bone clean, dense, fine, yet indicating substance; tendons and joints sharply defined; hide and hair fine; refinement, finish.

Temperament Active, good disposition, intelligent

Action
Walk Rapid, flatfooted, in line.
Trot Free, springy, square going
Lope Slow, collected, either lead shoulders and chest.

Head:
Ears Relatively small, set apart, alert, pointed, carried forward, high on head.

Eyes Large, bright, clear, kindly, set far apart. Muzzle Fine, nostrils large, thin, mobile; lips, thin, trim, even.

Forehead Broad, flat

Face Moderate length, lean, finely chiseled, straight face line

Jaw Broad, flat, wide between the angles of the jaw.

Neck
Shape Relatively long, not too thick, ample crest, clean cut throat latch.

Set On Good angle (45°), smooth into withers, smooth into shoulders and chest

Forequarters
Shoulders Long, sloping, well but not bulkily muscled.

Arms Short, muscular.

Elbows Large, long, clean, stand prominent and clear of chest.

Forearms Long, well muscled, vertical; broad from the side; muscles extending well down.

Knees Straight, broad, angular; front should be broad and flat.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hips</td>
<td>Moderate width, smooth, round.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croup</td>
<td>Good length, moderate width; top line should carry well back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tail</td>
<td>Attached high, well carried.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttocks</td>
<td>Prominent, well rounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thighs</td>
<td>Well muscled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stifles</td>
<td>Well muscled; greatest width of muscle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaskins</td>
<td>Good angle (65° - 70°), broad, strong, well muscled; muscles extending well down. Tie-in low on the hock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hocks</td>
<td>Clean, well defined, strong, straight back line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannon</td>
<td>Short, vertical, strong; broad from the side; tendons clear, sharp, set well back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fetlocks</td>
<td>Broad, deep, angular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasterns</td>
<td>Moderate length, strong, flexible, slope at an angle of 45° - 50°.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet</td>
<td>Medium size; toes straight ahead; wide heel; from prominent, elastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legs, General Shape &amp; Direction</td>
<td>Viewed from the rear, a vertical line drawn downward from the point of the buttocks should fall in line with the center of the hocks, cannon, and the foot. From the side a vertical line drawn downward from the point of the buttocks should just touch the back edge of the cannon from the hock to the fetlock. Good straight action when seen from front and rear at both walk and trot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Withers Prominent, muscular, extending well into back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest</td>
<td>Moderate width, deep, ample space between legs; large girth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribs</td>
<td>Well sprung, long, close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back</td>
<td>Straight, not too long, well muscled, broad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loins</td>
<td>Short, broad, well muscled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flanks</td>
<td>Deep, full, long, low underline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belly</td>
<td>Adequate size; neatly carried bottom line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak constitution</td>
<td>Narrow chest, long shallow body, shallow flank, long weak hock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak underpinning</td>
<td>Shallow, flat, shelly feet; light weak cannon; crooked and weak hock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsoundness</td>
<td>Spavin, poor eyesight, heaves, ringbone, curb splints close to knee, side-bones, fistula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action and disposition</td>
<td>Although not part of the horse’s conformation, action and disposition are very important to observe. Action should be straight and free. A horse moves on his feet and legs; if they are weak or improperly formed, his usefulness is limited. A horse has poor action if he has straight shoulders; straight, short pasterns; crooked legs and feet; or a short, stubby gait. These may cause gait faults such as paddling or interfering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paddling or winging (exaggerated paddling) is a minor gait fault, which is unsightly and not desirable. The horse tosses the heels of his hooves outward laterally just as he lifts them from the ground. This defect is most common in young horses with gaits not yet “settled,” and in toe-narrow or pigeon-toed animals. “Tight longeing” – exercising young horses in a short rope circle – may encourage paddling. You can detect paddling by viewing the trotting horse from the front or rear.

Interfering is a common gait defect in which the horse strikes the inner surface of the hoof or lower leg with the hoof of the opposite leg. Most commonly seen in the forelegs, interfering may be only a nuisance or it may produce injury. Squaring slightly the hoof or shoe toe can correct mild cases of interfering. Severe cases may require rasping or cutting back that portion of the hoof or shoe that strikes the opposite leg. Protective shin guards can be worn during exercise.

A horse’s disposition should be gentle and controllable. A horse may reveal bad temperament by: balking, kicking, rearing, backing, shying or halter pulling. For further information see Leaflet 2807, Selecting a Light Horse, obtainable from your Farm Advisor.

