EQUINE LINE

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Horse Operations Enjoy Tax Breaks From New Law

From www.nyfb.org

Horse owners today praised a new law signed by Gov. Cuomo that extends the same legal protections and tax assessment benefits to commercial equine operations that commercial horse boarding operations currently enjoy.

"This legislation is great news for horse businesses, which are a thriving and growing segment of the rural economy," said Dean Norton, President of New York Farm Bureau.

"Farm Bureau worked hard to champion this bill and we are grateful to Sen. Patty Ritchie and Assemblyman Bill Magee for their sponsorship and efforts in pushing it through," he said.

Up until now, farms that provide horse training, trail riding and riding lessons were excluded from agricultural district protections and agricultural tax assessments. But breeding and commercial horse boarding operations were eligible.

The law fixed the disparity by expanding the horse operations eligible for protections.

The equine industry is an important sector of the agricultural and rural economy. New York is a big horse state. The equine industry has a value of $1.83 billion, with total equine-related assets estimated at $10 billion, according to the last National Agricultural Statistical Service's Equine Survey from 2005.

Much of the sector's value comes from revenues generated by providing equine services, such as boarding, trail riding, riding lessons, training and therapeutic riding.

"This legislation fixed a big inadequacy in agricultural assessment laws among horse operations and is profound investment in the equine industry in New York State," Norton said.

In This Issue:

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Horse Saddle Sores - Treatment and Prevention

