

UPPER MIDWEST ENDURANCE AND COMPETITIVE RIDES ASSOCIATION



Pull out your calendars! 2014 Ride Schedule

Jun 21-22	Hopkins Creek	Manton, MI
Jun 21-22	Dead Dog Creek	Kinmundy, IL
Jun 28-29	AHDRAI My Backyard	Wyanet, IL
Jul 4-5	Endless Valley	Spring Green, WI
Jul 5-6	AHAM	Augusta, MI
Jul 12-13	Mosquito Run	Rogers, MN
Jul 19-20	Grand Island North	Limestone, MI
Jul 26-27	Wildcat	Palmyra, WI
Aug 3	Shore to Shore Warmup	Oscoda, MI
Aug 4-8	Shore to Shore	L Huron to L Michigan, MI
Aug 9	Shore to Shore Cool Down	Empire, MI
Aug 9-10	Louise Riedel Memorial	Arkdale, WI
Aug 16-17	Thistle Down Run	Frazee, MN
Aug 16-17	Rock River Charity Ride	Utica, IL
Aug 23-24	Northern Highland	Spooner, WI
Aug 30, Sep 1	White River Fall	Hesperia, MI
Sep 6-7	Charity Cup	Pillager, MN
Sep 6-7	Keweenaw	Lake Linden, MI
Sep 6-7	Lincoln Trail	Kinmundy, IL
Sep 12-14	Colorama	Greenbrush, WI
Sep 13-14	Tin Cup Springs	Luther, MI
Sep 20-21	Run for the Ridge	Fairfax, MN
Sep 27-28	Pine Martin Run	Nahma Junction, MI
Oct 2-5	DRAWarama	Palmyra, WI
Oct 11-12	Iron Oak	Arkdale, WI
Oct 11-12	Oak Leaf Run	Hamilton, MI
Oct 17-19	Point Chaser	Wabasha, MN
Oct 25-26	AHDRA III - Big River	Keithsburg, IL

Hey Riders!

Pay attention to ride flyers -
There are extra rules at some rides this year:
mandatory helmets for all – fines and/or DQ for
unleashed dogs – no stallions -
Read ride flyers before leaving home!

Applied Common Sense®
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A letter from the UMECRA President!

Potluck!

I'm not sure if this was a tradition from the beginning of UMECRA or not, but it is one I love. Coming together after a day of riding or volunteering or looking forward to tomorrow's ride; it's an awesome chance to sit with people you know well and other's you've just met to enjoy food, conversation and the awards.

At a ride in the fall of last year, one of the long time riders I was standing in line with lamented the slow disappearance of homemade food brought to the potluck. Sometimes I've noticed the disappearance of even bringing food to a potluck. And sometimes the luck is mostly deserts and not too many salads, appetizers and other side dishes.

So I'm asking nearly everyone – GET CREATIVE with your potluck dish this year. (Yes, there are some fabulous creative dishes brought already. Thanks to

GLACIER TRAILS 5/11 - 25 Mile Competitive LW			
Ruth	Casserly	Harley	1
Lori	Windows	JA Bannarr	1
Sarah	Rudstrom	Wings	3
Linda	Jacobson	Chub Lake Jack Daniel	4
Melinda	Stewart "Rookie"	McCues Miss Behavin	MO
GLACIER TRAILS 5/11 - 12 Mile Competitive Drive			
Tim	Casserly	Sam & Bach	1
Alice	Hubert	R Macaroni	2
GLACIER TRAILS 5/11 - 25 Mile Competitive Drive			
Tony	Troyer	Heart of Valpareiso/El Mini	1
GLACIER TRAILS 5/11 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Jr			
Charlie	Koester	Lu-Nor Sovereign	1
Ainsley	Suskey	Mi Lucky Charm	2
Brenna	Baemmert	RFR Crimson Crescent	3
Hattie	Herrman	Amigo	Pull
GLACIER TRAILS 5/11 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Sr			
Bonnie	Mielke	OLA Loki	1
**Olivia	Rudolphi	Winglass Syrah	2
Jan	Worthington	Golden Amir	3
Jim	Andriakos	WB Nelsons Thunder Byrd	4
Maxine	Bernsdorf	Ch Shamm Bashire	5
Marge	Dixon	Kenlyn Rendezvous	6
Julie	Jackson-Biegert	Princess Delites MHF	C
Jessi	Zirbel	JG Rusty	C
Leah	Savatski	My Low Rider	C
Shirley	May	Atalissa	C
Stephanie	Crispin	All About Majistic	C
Mary	Otto	Noor Qanibi	C
Deb	Searl	Sultan's Sundance	C
Nicole	Herrman	Sazais Native Sun	C
Joslyn	Seefeldt	DSD Starstruck	C
Robin	Schadt	Sassy Aspen	C
GLACIER TRAILS 5/11 - 12 Mile Competitive Novice			
**Jack	Jewison	Schuetzzy	1
John	Lewis	Cana	2