Judging

When judging, follow an orderly system that allows you to see everything about the horse. First get a good view of the horse from a distance. This helps you decide on overall conformation, width, height, type, and balance. Viewing the horse from a distance also helps you recognize features you cannot see any other way.

Inspect the horse closely from the front, from behind, and from the side. Inspect for soundness, type and quality of legs and feet, and quality and substance of bone. Feel the area immediately below the coronet, pasterns, and cannons with your hand. You can detect sidebone, ringbone, and splints this way.

Every horse owner should be able to recognize the common unsoundnesses, defects, and blemishes. When you examine a horse you should:

- Observe the animal in a stall
- Examine the horse at halter
- observe the horse in motion
- observe the animal after exercise

If you are suspicious or detect something you do not understand, call an expert and have the horse thoroughly examined. See leaflet 2808; So you want to Be a Horse Judge, obtainable from your Farm Advisor.
UNSoundnesses of the Horse

DEFINITIONS OF UNSOUNDNESSES

FEET:
- Toe crack-a split in the front part of the hoof wall; may be partial complete, or high or low.
- Quarter crack: a split in the quarter area of the hoof wall which is toward the heel.
- Seedy Toe : a separation of the wall of the hoof near the toe.

PASTERN:
- Ringbone – a bony enlargement surrounding the bones of the pastern.
- Sidebone – ossification of the lateral cartilages.

CANNON:
- Splint – a bony enlargement in the groove formed by the splint and cannon bones: may be high or low, forward or back.
- Bowed Tendon – an extension backward of the flexor tendons as a result of being torn or stretched.

HOCK:
- Capped hock – an enlargement on the point of the hock due to inflammation of the bursa.
- Curb – an enlargement below the point of the hock.
- Thoroughpin – a soft, puffy enlargement in the web of the hock.
- Bog spavin – an inflammation of the hock joint characterized by distention of the joint capsule.
- Bone spavin – any bony enlargement on the bones of the hock.

HIP:
- Knocked down hip (hipped) – a fracture of the point of the hip.

KNEE:
- Over in the knee – a bending forward of the knee. This may be congenital or due to injury.

ELBOW:
- Capped elbow (shoe boil) – enlargement at the point of the elbow due to inflammation of the bursa.

BODY:
- Hernia (rupture) – a protrusion of a loop of tissue through an abnormal opening.

UNSOUNDNESSES REVEALED BY PERFORMANCE

Heaves: -a forced or labored breathing characterized by difficulty of expiration and a chronic cough.

Roaring: -an audible sound produced on inspiration when breathing.

Stringhalt : -a peculiar jerking (over flexion) of the hind leg when walking, trotting or turning.
Location of Some Common Conformation Faults

FRONT VIEW OF FORELEGGS

A vertical line from the point of the shoulder should fall on the center of the knee, cannon, pastern, and foot. The right conformation is shown at A; in B the forefeet toe out; in C the bowed legs are weak; D shows the extreme of knees set close together with toes pointing outward, and horses with such conformation almost invariably interfere; E illustrates a form of conformation predisposing to interfering; in F the knees are set close together, showing a tendency to knee hitting; while in G, the subject will wing or throw out his feet as they are elevated, which retards action.

SIDE VIEW OF FORELEGGS

A vertical line from the center of the elbow joint should fall on the knee and pastern and back of the foot, and a vertical line from the middle of the arm should fall on the center of the foot. A represents the right conformation; B shows forelegs too far under the body; in C they are too far advanced; in D, the subject is knee-sprung; and in E is illustrated what is commonly known as calf leg. Knee-sprung horses are apt to stumble; calf-legged horses often are sore in their forelegs after they have been used awhile.
REAR VIEW OF HINDLEGS

Viewed from the rear, the hind legs have the greatest strength when they have the direction shown in A. This direction is correct when a vertical line from the point of the buttock crosses the center of the hock, cannon, pastern, and foot. B shows hind legs set too far apart, tending to produce a sprawling gait. In C the hind feet toe in or are pigeon-toed, the joints being improperly formed, producing considerable undesirable lateral motion when the feet are carried forward. With such conformation the feet cannot be carried in a straight line. In D the hind legs are set too close together, predisposing the horse to interfere. The condition shown in E is generally known as cow hocked, and hind legs so formed do not have the strength of those in which the columns of bones are placed directly over one another.