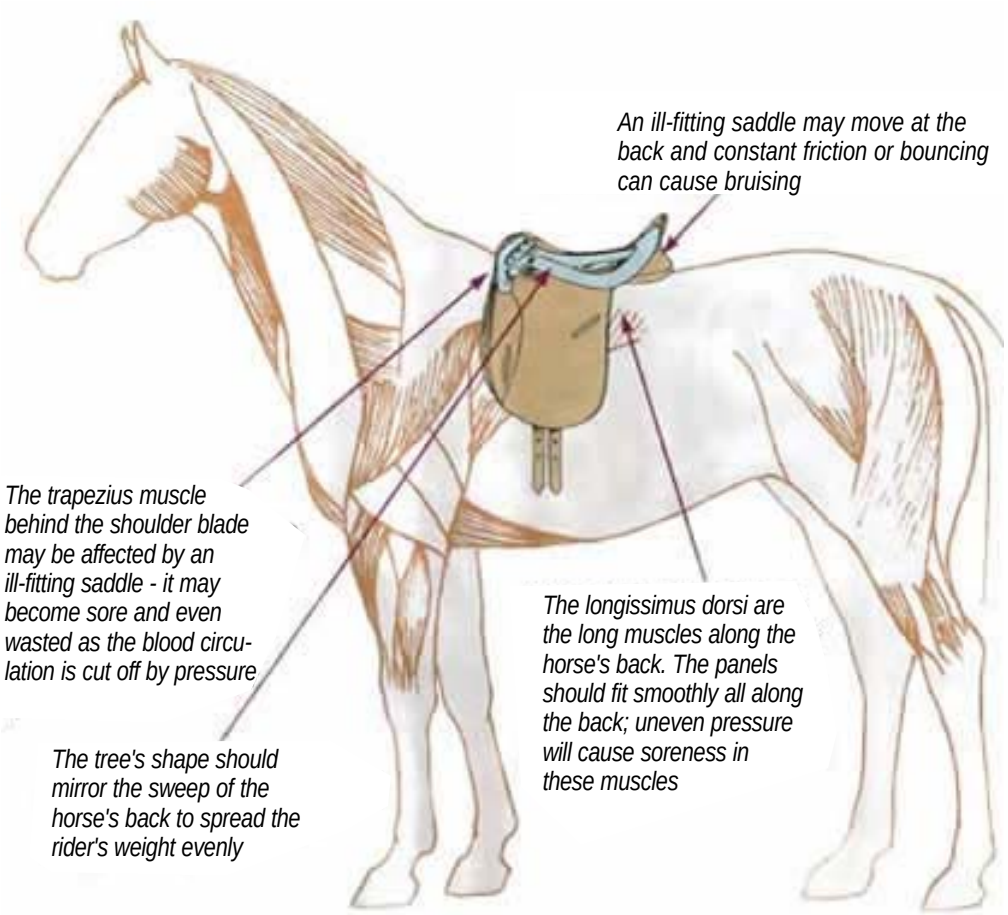
Adapted from www.raraequus.com

The most common causes of saddle sores on horses are by and large incorrectly fitting saddles. Similar to walking a mile or two in a pair of shoes the wrong size, being ridden in an ill fitting saddle can be extremely painful for a horse. If you suspect this may be the case (ill fitting saddles are also frequently accompanied by behavior problems) you should have your saddle fit checked by a trainer, vet, or, preferably, a professional saddle-fitter, who can be located through most tack stores. Saddles sores caused by poor saddle fit usually show up around the withers, shoulder, or back under the cantle.

Sometimes saddle sores are caused by a dirty saddle pad, or a clean saddle pad placed on a dirty horse, or a saddle cinched up with the hair not laying flat underneath. All of these situations can be big enough irritants to cause open sores or wounds within the space of a short ride.

Finally, saddle sores can be caused by girths and cinches being too tight, too loose, too rough, too dirty, or skin being bunched underneath them- also galled girth galls.

Care for horse saddle sores is basically the same regardless of the cause. Treatment consists of a daily application of some type of wound care, or examination by a vet if severe enough, and absolutely no riding until the saddle sore has healed completely. After the skin has healed, riding can resume- with the initial cause of the sore removed.



Keeping an Eye On Invasive Plants

Adapted from www.team.ars.usda.gov/v2/leafyspurge.html

Leafy Spurge

The plant was first reported in the United States in 1827. Leafy spurge is an aggressive, persistent, deep-rooted perennial, growing to a height of 3 feet or taller. Vegetative stems manufacture sugars for root reserves while other stems produce flowers. Leafy spurge reproduces by vegetative re-growth from spreading roots and by the production of large quantities of seeds that are often dispersed by birds, wildlife, humans, and in rivers and streams. The stems are thickly clustered and bear 1 to 4 inches leaves that are alternately arranged along the stems. When damaged, leaves and stems produce a milky latex. The flowers are yellowish-green, arranged in clusters, and enclosed in yellow-green bracts.

Infestations

Leafy spurge now extends from southern Canada through the northern United States, and is approaching areas as far south as Texas. (see Leafy Spurge Distribution map)

Leafy spurge produces a milky latex that is poisonous to some animals and can cause blistering and irritation on skin. The digestive tract is similarly affected when this plant is eaten by humans and some animals. Livestock usually refuse to eat leafy spurge unless it is given to them in dry, weedy hay or when better forage is not available.

Leafy spurge is extremely difficult to control by chemical means and almost impossible to control by cultural or physical methods in rangelands. It apparently has the ability to purge undesirable chemicals from the root system. Although leafy spurge causes problems with cattle that consume it, sheep generally can be taught to feed on it and goats will seek it out. Both sheep and goats are utilized in weed control programs to "keep the yellow out" and to retard the spread of leafy spurge. People should handle the plant with caution because the latex can cause irritation, blotching, blisters, and swelling in sensitive individuals. The eyes should never be rubbed until after the hands are thoroughly washed. The dried latex is often very difficult to wash off, consider wearing lightweight latex gloves when handling the plant.

Why should I be concerned?

Leafy spurge is an invasive exotic weed that infests more than five million acres of land in 35 states. It has caused significant problems in the northern Great Plains by invading grazing lands for cattle and horses, reducing rangeland productivity and plant diversity, degrading wildlife habitat, displacing sensitive species and drastically reducing land values.