Grand Island 5/24 - 25 Mile Competitive HW			
Jeanne	Aslakson	Quincey QT	1
Grand Island 5/24 - 25 Mile Competitive LW			
Laura	Husser	CDWD Margarita	1
Lisa	Germann	Justkiddingaround+/-	2
Becke	Grams	Bear's Northern Light	3
Cathy	Hansen	Moonstruck	4
Sarah	Rudstrom	Wings	5
**Bonnie	King	Harvey	P
Grand Island 5/24 - 50 Mile Endurance HW			
Bonnie	Mielke	Ola Loki	1
Joslyn	Seefeldt	Bey Berry Fizz	2
Stephanie	Crispin	EE Vning Shade	P
Nicole	Herrmann	Sazars Native Sun	P
Grand Island 5/24 - 50 Mile Endurance Jr			
Brenna	Baemmert	Missy	P
Whitney	Meinders	MS Dasani	P

Grand Island 5/24 - 50 Mile Endurance LW			
Linda	Hamrick	RTM First In Line	1
Rachael	Meinders	Mattingley KC Heart	2
Linda	Jacobson	Major Ridge Scarlet Debut	3
**Diana	Anderson	HJH McCoy's Majic	4
Bettina	Koehn	JBK Nadja	5
Brooke	Koehn	JBK Zum Bayou	6
Pam	Cotton	Cherokee Diamond	C
Eileen	Kirsch	Sabins Scooter	C
Diane	Meinders	Lacey's Game	C
**Andrea	Redman	AM Love of Life	C
Sheila	Schneider	Gypsy B. Miss Behavin	C
**Krista	Kester	All Gone MHF	P
Grand Island 5/24 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Jr			
Ainsley	Suskey	Mi Lucky Charm	1
Grand Island 5/24 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Sr			
Angel	Chmurynski	Yankee Zar	1
Tina	Williams	Dynamo Dash	2
**Kayla	Shope	Lu-Nor Tornado	3
**Julia	Newton	Lucca	4
Cathy	Cook	Red Cloud	5
Leslie	Bennett	Lis's Love	6
**Erin	Anderson	Angel	C
Karen	Bahrman	Prada SF	C
Maxine	Bernsdorf	CH Shamm Bashire	C
Jill	Feller	JG Hamdah	C
**Douglas	McQueen	Moon Is A Star	C
Marlie	Nauta	October	C
Andy	Nauta	Kestell's Magic O'Henry	C
**Jo Ellen	Roberts	Zippin Rosie	C
**Kelsey	Shope	Dublin	C
**Whitney	Wos	Hook	C
**Megan	Wos	Nike	C
Grand Island 5/25 - 25 Mile Competitive HW			
Jeanne	Aslakson	Cinbob Go Chief	1
Grand Island 5/25 - 25 Mile Competitive Jr			
Rachael	Meinders	Brittanyrolsthedice	MO
Grand Island 5/25 - 25 Mile Competitive LW			
Laura	Husser	CDWD Margarita	1
Leslie	Bennett	Catchulatr WLA	2
Diane	Meinders	Lacey's Game	3
Lisa	Germann	BackstreetsstrutterGSA	4
Eileen	Kirsch	Wineglass Rez	5
Linda	Jacobson	Chublake Jack Daniel	6
Grand Island 5/25 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Jr			
Whitney	Meinders	Shatto's Sir Lance Lot	1
Ava	McCarty	Dynamo Dash	2
Ainsley	Suskey	Mi Lucky Charm	3
Grand Island 5/25 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Sr			
Cathy	Cook	Red Cloud	1
**Douglas	McQueen	Moon Is A Star	2
Angel	Chmurynski	Sonny	3
Maxine	Bernsdorf	CH Shamm Bashire	4
Pam	Cotton	MRK Annie Oakley	5
Becke	Grams	LW Classic Diamond	Pull