SIDE VIEW OF LEGS

A vertical line from the hip joint should cross the center of the front and divide the gaskin in the middle; a vertical line from the point of the buttock should coincide with the back of the cannon. In B, the hind legs stand too far under the body (sickle-hocked); in C, the hind legs are set too far back; and in D, the hock joint is too straight.
FITTING AND SHOWING YOUR HORSE

You probably will exhibit your horse both at halter and under saddle. Showing under saddle varies so greatly, depending on the type of riding you do, that it will not be discussed in this manual. However, some general rules about fitting your horse to present him at his best for show apply to all kinds of competition.

FITTING YOUR HORSE

Your feeding program should insure that your horse arrives at the show in good condition, evenly covered with fat so that ribs, hip bones, and the top of the rump do not show prominently. Do not allow your horse to become overly fat or show a hay belly. A grain ration and proper exercise will help to bring your horse up to condition.

Clean, short, and shiny hair is essential for a horse to look his best. During the summer, grooming and blanketing will do the job. In winter, clipping may be necessary. Always blanket a clipped horse. Coarse, long hair that stands up during the summer months usually is a sign of poor health, probably due to parasites, poor teeth, or bad feeding. Washing helps clean an animal, but makes the hair stand up. Therefore, wash your horse a day or two before showing, whenever possible. Direct sunlight while waiting to go into the ring also makes the hair stand up. It is a good idea to keep your animal in the shade or under a light blanket while waiting.

Thorougbred and quarter-horse types usually have their manes pulled. Manes can be from 4 to 8 inches long. When pulling, take only a few of the longest hairs at a time and jerk sharply. Do not pull slowly. When quarter horses are shown with roached manes, the forelock and a small wisp of mane over their withers are left at about 4 to 6 inches long.

For a neater appearance, you may trim the short hairs around the muzzle and chin and the fuzz on the inside and outside edges of the ears, either with small electric clippers or hand shears. A path for the bridle and halter immediately behind the ears often is trimmed also. Trim some of the long hair from the legs and fetlocks and around the coronary band. Oiling the coat is not acceptable. Mild bleach solution can take stains from white or light-colored hair.

A plain leather halter and a leather lead strap with a metal chain are the best equipment for showing your horse in hand. However, any simple halter and rope, or a plain bridle, can be used. Showy or flashy outfits for halter classes are unnecessary. English showmanship should be shown with an English bridle.

SHOWING YOUR HORSE

Horse showmanship is just as much a skill as showing other livestock. Show off your horse’s best points and hide the worst. Pay attention to your horse at all times. Do not get between the judge and the horse. It is all right to try to get a favorable position in the ring, but remember good manners and sportsmanship. Treat your fellow contestants as you like to be treated.

Lead your animal from his left side. Walk slightly behind his head. Hold the lead strap a safe distance from his head with your right hand. The remaining lead strap or rope should be folded neatly and carried in the left hand. Folding the remaining lead strap in a loop around your hand is dangerous and can lead to serious injuries. Keep him alert but with the head in a natural position.

Utility breeds should stand with all four feet squarely under them, with head and neck held naturally. Saddlebreds park, walking horses stretch, and Shetland ponies should stand slightly extended, but not spread so far that they show a weakness in their back. The head and neck should be held high. Some
individuals of the utility breeds show to greater advantage when they are not standing perfectly square. If the ring is not completely level, be sure that the front end of the horse is always higher than the rear. Always know where the judge is. Never let your body obstruct his view. Get your animal in position and ready for the judge before he looks at him, not during his inspection. Step aside if the judge wants to make a front inspection. Turn your animals head slightly in the direction of the same side handled by the judge. If horses are lined up head to tail, allow enough room between the horse in front of you for the judge to pass between animals without danger of being kicked.

When the judge asks that the horse be walked and trotted, go directly away from the judge, stop your horse momentarily before turning to the right, and return directly toward him. Stay to one side to give him an unobstructed view of the horse in action.

Keep your body at right angles to your horse. Move parallel with the horse and hold the lead in the right hand about 3-6 inches from the halter. Don’t look back. Always turn to the right, pushing your horse around the turn. Don’t pull.

If chain is used, hold where leather starts, directly below chain.

Example of Showmanship Positions:
Safe Driving

Beginners should learn to drive under the guidance of a competent instructor and/or experienced driver.