The economic impact of leafy spurge is staggering, but the impact of leafy spurge cannot be measured in dollars alone. Leafy spurge crowds out native vegetation, resulting in a monoculture that reduces biodiversity and threatens both abundant and sensitive species. The invasion of exotic weed species in national parks, wildlife refuges and other lands set aside for wildlife and recreation has, in fact, reached epidemic proportions. In addition, the most commonly used control tool - herbicides - often have adverse environmental consequences. In short, leafy spurge is an economic and environmental catastrophe for land managers and taxpayers in the U.S.

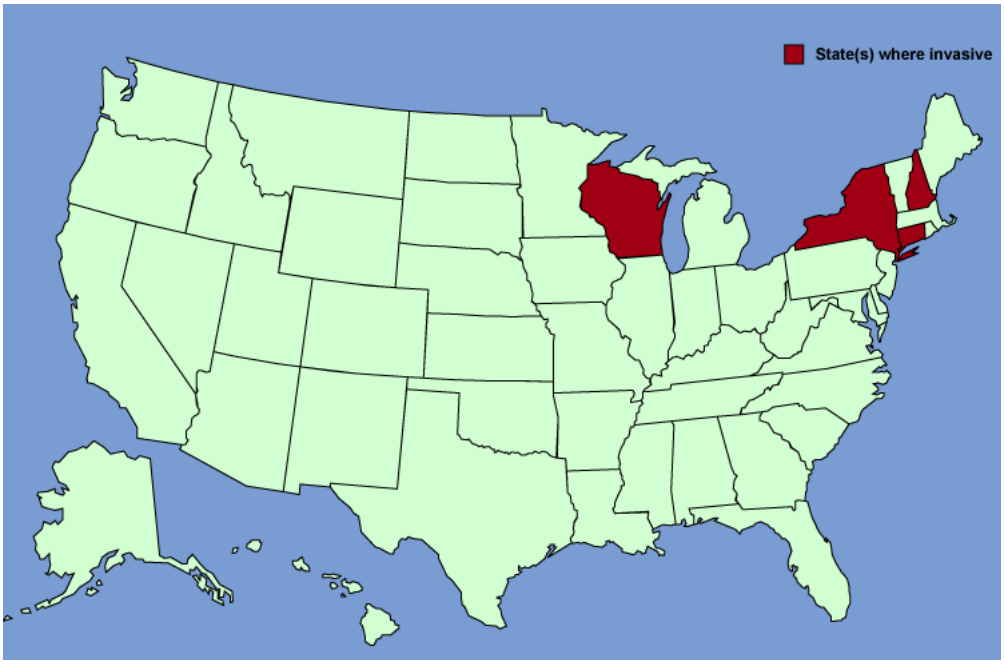
Black Swallow-wort

Adapted from www.nps.gov

Black Swallow-wort (*Cynanchum louiseae*) is an invasive plant whose numbers are increasing in the Hudson Valley. In order to develop a good plan for controlling its spread, data is needed to more accurately assess the the range of the plants presence in the area. As a plant that spreads and reproduces most rapidly in full sun, agricultural sites are often infested with the plant. For this reason, we are asking our agricultural constituents to BE ON the LOOK OUT for this plant:

> "Black or Louis' swallow-wort (previously *Vincetoxicum nigrum* and *Cynanchum nigrum*) is a perennial, twining herbaceous vine. The leaves are oval shaped with pointed tips, 3-4 in. long by 2-3 in. wide, and occur in pairs along the stem. The small five-petaled star shaped flowers are dark purple to almost black with white hairs, about ¼ in. across, and are borne in clusters. The fruits are slender tapered pods, 2 to 3 in. long by about ¼ in. wide, turning from green to light brown as they mature. Plants have rhizomes (underground stems) that sprout new plants and grow in clumps of several to many stems, forming extensive patches."
>
> *---Plant Conservation Alliance's® Alien Plant Working Group*

Black Swallow-wort (a member of the milkweed family) is most easily identified when it is in flower, so looking for it in July during its flowering season is an advantage, and allows it to be removed before it sets seed.



Please report whether or not you have found this plant on your property. Please note its location as accurately as is practical, and include an assessment of how heavy the infestation is, and an approximation of how long the plant has been known to be in that location. Photographs or submitted plant specimens would be very desirable for accurate identification.