SISU On the Border 5/17 - 25 Mile Competitive HW			
Carmen	Stueck	Phoenix	1
Becki	Sanford	Stryka Major Chord	2
Sheryl	O'Brien	Wild River Sundancer	3
Brenda	Garrison	Sweet Hone DE	4
Bethany	Borchert	Dun Adoby Fox	5
Katja	Wiedrich	Affirmed Stardust	Pull
SISU On the Border 5/17 - 25 Mile Competitive LW			
Linda	Goddard	Regal Task	1
Colleen	Morgan	JBK Tara	2
Candy	Barbo	Nobel Annie	3
Karen	Kirsten	Cisero	3
Mary	Lambert	Psyches Amore	5
Victoria	Robinson	SC Zhivago	Pull
SISU On the Border 5/17 - 50 Mile Endurance LW			
Jodi	Johannessen	PR Bay Muscarana	1
Angie	Mikkelson	Tango	2
Tracy	McIntosh	Amigo Rissar	3
Diane	Schermerhorn	Iron Lady Hawk	4
Teresa	Fett	CR Mistiraaz	
SISU On the Border 5/17 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Sr			
TJ	Edwards	Miss Molly Mule	1
Janet	Sarver	Pswoosh (Bashir)	2
Debra	Juttner	Rena	3
Joel	Hildebrandt	Chazzy	4
Charlotte	Tuhy	Raffimas Image	5
Paula	Goligowski	Little Bay	6
Mary	Aschenbrener	Jake	7
Nancy	Salazar	Nebulucnt	8
**Chip	Jack	WF Everlasting	Pull
Janette	Sasena	Caduceus Oriana	Pull
SISU On the Border 5/18 - 25 Mile Competitive HW			
Ed	Barbo	Psyche on Fire	1
Sheryl	O'Brien	Cherry Rebel BFV	2
Bethany	Borchert	Dun Adoby Fox	3
Janet	Sarver	Joey	Pull
SISU On the Border 5/18 - 25 Mile Competitive LW			
Linda	Goddard	Regal Task	1
Candy	Barbo	CR Winsor	2
Mary	Lambert	Psyche Amorie	3
SISU On the Border 5/18 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Sr			
Diane	Merz	Sterling Illusion	1
Jodi	Johannessen	Denti Moore	2
TJ	Edwards	Miss Molly Mule	3
Joel	Hildebrandt	BE Sparticus	4
**Ben	Zishka	Ariel	5
Charlotte	Tuhy	Phantom Mirage	6
Paula	Goligowski	Willie Winchester	7
Jan	Rivard	Jewell	8
Dana	Gazner	Remington	9
Ellen	Kraft	Harlequin	10
Meredith	Schiener	Tryggr	11
Sarah	Maass	Royal Opus	12
Sue	Schedin	Faden Gazad	Pull

SISU On the Border 5/18 - 13 Mile Competitive Novice			
**Jennifer	Klitzke	Gift of Freedom	1
**Kristin	Christian	Whiskey	2
**Leslie	Lloyd	Bullet	3
Deb	Moe	Fadbai Cufflink	4
**Amanda	Goetze	Splash	5
**Crystal	Esqueda	Spirit	6
Holly	Egerer	Zippy's Ace of Diamonds	MO
**Chip	Jack	Bay Decision (Dezi)	MO
Dale	Lunde	Images Princess Haily	MO
Ken	Meyer	Samarii	MO
Bev	Specht	Bella	MO
SISU On the Border 5/18 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Jr			
**Kade	Zishka	Tizzy	1
Ravyn	Swanson	Proud Rageyma (Ruby)	2
Cassidy	Wiethoff	Black Jack	3
Grace	Steffl	Indiana	4
**Leah	Schnobrich	Buffy	5

