

# HORSES AND HUMANS FOR A HEALTHY HABITAT

*Ways to keep our planet beautiful for us and our horses*

## MANURE MANAGEMENT

*More than just cleaning stalls.....*

### COMPOSTING – WHAT IS IT???

Composting is the biodegradation of organic material, such as food, yard waste (leaves and grass), and manure. It may take a very long time for some material to biodegrade depending on its environment, but it ultimately breaks down completely

### FOUR BASICS OF COMPOSTING

- Oxygen – maintains proper temperature of the pile  
*Frequent turning equals quick compost!*
- Temperature – ideal is **140° F**; piles should be turned above or below 140° F
- Moisture – pile should always be slightly moist, cover pile to maintain moisture  
*Should be similar to a wrung out sponge!*
- Carbon : Nitrogen ratio – ideal range between 20:1 and 40:1

Keeping these steps in mind will put you on the path to having a great batch of compost!



### BENEFITS OF COMPOSTING

- *Kills parasites/weeds within the waste for fly control*
- *Improves soil quality when applied = more food for your horse!*
- *Limits nitrogen depletion of the soil*
- *Sell to local farmers to make money!*

***Fun Fact: A 1000 pound horse produces 31 pounds of feces and 2.4 gallons of urine a day adding up to a total of 51 pounds of daily waste.***



*A covered compost pile*



*Possible manure storage container*

## NOT COMPOSTING????

### *How to Properly Store Your Manure*

Even if you are not composting or waiting to compost, you need to know how to store your manure so it doesn't hurt the environment...

Consider the location of your manure pile and type of container (if any) it will be stored in:

LOCATION: Manure containers or piles should be as far away as possible from water sources so there is no contamination!

- Always make sure there is at least 200 feet between water sources and the manure pile

REMOVAL: How the manure will be removed will determine what kind of container you will need

- Trash cans or covered truck beds allow for easy removal of manure, while dumpsters require special equipment

*Whether you have one or many horses, it is easy to be more "green" by storing or composting manure!*

*Make it fun: compete with other barn members to see how much manure you can collect and compost. Give out prizes to the ones who were the best collectors!*

## CHOOSING THE BEST BEDDING

*Safe for the environment AND the horse*

As owners and care-givers, we must provide horses with the most comfortable and safe living arrangements. Choosing the most efficient and cost effective bedding can make all the difference to the horse as well as the stall cleaners



There are many factors in choosing bedding:

- ABSORBENCY!!
- Price
- Biodegradability
- Availability
- Ease of disposal
- Allergies

There are also various types of bedding to choose from, making it easy to choose the best type of bedding for you and your horse. Kinds of bedding and their pros and cons include:



*Examples of bedding*

- Straw – Cheap, good for compost, low absorbency
- Sawdust – Expensive, high absorbency, good for compost
- Shavings – Cheap, bad for compost, readily available
- Newspaper – Moderate absorbency, readily available (**recycle!**), ink could bleed
- Wood pellets – Expensive, high absorbency, great for compost

### HELPFUL BEDDING WEBSITES

[www.equilitter.com/comparisons.html](http://www.equilitter.com/comparisons.html)

[www.royalwoodshavings.com/faqs.html#anchor23](http://www.royalwoodshavings.com/faqs.html#anchor23)

[www.justhorses.com/50.html](http://www.justhorses.com/50.html)

*Did you know?? Not all hardwoods can be used to make wood shavings; walnut and oak woods contain toxins that are harmful to horses*

# PASTURE MANAGEMENT

## *How Does Your Paddock Grow?*

Having a great pasture is an important part of horse care: it provides food and exercise to your horse, as well as gives value to your property for years to come. Good pasture requires a little time and a little common sense to make it the best it can be.

### PLANNING YOUR PASTURE

Before you think about having a beautiful pasture, take some time to think about what your horses needs are and what resources you have available. Some key aspects to think about:

- **How much land do you have for pasture use** – will determine how many horses you can have and how long they can use the pasture
- **How many horses will be using the pasture** – more horses require a larger pasture, or many smaller ones
- **Will the horses be turned out separately or together** – larger number of horses will wear out a pasture quicker than a small number will
- **How long will the horses be out in the pasture** - horses turned out 24/7 will deplete the pasture resources a lot quicker than a few hours of turnout will

*Thinking ahead of time about your pasture will save you time and money, and will make sure that your horse is happy and healthy!*



### A WELL MANAGED PASTURE

- *Reduces the environmental impacts of your barn, such as water contamination from soil or manure*
- *Improves the beauty of your property, which makes for happy neighbors and increases the property value*
- *Provides food and recreation for your equine friends!!*

***In many states, horses are considered livestock and each town require you to have a specific amount of acreage per horse to house them on your property – check your state laws to find out***



*A healthy pasture*



*Examples of poisonous plants: Tansy Ragwort (left) and Black nightshade (right)*

## THE PASTURE WALK

It's important to check the safety of paddocks routinely. The purpose of a pasture walk is to check all of your pastures to make sure there isn't anything within or around the paddock that can hurt either your horse, or the surrounding environment.