For more information or to report an infestation, please contact Ed McGowan from the Lower Hudson Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) at 845-786-2701 or email Edwin.McGowan@oprhp.state.ny.us or visit http://nyis.info/PRISM/Lower_Hudson_PRISM.aspx.

West Nile Virus

Source: www.health.ny.gov/diseases/west_nile_virus/

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne infection that can cause serious illness, and in some cases, death. West Nile virus was first found in New York State in 1999. Since 2000 there have been over 254 human cases (26 deaths) of WNV statewide. Please refer to the West Nile Virus Update for the most recent information at http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/west_nile_virus.

The chances of a person becoming ill with WNV are small. Most people who are infected with the West Nile virus will not have any type of illness. It is estimated that 20% of the people who become infected will develop West Nile fever: mild symptoms, including fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. In many individuals, these symptoms are so mild that they go unnoticed or undetected.

The symptoms of severe infection (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis) can include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, paralysis, and coma. It is estimated that one in 150 persons infected with the West Nile virus will develop the more severe form of the disease. Prevention of mosquito-bites is the most important way to reduce your risk of mosquito-borne diseases such as WNV.

To help protect yourself from mosquitoes and West Nile Virus, wear long sleeves, pants and socks. Consider using insect repellent on exposed skin, and follow label directions. Repellents can be effective at reducing bites from insects that can transmit disease. But their use is not without risk of health effects, especially if repellents are applied in large amounts or improperly. Information in the fact sheets will help you decide when and if a repellent is right for you.

Tractor Safety Tips

Source: www.ehs.iastate.edu/cms/default.asp?ID=285&action=article

Tractors are the main cause of accidental deaths on farms. Over the years, many farmers, farm workers and others living on or visiting farms have been killed or seriously injured when falling from moving tractors, being run over by tractors, or being crushed when a tractor rolls sideways or backwards.

Spot the Hazard

Regularly check for hazards relating to tractors, attached implements and field conditions. Hazardous areas could include mechanical parts, operator training, other people, work procedures, unsafe jacking, climatic conditions, chemicals used, uneven terrain, and any other potential causes of an injury or a hazardous incident. Keep a record to ensure identified hazards are assessed and controlled.

Assess the Risk

Once a potential hazard has been identified, assess the likelihood of an injury or hazardous incident occurring. For example, risk to children playing near a tractor will vary, depending on what the tractor operator is doing, how close they are to the tractor, and whether the operator knows they are there. Consider ways of minimizing risk.

Make the Changes

Ways to improve tractor operator safety include:

- Reading and following safety procedures in the manufacturer's manual.
- Ensuring an approved cab or roll-over protective structure (ROPS) is fitted.
- Fitting and using a seatbelt on tractors with ROPS.
- Fitting a fall-on protective structure (FOPS) on tractors at risk from falling objects.
- Fitting a seat with side restraints and a back rest to reduce the risk of back strain.
- Wearing hearing protection and remembering that not all tractor cabs are soundproof.
- Keeping children away from tractors and machinery.
- Removing starter keys when tractors are not in use.

- Having an up-to-date maintenance schedule.
- Following save maintenance and jacking procedures.
- Ensuring the operator is properly trained for each type of tractor work.
- Always mounting and dismounting on a tractor's left side in order to avoid the controls.
- Adjusting the seat so all controls are safely and comfortably within reach.
- Keeping all guards in place, including the power take-off (PTO).
- Operating the self-starter from the operator position only.
- Never carrying passengers.

When operating a tractor:

- Drive at speeds slow enough to retain control over unexpected events.
- Reduce speed before turning or applying brakes.
- Watch out for ditches, logs, rocks, depressions, and embankments.
- On steep slopes, without a trailed implement, reverse up for greater safety.
- Engage the clutch gently at all times, especially when going uphill or towing.
- Use as wide a wheel track as possible on hillsides and sloping ground.
- Descend slopes cautiously in low gear, using the motor as a brake.
- Never mount or dismount a moving tractor.
- Ensure the park brake is on and operating effectively before dismounting.
- Take short breaks regularly when working long hours.