Ahdra II - Endure 5/30 - 50 Mile Endurance HW			
Guy	Worthington	Fast William	1
Jim	Andriakos	WB Beksibs Thunderbyrd	2
Kathy	Soukup	GSF Frankie	3
**Jason	Williams	Mo	Pull
**Gerald	Cummings	All For You	Pull
**Kellie	Moore-Fryman	Praise The Lord	Pull
Aaron	Mowrer	Arazi	Pull
Josh	Mowrer	A Time To Shine	Pull
Ahdra II - Endure 5/30 - 50 Mile Endurance LW			
Lori	Windows	Ella N Fires Jane Doe	1
**Kathy	Torgesen	Jasmine	2
Brooke	Thibeault	Apache	3
Nicole	Mauser-Storer	Peso	4
Belinda	Cook	BF Four by Four	5
Ahdra II - Endure 5/30 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Sr			
**Frank	Langholf	BZ Sierra Sunrise	1
**Laurie	Durbin	Pocos Prairie Princess	2
Linda J.	Miller	Crescent Moon Jet	3
Shirley	May	Twinkle	4
**Trudy	Horsman	HM Belle Starr	5
**Olivia R.	Rudolphi	WineGlass Sherry	6
Jen	Allen	WMA Shadrach	C
Robin	Schadt	Kayheart	C
Barb	Straw	Shadowraff	C
Phil	Sears	Callie	C
**Vicki	Wright	PD	MO
Jessi	Zirbel	Force	OT
Kathleen	Skoza	BMA McCord	OT
**Linda	Rudolphi	WineGlass Dora	RO-L
Karen	Tellef	Okan Extraordinaire	RO-M
Barry	Saylor	MD Colorful Touch	L
Marge	Dixon	Kenlyn Rendezvous	RO
Ahdra II - Endure 5/30 - 25 Mile Limited Distance Jr			
Charlie D.	Koester	Lu-Nor Solverign	OT
Ahdra II - Endure 5/30 - 25 Mile Competitive HW			
Sarah	Mowrer	Bint Llalla	1
**Karen	Sylvara	Spot Me Wild	MO

quickly become fatal. Janicki recommends seeking veterinary help if it's obvious (based on clinical signs mentioned in No. 5, along with untouched water sources) a horse hasn't been drinking for two days. "After three to four days, the horse's organs will begin to shut down, which can result in irreversible (organ and tissue) damage," she explains.

Water intake, however, is not just about drinking. "Horses on pasture (which has a high percentage of moisture) will sometimes drink little to no additional water," Gordon explains. "The more dry feedstuffs fed to the horse (such as hay), the more water they will drink."

She adds that horses also naturally generate "metabolic" water as a result of breaking down protein, carbohydrates, and fat. "This does not provide a large amount of water, but does contribute to the horse's daily balance," she says. "All of these things may change the horse's demand for water. Always follow good basic horse keeping rules and have fresh, potable water available at all times."

2. How do I encourage my horse to drink?

Both of our sources agree that the easiest way to encourage drinking is to provide your horse with fresh, clean, palatable water at all times. "Frequently checking, scrubbing, and refilling water troughs and buckets is part of the nitty-gritty of horse keeping," Gordon says.

Other ways to up your horse's intake include soaking hay and providing salt via salt blocks, loose salt top-dressing on feed, or a salt supplement. "Correct sodium balance in the horse is necessary for proper thirst response and body water equilibrium," Gordon explains.

3. What temperature water do horses prefer to drink?

There is evidence that horses prefer lukewarm (20°C or 68°F) water, especially during cold weather, Janicki says. For instance, researchers have shown that pony stallions drank 38-41% less water when it was near frozen compared to when it was 66°F. Yet, when kept indoors at warm temperatures, they drank the same amount of both 32°F water and 66°F water.

4. Can a horse drink too much water?

A horse can, in fact, drink too much water, particularly if he suffers from certain health conditions, such as equine Cushing's disease. Such ailments can cause a horse to exhibit polydipsia, or excessive drinking behavior.

"Excessive water intake can cause stress on the kidneys as they eliminate the excess water and can also dilute the electrolytes in the horse's body, decreasing its ability to regulate temperature," Janicki explains.

Healthy horses, however, typically don't drink beyond their body's capacity, says Gordon: "In research we conducted looking at water intake from adding sodium to

diets, no horse drank beyond what was considered normal for their body weight or based on weather conditions. We're usually more concerned about the opposite: horses not drinking enough water."

5. What are signs of dehydration, and what do I do if my horse becomes dehydrated?

Becoming familiar with your horse's normal vital signs (TheHorse.com/EquineHealthSigns) is one way you can prepare to detect dehydration. Clinical signs include an elevated heart rate or pulse (28-40 beats per minute is normal for an adult horse), changes in gum color and feel (bubblegum pink and moist are normal), and decreased skin elasticity (detectable via a skin pinch test, in which the skin along the neck in front of the shoulder should retract back to normal in less than two seconds when pinched and released). According to the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), changes to these vital signs occur when the horse is 4-6% dehydrated. Horses typically display visual signs such as sunken eyes and a tucked-up appearance to the abdomen when dehydration levels approach 8-10%.