General Rules

- Never enter the cart in the barn.
- Enter the cart in the clear.
- Enter the cart from the left side.
- When driving keep your feet flat on the bottom of the cart and hands inside the cart.
- No horse shall be left unattended or tied while put to a vehicle.
- All rules of the road should be observed unless officials direct otherwise. Drivers must drive on the rail at a safe distance behind horse and cart in front. Passing is permissible but the driver should return to the rail as soon as possible.
- Blinders and overchecks or sidechecks are required.
- In case of a runaway, all other drivers must move off the rail to the center of the ring and stay in their vehicles. Most frightened horses tend to run the rail looking for a way out.
- Slower animals are encouraged to work “off the rail” or “on an inside track.”
- All persons involved in driving competition must have safety foremost in their minds.
- A driver must never allow passengers to enter a vehicle until he/she is seated with the reins in hand and must never dismount while passengers are in vehicle.
- It is unsafe to bridle or harness a nervous horse.
- Before saddling or harnessing, shake out and inspect the blanket, saddle and harness for matted spots and burrs that might irritate the horse.
- Check the bridle, girth, saddle attachments and harness for the proper length for you.
- Make sure that you use the proper harness equipment.

Groom

Groom must wear appropriate attire. This attendant shall take No action that will affect the performance of any horse. Only one Groom is allowed per horse. The Groom must not have a whip and shall remain at least two paces distance from the head of the horse when the judge is inspecting the horse, and at all other times unless assistance in controlling the horse is needed.

The Bridle

A.) Blinder – well cupped to give ample eye clearance.
B.) Cheekstraps – adjust to center the blinder on the eyes, yet not becoming slack when a cheek or bearing rein is tightened. Adjust to hold the driving bit in the correct position.
C.) Blinders strays – should turn the blinders out enough to give adequate vision. The buckle in front of the crown piece, between the ears, sets the distance of the blinders for the eyes. Let it down to open the blinders wider or tighten to bring them closer to the head.
D.) Browband – may be plain, embellished with metal to match the metal harness parts, or with colored leather to match the cavesson or saddle pad. Each end of the browband usually has a rosette of plain or decorated metal discs or of leather of silk to match the vehicle upholstery.
E.) Noseband or Cavesson – snug, but not tight (allow one to two fingers of slack). A cavesson allows for greater adjustment and may match the browband.
F.) Throatlatch – Functionally snug, yet comfortable when the horse’s head is collected. Should allow room for several fingers of spaces at the bottom.
Harnessing and Hitching

Establish a routine and do not vary it. This way you won’t over look a buckle. If possible, have an assistant.

A) With horse in halter and lead, put on the saddle with backstrap and crupper attached and the wrap straps done up. Fit the crupper below the root of the tail with all the hair in place. Adjust the girth.

B) If breeching or kicking strap is used, run through the backstrap keeper.

C) Put on breast collar with traces done up or crossed over the horse’s back.

D) Run driving reins through the saddle terrets, bit ends loose, and the buckled hand ends looped and placed through the backstrap, but quickly accessible.

E) With lead rope around horse’s neck, remove the halter and put on the bridle. hold your right arm under your horses throat latch, the bridle cheek pieces in your right hand centering between the horses eyes. With the left hand raise the bit to the horses mouth, left hand thumb in corner of mouth, insert bit. Most horses will open there mouth to accept the bit. When you get to this point, do not pull the ears forward. Pull the crownpiece back over the natural fold of the ear with the right hand, flip this ear up. Do the same with the other ear and hand. Pull the forelock through so that it lies outside the brow band. Buckle the throat latch and adjust the chin strap.

F) Fasten the driving reins to the bit; fasten the throat latch, noseband, and curb chain if used. Never put the horse to the vehicle before the bridle is on!

G) Bring the vehicle to the horse. Approach with lifted shafts, then gently lower them on each side.

H) Guide the shafts through the shaft loops. If alone, do the near side first, then move to the off-side. The ends of the shafts should not be forward of the point of the shoulder.

I) Fasten the traces to the singletree on the cart. Traces must be the same length on each side with no slack. The tips of the shafts should come no further forward than the point of the shoulder; if they back too far, they may catch behind the shoulder. The horse must have room to extend its legs while trotting, but not so much that it is out of the shafts.

J) Unbuckle the wrap straps and bring them up on the inside of the trace next to the horse. Wrap over the shaft in front of the shaft loop, then around underneath, behind the shaft loop, then buckle on the outside of the trace.

K) If breeching is used, connect the shafts with straps passing through the shaft “D” on the underside of the shaft. Take the necessary turns around the shaft and pass the tongue of the strap under the wraps before buckling.