When towing implements:

- Fit attachments according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always attach implements to the draw bar or the mounting points provided by the manufacturer.
- Never alter, modify or raise the height of the draw bar, unless provided for by the manufacturer.
- Regularly check safety pins on towed lift-wing implements to ensure they are not worn.
- Ensure all guards on towed implements are in place before operating.
- Never hitch above the center line of the rear axel, around the axel housing, or to the top link pin.
- Never adjust or work on implements while they are in motion.
- Never attach implements unless the PTO shaft is guarded.
- When parking, always lower the three-point linkage and towed implement.

To avoid strain injury:

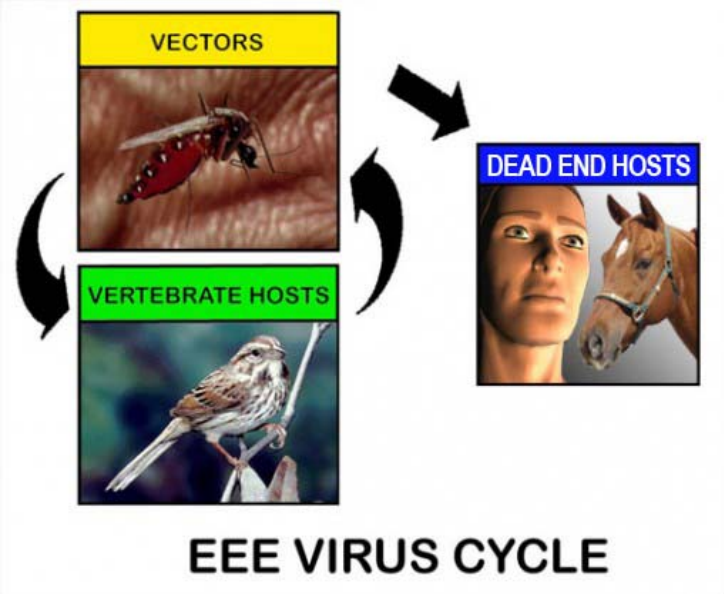
- Adjust the tractor seat for back support and comfort.
- When buying a tractor, ensure seating is safe and comfortable.
- Check seat height, seat depth, back rest height and angle, fore and aft movement, seat tilt, firm padding, partial pivoting (if you have to spend long periods looking behind you), and vibration-absorbing suspension.
- Dismount every hour or so, and spend 5-10 minutes doing something active.
- Plan for your next tractor to include suitably low steps, hand grips, adequate doorway and cab space, and a safe mounting platform.
- Dismount by climbing down - not jumping down - and use each provided foot and hand hold.

NY Confirms Two Cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis in Horses

Source: www.agmkt.state.ny.us

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) confirmed 2011's first case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis, also known as EEE, in an Oneida County, NY horse. The 9 year old mare had lived at its current home for several years and had no recent travel history. The horse was unvaccinated. There is one other horse on the same premise that is not showing any signs of EEE, and which has since been vaccinated.

The NYS Dept of Agriculture and Markets, Division of Animal Industry has reported a second case of EEE in Oswego County. Oswego County has had plenty of EEE-positive mosquito activity recorded already this summer through the NYSDOH mosquito surveillance pools.



Typical symptoms of encephalitis in equines include staggering, circling, depression, loss of appetite and sometimes fever and blindness. There is no cure for this disease, which has high mortality rates in horses. Humans cannot become infected by handling an infected horse, nor can a horse acquire the virus from another infected horse; however, the presence of an infected horse in the area indicates that mosquitoes carrying EEE are present and pose a threat to both humans and horses.

Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, Darrel J. Aubertine, reminds horse owners that West Nile Virus causes neurologic symptoms similar to EEE and is also spread by mosquitoes. Commissioner Aubertine urges all horse owners to discuss vaccination against both diseases with their veterinarian. State Veterinarian David Smith added that any horse exhibiting neurologic problems should always be handled with great caution. The risk of physical injury to handlers is greater when horses are unsteady on their feet and also rabies needs to be ruled out as a cause of the symptoms.