"Most of the time, dehydration can be fixed by offering clean, palatable water," Janicki says. "In cases where the horse is 8-10% dehydrated, you will need to call a veterinarian to administer fluids."

6. On a very hot day, how long would it take for a horse to become dehydrated?

"An idle horse requires approximately 5 L water/100 kg body weight," Janicki says. "Typically, for a 1,100-pound horse, that would be around 25 L (6.6 gallons) of water per day. This is based on research done on horses kept at a thermoneutral temperature range (-15-10°C or 5-50°F), which is considered to be the temperature a horse maintains its own body temperature with little or no energy expenditure."

How long it takes for a horse to become dehydrated depends on many individual factors affecting hydration status in hot weather, such as diet, work, pregnancy, lactation, and age.

The good news is that in two studies Gordon and colleagues performed recently, they saw a positive link between ambient temperature and water intake. "If temperatures are rising, horses will drink more water to maintain hydration status and offset sweat losses," she explains. "Therefore, (how long it takes for a horse to become dehydrated) partially depends on the availability of water for horses to rehydrate on a very hot summer day."

In another study, Geor et al. demonstrated that horses exercised at high temperatures (33-35°C or 91-95°F) and high humidity (80-85%) increased their water intake 79% for four hours.

7. Can certain health conditions impact a horse's water intake?

Basically, any health condition that decreases feed intake can also lessen water intake, says Gordon. And if a horse suffers from diarrhea for any reason, he can become dehydrated easily, even if drinking normal amounts of water, says Janicki.

On the other end of the drinking spectrum, "horses with uncontrolled glucose/insulin may drink and urinate more," Gordon says. And, as mentioned, horses with Cushing's disease can develop polydipsia.

Diet can also affect water consumption. "High levels of fiber (hay), salt, potassium, and protein in the diet can cause excessive water intake," Janicki notes.

8. How can I keep my horses hydrated while competing or traveling?

Janicki suggests making frequent stops (every two to three hours) to offer your horse water when traveling. This will help him not only stay hydrated but also tolerate traveling for long periods of time.

Gordon says owners can also offer their horses soaked hay or a compressed hay product: "It masks the taste of 'foreign' water and helps ensure the horse remains hydrated."

During competitions or trail rides, offer your horse water whenever possible. "(Horses) should be able to drink as much as they want, unless certain medical conditions prevent this from happening," Janicki advises. In such cases, work with your veterinarian to determine how much water to offer and how frequently.

9. Immediately after an intense workout, should I taper my horses' water intake or should I allow them to drink all they want, all at once?

Similar to the response to the previous question, a horse should be allowed to drink as much as he wants anytime after performing an intense exercise bout.

Although some owners have reservations about giving a horse free access to water before he "cools down," Gordon points out that Schott et al. have demonstrated in research studies that horses do not drink beyond their stomach capacity in the first few minutes following intense exercise.

"Water does not need to be withheld," she says. "Use ambient temperature or 'hose-cold' water, and train horses to drink salt water after intense exercise to help replenish water and electrolyte requirements. Also provide clean water at the same time."

10. Why are some horses so picky about their water sources?

Horses are very sensitive to the smell and taste of water and feedstuffs, says Gordon, and there can be many explanations as to why a horse refuses to drink from a certain water source. Janicki explains that water sources have varying pH levels and, more importantly, total dissolved solid (TDS) levels. "Palatability is affected most by TDS values, which measure the amount of ions in the water source," she says.

Water hardness (which can be due to high calcium, magnesium, sodium, and potassium levels) also affects palatability.

If your horse turns up his nose at water when traveling or competing, Janicki suggests taking water from home with you and making it available so your horse will not become dehydrated.

11. I often ride in the desert where there are no water sources. How long and hard can I ride my horse before he needs a chance to drink?

Our sources do not suggest taking long, hard rides in the desert without water sources, unless you're completing an endurance event. "Endurance riders typically provide water at all times before the ride," Janicki says. "Soaking hay or hay cubes before the ride will help with fluid balance. Do not provide grain within four hours of (before) the ride, as this may dehydrate a horse quicker. Offering electrolytes before and after the ride in water will help with electrolyte losses and fluid intake."

12. When trail riding, what kind of natural water sources are safe for horses? What are the signs that a natural water source might not be safe?