L) Fasten the overcheck or side check last

Mounting the Cart

With the adult assistant at the animal’s head, the reins still in/her hand, walk to the rear of the cart. Ground drive the animal with the assistant leading until it has relaxed. After the animal has accepted pulling the cart with no weight, the driver may mount. Hold the reins and mount the cart the shafts on the shafts loops and backpad: be alert to a reaction from the animal. When driving alone, sit in the center to balance the load.
Driving Position

Sit up straight and look forward, with your arms extended and elbows slightly bent and close to your body. This position lets you respond quickly with maximum strength. The seat of the cart should be adjusted so that you sit with your knees comfortable bent and one foot slightly ahead of the other to maintain balance. Hold the reins, one in each hand and keep light, constant contact with the animal’s mouth. To turn to the right, draw your right hand slightly closer to your body and ease your left hand forward. Turning to the left is the opposite. To stop, close your fingers and evenly pull back your hands toward your body. Control by first using the fingers, then the wrist, and then if necessary the arms.

Holding the Reins

The reins may be fastened together or kept separated. Unconnected reins are a greater safety risk than joined reins. With properly held, joined reins, should the driver drop one hand off a rein he/she will still have the horse, and can regain control. Therefore we recommend that you join the reins. Either way they should be long enough so that if the horse stumbles or pulls, they won’t be yanked out of the drivers hands. Take care that excess rein doesn’t become entangled in the vehicle’s wheels. The driver can sit on the excess of drop it into the solid floored cart. One popular way of holding the reins is up through the palm with the thumbs on top. Keep fingers and thumbs closed on the reins for a good grip. Another way to hold the reins is to grasp them, one in each hand, over the first finger, or between the first and second fingers with the excess rein running down through the hand between the palm and the fingers. Carry your whip in your right hand, resting it on your forefinger and held lightly in the palm of your hand with your other three fingers. The tip is just off the vertical to the left. Continue to use the reinboard to maintain

Unhitching/Unharnessing

Once the horse and cart are stopped, the helper should immediately detach the overcheck from the terret hook.

The header/helper stands at the head of the horse as the driver dismounts from the vehicle, still holding the reins. Once the driver is on the ground, the helper moves to the offside of the vehicle. In unison the helper and driver unhitch the horse from the vehicle using the following procedure: Remove the various pieces of harness in reverse order of hitching: undo kicking straps, holding back straps, traces/tugs (lay these over the horse’s back) thimbles, and wrap straps. Coordinate the procedure by calling out each part as it’s removed. Remove the cart from the horse with the driver still holding the reins. The cart is lifted up and away from the horse with a statement of purpose, such as “CART AWAY”. With the reins in your left hand, move the cart back away from the horse the lead or drive the horse forward. Place the halter around the horse’s neck and remove the reins from the bit. Remove the bridle and halter the horse. Undo the crupper and the bellyband and lift the harness up and away from the horse. Remove the collar and traces.

Desirable Characteristics

Action and Gaits
Walk: Flat footed, ground-covering and brisk.

Working trot: Between the strong trot and the slow (collected) trot; to go forward freely and straight, engaging hind legs with good hock action, on a taut but light rein. The steps should be as even as possible. The hind feet touch the ground in the footprints of the fore feet. The degree of impulsion and energy displayed at the working trot clearly demotes the degree of suppleness and balance of the horse.
**Trot On:** (strong trot) A clear, but not excessive, increase in rate and lengthening of stride while remaining well balanced and showing appropriate lateral flexion on turns; light contact to be maintained. Excessive speed will be penalized.

Collected and/or extended gaits may be called for only in a Championship Class.

Height of mini horses are the same standard as American Miniature horse standard.

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**Head with bridle, cavesson, and overcheck**

**Parts of the driving bridle**

1. Blinder
2. Blinder stay adjustment
3. Overcheck rein adjustment
4. Browband
5. Blinder adjustment
6. Throatlatch
7. Cheekpiece
8. Cavesson/noseband
9. Bit adjustment
10. Driving snaffle
11. Overcheck rein
12. Crown piece
Collar and hames harness with sidecheck bridle and breeching

- Cavesson
- Sidecheck Carrier
- Sidecheck Rein
- Terret Hook
- Terret Rings
- Backstrap (Turnback)
- Breeching
- Traces (Tugs)
- Hame Seat
- Hame Strap
- Neck Collar
- Rein
- Hames
- Saddle or Backpad
- Shaft Loop
- Wrap Strap
- Point of Draft
- Holdback Strap
- Bellyband
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