Vaccines currently available drastically reduce the incidence of EEE in horses and are effective for six to twelve months, so horses should be re-vaccinated at least annually. In an area where the disease occurs frequently, most veterinarians recommend vaccination every six months. For the vaccine to be effective, it must be handled and administered properly and ideally given at least two weeks before the horse is exposed to the virus. Additionally, to stimulate full immunity, horses must be vaccinated twice, about 30 days apart, the first year that the horse is vaccinated. While it's best to have horses vaccinated well before potential exposure, vaccinating horses now will still provide protective benefits for this year's mosquito season.

Other prevention methods include destroying standing water breeding sites for mosquitoes, using insect repellents and removing animals from mosquito-infested areas during peak biting times, usually dusk to dawn.

Humans should reduce contact with mosquitoes. Wearing protective clothing and insect repellents and avoiding the outdoors during dawn and dusk are all ways to avoid mosquito bites. For more information about humans and EEE, visit: www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/eastern_equine_encephalitis/fact_sheet.htm.

State Alerts Horse Owners of Ehv-1 Outbreak in Western U.S.

No New York Horses Known to be exposed to the Virus; State Vet Offers Guidance

Source: www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AD/release.asp?ReleaseID=1962

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine today alerted horse owners of an outbreak of Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1) that is traced to horses that attended the National Cutting Horse Association's (NCHA) Western National Championships in Ogden, Utah April 30 through May 8, 2011. At this time, there are no New York horses known to have been exposed to the virus at the Utah show.

The Department is closely monitoring the situation in the western part of the U.S. and has been in close contact with federal animal health authorities and other states. Approximately 29 states are believed to have horses that were exposed to EHV-1 at the show.

Equine Herpesvirus is commonly found in equine populations worldwide, and can cause respiratory disease, abortion and sometimes neurologic disease. While EHV-1 is highly contagious among horses, it does not pose a threat to human health.

New York State Veterinarian Dr. David Smith advises horse owners concerned about EHV-1 to contact their veterinarian. In general, exposed horses should be isolated and have their temperatures monitored twice daily for at least 21 days. If an exposed horse develops a fever or other signs consistent with EHV-1 infection, diagnostic testing should be performed. Testing healthy horses is generally not recommended.

As a basic biosecurity measure, all newly purchased horses or horses that return from events should be imme-

diately isolated from other horses for at least three weeks. These horses should be monitored for signs of illness, which could include fever, cough, lack of appetite, nasal or ocular discharge, swelling around the throat or incoordination. It is recommended to take the temperature on these animals twice a day during the isolation period, and have separate equipment. If a fever is recorded, a veterinarian should be called immediately.

Direct horse-to-horse contact is a common route of transmission of EHV-1, but it can be indirectly transmitted as well. This occurs when infectious materials, such as nasal secretions, are carried between infected and non-infected horses by people or objects such as buckets, grooming tools, tack, etc.

Fever is one of the most common clinical signs, as well as coughing and nasal discharge. Abortions caused by EHV-1 generally occur after five months of gestation. Neurologic signs of the virus are highly variable, but affected horses may appear weak and uncoordinated. Severely affected horses may become unable to rise. The neurologic form of the disease is sometimes referred to as Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy (EHM). Any horse in New York that exhibits signs consistent with neurologic disease should always be considered as a potential rabies case and therefore, handled with caution.

New York did have two confirmed cases of EHV-1 in March that was linked to an incident at Cornell's Equine Hospital in which an infected foal died and a gelding that was exposed and confirmed with the virus is now recovering.

For more information on EHV-1, visit the American Association of Equine Practitioners' website or check USDA APHIS' brochure on the virus.

Information for farmers about tax issues related to weather (e.g. Hurricane Irene) losses

The recent harsh weather from Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irene that has affected many parts of the Eastern United States has caused damage to roads, streams, buildings, piers, and agriculture.