Again, clean, fresh water is the best water for horses. Janicki suggests examining a potential water source carefully before allowing your horse to drink from it, considering its clarity (rainfall and runoff decrease clarity), odor (which can indicate unclean water, potentially impacting palatability), temperature (since extremely cold or warm water affects palatability), and color (which does not necessarily affect water quality, so use this factor in combination with the others—i.e., don't let your horse drink from mirky, moldy-smelling water that is also green).

Take-Home Message

The best way to ensure your horse is well-hydrated is to offer him free-choice access to clean, quality water regardless of whether he's stabled, turned out, traveling, or competing. Watch for signs of dehydration, and work with your veterinarian to solve any watering hole issues your horse might have.



AHDRA Triple Crown Standings!

The first AHDRA ride is in the record books, and so is the first Jewel in the Triple Crown. This year, AHDRA will be awarding a gift card worth a minimum of \$300 for the winner of the Triple Crown. The rules are simple. Participants need not be AHDRA or even UMECRA members. All they must do is attend all three of the AHDRA rides - ENDURE, MY BACK YARD, and BIG RIVER. The horse rider team who accrues the most points in all three rides will be the Triple Crown winner. They need not accrue the points in the same division. For instance, the team can participate in LD's at one ride and comp at another. It is total points. Here is the Top 20 from the results at Endure. If you know you participated and do not see your name, NOT TO WORRY. I have a complete list. Many of the Top 20 will fail to attend all rides. It's not over until it's over! Next leg in the Triple Crown is My Back Yard the end of June. See You There!!!

Kathy Torgesen	Jasmine	34
Jennifer Plummer	Sky Blu	22
Ruth Casserly	Auran Harley Davidson	21
Leah Palestrant	KW Farih Magnum	20
Guy Worthington	Fast William	18
Lucy Bagot	Autumn Maverick	18
Team Casserly	Auran Bachlava	
	Amir Sam PMR	16.5
Jim Andriakos	WB Nelsons Thunderbyrd	16
Olivia Rudolphi	H. Wineglass Syrah	16
Team Troyer	Heart of Valparaiso	
	El Minister	15
Brooke Thiebeault	Apache	14
Robin Schadt	Kayheart	13
Gue Worthington	Rerun	12
Barry Saylor		11
Frank Langholz	BZ Sierra Sunrise	11
Guy Worthington	PA Hi-Spirit	11
Roberta Harms	JM C'est La Vie	10
Kathi Soukup	GSF Frankie	10
Nicole Mauser-Storer	Peso	10
Belinda Cook	BF Four by Four	10
Josh Mowrer	Magnum Archie	10
Jim Andriakos	CR Cosmic Eclipse	10
Laurie Durbin	Jetta	10
Holly Kemis	Wineglass Remeny	10
Sarah Mowrer	Bint Llalla	10

How Much Protein is Enough?

By Karen Briggs Jun 14, 2014

How Much Protein is Enough? www.thehorse.com

An adult horse's protein requirements are low enough that true protein deficiencies are quite rare. They usually occur only when a horse is on very poor pasture or hay with no other supplemental feed for a prolonged period of time.

Are you confused about how much protein your horse should consume? Don't worry: You're not alone. Here's what you need to know about protein excesses and deficiencies in horse diets, and how to determine how much protein your horse needs each day.

Excesses and Deficiencies

Horses that receive inadequate amounts of protein in their diets can suffer a number of ill effects, including decreased growth and development in youngsters, and reduced appetite, body tissue weight loss, slow hoof growth, energy deficit, and a poor hair coat with reduced shedding in adults. Pregnant mares with protein deficiencies may become more prone to abortions, and lactating mares suffer declines in milk production. Muscle deterioration, especially in the large muscle groups of the hindquarters, also might be evident, and some horses will begin eating manure. The reduced food intake of a depressed, protein-deficient horse can become a vicious cycle, making efforts to correct the condition difficult. But the protein requirements of an adult horse are low enough that true protein deficiencies are quite rare.

They usually occur only when a horse is on very poor pasture or hay with no other supplemental feed, for a prolonged period of time. With a corrected diet, most of the signs of protein deficiency in adult horses can be turned around in as little as a week. The damage done to a young, growing horse, however, can be more serious.