Important items to check during a pasture walk could include:

- Broken fences – could injure or let your horses escape
- Flooding/muddy areas - leads to erosion and is dangerous to horses' legs and hooves
- Amount of manure – large amounts of manure increases the pest population and causes aggravation for your horse
- Poisonous plants – ingestion could cause your horse to become sick, or even die
- Amount of grass – pastures need to be rested or rotated if grass level is low to reduce weed growth

You could also turn a pasture walk into a fun activity! Make a checklist and go do a pasture walk with your friends. Have prizes for the people who found any dangers during the pasture walk (i.e. broken fences or poisonous plants).

*Incorporating a quick pasture walk into your list of barn chores can help you get into the habit of it and prevent a lot of emotional and financial challenges down the road.*

*A horse will eat timothy, orchard, Kentucky Blue or a combination of all types of grass. Make sure it's kept short because they won't like long, tough grasses.*

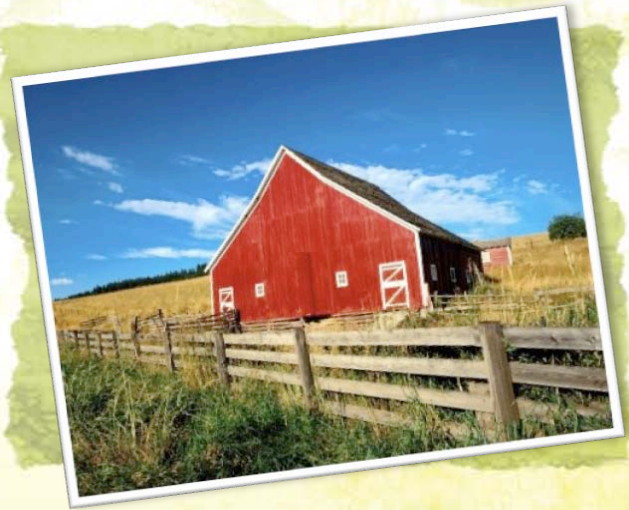
## THE “GREENER” BARN

*Simple ways to improve your barn and save the environment*

When it comes time to build that new barn or renovate an existing one, choosing materials that are eco-friendly results in a place that is good for both horses and people for years to come.

Recently, solar panels have become popular for use in many homes and barns to conserve energy and keep the building warm. However, these can be expensive and need to be professionally installed. There are many inexpensive changes you can make to your barn to make it “greener” by recycling various items:

- Recycle tires by grinding them up and using them for footing for an indoor arena
- Use old soda bottles for stall toys to entertain bored horses
- Use cardboard bedding for overweight horses that will eat straw or shavings
- Use paper bags to portion out meals for shows or to stuff in your boots to help them retain their shape
- Recycle scrap wood to make cross-country jumps or use woodchips to decorate the base of the barn outside



*Horse sculpture made of recycled wood*

## **HIT THE TRAILS!**

*Visit a local trail riding spot with your friends or barn mates and organize a trail clean up. Garbage, rocks and sticks can be collected and used in the ways mentioned before. This way, you are not only improving your barn, but also cleaning up the environment for others!*

*Recycling a single run of the Sunday New York Times would save 75,000 trees*

## THE HORSE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS PROGRAM (HEAP)

The Horse Environmental Awareness Program Committee is a unique partnership of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, University of Connecticut Department of Animal Science, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Connecticut Farm Bureau, local water conservation districts, and other private partners. The committee has several accomplishments to date including the creation of two videos, compiling of various fact sheets, as well as conducting a series of workshops for horse owners educating them about best management practices. The efforts of the group are funded by educational funds available through the United States Department of Agriculture's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). All of the information provided in this booklet has been taken from HEAP.

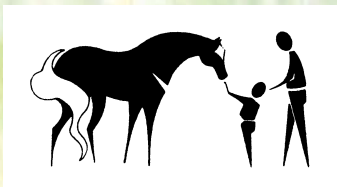
For more information, please visit the Eastern Connecticut RC&D Website at: [www.easternrcd-ct.org/HEAP](http://www.easternrcd-ct.org/HEAP)

### SPECIAL THANKS

Many thanks to the American Youth Horse Council for providing the funding for this booklet

The American Youth Horse Council ("AYHC") is the umbrella organization providing encouragement, communication, leadership and resources to serve and promote the youth horse industry

Please visit their website for more information:  
[www.ayhc.org](http://www.ayhc.org)



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