More common, and equally damaging, is an excess of protein in the diet, especially in mature horses that have been fed by owners laboring under the misunderstanding that protein equals energy. Here's what happens: Protein not used immediately by the horse's system is broken down to release the nitrogen atoms (the rest of the molecule being stored), and those nitrogen atoms become bound up as ammonia and urea molecules. The ammonia and urea eventually are excreted in the urine, which leads to increased water intake, increased urination, and a noticeably strong ammonia smell in the stall. And before ammonia and urea can be excreted in the urine, they must be filtered out of the blood—a process that, over time, can tax the kidneys. It's conceivable that this eventually might lead to decreased renal function, and that then the unfiltered urea and ammonia in the bloodstream can exacerbate liver and kidney disease.

Decreased athletic performance is another possible outcome of a high-protein diet. Lower blood pH at rest, and during sprinting exercise, has recently been demonstrated in horses fed abnormally high levels of protein. And in addition to all this, there's some evidence that excess protein can interfere with calcium absorption the absorption of both calcium and phosphorus. Researchers differ, however, on how much damage a high-protein diet can cause, and how long a horse must be fed such a diet before the effects (if any) are noticeable. There is stronger evidence for the detrimental effect of excess protein in growing horses—in one study, weanlings and

yearlings fed a diet 25% higher in protein than normal suffered slower rates of growth overall and higher incidences of developmental bone and joint problems.

So what is an appropriate level of protein for your horse? Continuing research is changing that answer all the time, but there are some general guidelines. The amount of crude protein needed in the diet depends on the needs of the individual horse (the most pivotal question being, is he still growing?), the digestibility or “bioavailability” of the protein, and the amount of the diet consumed. As a rule, though, a value of 0.60 g of digestible protein (1.26 g of crude protein) per kilogram of body weight per day is appropriate for most adult horses for maintenance metabolism. Broodmares in their first eight months of gestation trimester of pregnancy don’t really need supplemental levels of protein, but in their last trimester, when the fetus does 60% to 65% of its growing, from the fifth month on, their protein requirements increase.

Lactation (nursing) also demands higher protein levels; the protein content of mare’s milk is highest right after foaling and decreases gradually as the lactation period progresses. In one study, nursing broodmares fed less than 2.8 g of crude protein per kilogram of bodyweight per day lost weight and produced less milk than mares fed at least 3.2 g of crude protein per kilo of bodyweight per day.

Protein deficiencies in the mare’s diet also have an adverse effect on the growth of the nursing foal. After three months of nursing, most mares are producing fairly small amounts of milk—and foals are starting to eat more solid food. At this point, a return to regular protein levels is appropriate for most mares.

Some researchers feel that during the breeding season, stallions also can benefit from a higher level of dietary protein, which is scaled back once breeding is finished for the year. And hard exercise (such as racing, three-day eventing, or endurance racing) does increase the need for protein in the diet of adult horses, to support increased muscle development and mass, and to replace nitrogen lost in sweat. But the overall increase is quite small—just 1% to 2%.

Which feeds provide the best protein? Animal sources, such as milk and egg protein, and even fish and meat meal, offer the best amino acid profile and the highest levels of lysine. Milk protein is often used as the primary protein source for foal feeds, but because it is quite expensive (and because adult horses are far less sensitive to protein quality differences), it’s rarely found in feeds for mature animals.

Among the plant sources, soybean and canola meal are the next best things—they are the only two plant protein products that contain adequate amounts of lysine and methionine. Other common protein sources, such as linseed meal and cottonseed meal, have poor amino acid profiles and are generally supplemented with amino acids added by the feed manufacturer.

Grains themselves (such as oats, corn, and barley) can contain between 8% and 20% protein, but it’s of poor quality—which is the reason most feed companies add a higher-quality protein supplement to their “balanced” feeds (sweet feeds, pellets, and other pre-mixed rations). If the manufacturers have done their job, the feed should contain at least 0.65% lysine (on a dry matter basis). If this level isn’t present, more feed will be required to get the same results (particularly with young, growing horses). Protein, while a crucial part of your horse’s diet, has to be viewed in the proper perspective—as just one part of a working whole in the nutrition scheme.

Managing Mud on Horse Farms

By University of Kentucky’s College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment Feb 20, 2014

Horses are creatures of habit and return to the same grazing areas repeatedly. This behavior causes overgrazing and trampling that inevitably reduces grass coverage and results in muddy areas.

You might know the feeling when you lift your foot to take a step across your horse’s paddock and suddenly realize that your boot has been left behind and your soaked foot is half a step away from it in ankle-deep mud. Mud is a problem anywhere water meets bare soil. And during the last few years Kentucky horse farms have had their share of mud.

Horses are creatures of habit and return to the same grazing areas repeatedly. This behavior causes overgrazing and trampling that inevitably reduces grass coverage and results in muddy areas. Recent extreme weather conditions have further thinned Kentucky pastures, magnifying the mud issue. Mud is not only unattractive, it also is dangerous for horses and people to move around in, harbors bacteria, and decreases pasture productivity. However, the following pasture management practices can help reduce mud and its associated challenges.

The University of Kentucky has several publications related to mud management. Please see the list of publications below for more information. These, as well as other pasture-related information, can be found at www.uky.edu/Ag/forage with equine specific publications listed under “Horse Links.” Contact your local county agriculture and natural resource agent with specific questions or issues.

Overseeding heavy traffic areas can prevent or correct mud issues. Depending on your method, overseeding can be a long-term solution or a short-term simple fix. The ideal method is to remove horses from the paddock or fence off an area, then seed into a prepared seedbed or killed sod with perennial grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, orchardgrass, and endophyte-free tall fescue. This requires seeding equipment, sacrificing some of your turnout, and waiting six or more months for the seedlings to fully establish, but results can last for years.

On the other hand, perennial and annual ryegrass provide short-term overseeding options for horse owners that are quick to establish and relatively inexpensive. Annual ryegrass will establish very quickly and is inexpensive; however, it only survives until midsummer. Perennial ryegrass survives for about two years in Kentucky if not overgrazed, but it is a bit more costly and slightly slower to establish. Unlike other cool season grasses, ryegrasses can be broadcast on top of the ground and will still germinate and take root. In small, high-traffic areas, this might be the simplest mud management method. Keeping horses and people off this area as long as possible will produce the best results; consider relocating high-traffic sites such as hay racks and water tanks, or walking horses through a different gate until the root is established. Broadcast seeding (also known as top seeding) of other forage species (Kentucky bluegrass, orchardgrass, etc.) will not be successful unless the area is dragged or cultipacked (to compact the soil) after seeding to bury the seed. Even when overseeding ryegrass, dragging is recommended.

Successful overseeding depends on several factors including time of seeding, seed quality, and soil fertility. Always purchase certified seed of improved varieties and consider performing a soil test before seeding. Make sure to use endophyte-free perennial ryegrass, since turf-type perennial ryegrass contains an endophyte similar to that found in tall fescue, which can create problems for pregnant mares. Early March is the best time for spring overseeding in Kentucky.

High Traffic Area Pads

Sometimes seeding can't provide enough relief from mud. Paddocks with only one gate or water source, for instance, face mud issues constantly, especially when overstocked. In these cases owners can install high traffic area pads. These pads do require some investment; however, they will reduce or eliminate mud for years to come.

High traffic area pads can reduce or eliminate mud for years to come.

A high traffic area pad or feeding pad consists of geotextile fabric, No. 4 crushed stone, and a dense grade aggregate installed over an excavated area. The result is a pad of

smooth, dry surface similar to concrete. The geotextile fabric prevents mud from seeping up into the pad and eventually engulfing the area. Typically, poured concrete will cost around \$4 per square foot. The University of Kentucky Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Department estimated the cost of a high traffic area pad around 80 cents per square foot.

High traffic area pads can be installed anywhere that equine or machine traffic is too high to establish cover, including around gates, water/feed sources, and along fence lines or shade areas.

Preventing Mud in the Future

Mud prevention requires long-range planning and a balance between managing horses and managing pastures. Establishing a sacrifice area is a simple way to decrease pasture damage during times of heavy moisture or excessive drought. A sacrifice area is similar to a drylot that will provide an alternative turnout space to pasture. Ideally, the sacrifice area should be prepared similarly to the high traffic pad as described above.

Pasture rotation is one of the simplest ways to avoid mud issues. By giving a pasture a rest period, bare soil often will be reduced naturally. When paired with overseeding, it will provide a greater increase in cover. Pasture rotation only requires two paddocks, but three or more are recommended to provide each paddock with longer rest.

Ray Smith, PhD, is a forage extension specialist at the University of Kentucky. Krista Cotton is the assistant coordinator of UK's Horse Pasture Evaluation Program.

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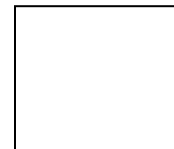
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