In many cases the damage to farms, rural businesses and private homes qualifies as a casualty loss due to the unexpected damage. The Internal Revenue Code has provisions that often allow individuals and businesses affected by such sudden events to apply beneficial tax rules to their circumstances when they meet the qualifications of these rules.

A resource to help individuals and clients of professional tax preparers relative to casualty losses and other income tax issues is available from the website RuralTax.org. On this website are fact sheets that explain how to apply the rules to businesses as well as personal casualties. These include an article on involuntary conversion and a related article on weather related sales of livestock.

Cooperative Extension educators and professional tax preparers may be resources to access this information and provide income tax information relative to a potential casualty loss.

Individuals are encouraged to contact their income tax professional to determine how these rules may apply to their specific circumstances.

Contact: Joseph A. Bennett (New York)
(607) 254-5102

Disaster Action Guidelines For Horse Owners

You should be aware that actions you take before, during and after a natural or man made disaster could save your horses' life.

Plan Ahead Before a Disaster Occurs:

- Familiarize yourself with the types of disasters that can occur in your area and develop a plan of action to deal with each type. Some disasters to consider are hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, severe winter weather, fire, nuclear power plant accidents with release of radioactivity to the environment and hazardous material spills.
- Survey your property to find the best location to confine your animals in each type of disaster. Check for alternate water sources in case power is lost and pumps and automatic waterers are not working after the disaster.
- If you think you might need to evacuate your horses from your property determine several locations the animals could be taken, several routes to these locations and the entry requirements for each. Make arrangements in advance with the owner/operators to accept your horses and be sure to contact them before taking the horses there. Locations that could be used for evacuation are private stables, race tracks, fair grounds, equestrian centers, private farms and humane societies.
- Permanently identify each horse by tattoo, microchip, brand, tag, photograph (4 views-front, rear, left and right side) and/or drawing. Record its age, sex, breed,

and color with your record of this identification. Keep this information with your important papers. If not identified at the time of the disaster in the above manner, paint or etch hooves, use neck bands or paint telephone number on side of animal.

- Be sure your horses' vaccination and medical records are written and up-to-date. As a minimum, each horse should have a current Coggins test documented. Check with your veterinarian as to what immunizations are advisable. Have documentation of any medicines with dosing instructions, special feeding instructions and the name and phone number of the veterinarian who dispensed the drug.
- Place a permanent tag with your name and phone number, and the horse's name on each animal's halter.
- Consider in your plan the prioritizing of which animals will be saved, if all cannot be saved. Let all farm personnel know of your plans in case you are not there when a disaster occurs.
- Prepare an emergency kit consisting of: plastic trash barrel with lid, water bucket, leg wraps, fire resistant non nylon leads and halters, first aid items, portable radio and extra batteries, flashlight, sharp knife, wire cutters, tarps, lime, bleach
- Have trailers and vans maintained, full of gas and ready to move at all times. Acclimate your horse to trailers and vans.
- Remember during emergencies you are taking minimum actions to assure the animal's survival. Have enough fresh water and hay on hand for 48-72 hours.
- During disasters you may wear different or unusual clothing, so condition your horses to strange appearances ahead of time.
- Consider your insurance needs and be sure you have all the coverage on your property and animals you may need and that claims will be paid for the type of disasters you may encounter.
- Practice Your Plan.

At the Time of the Disaster:

- Stay calm! Follow your plan!
- Listen to the Emergency Broadcasting System (EBS) station on your portable radio for information about how to locate horse care providers offering services during the disaster and any special instructions about actions you should take to protect your animals.
- If you leave your home, take your horses' immunizations and health records with you. Records kept at home may be damaged during the disaster.
- If you evacuate and take your horses with you, take all your immunization and health records, your emergency kit and sufficient hay and water for a minimum 48 hour period. Call ahead, if possible, to make sure that your emergency location is still available.
- If you must leave your horses unattended at home, leave them in the area most appropriate for the type of disaster you previously selected such as high ground in a flood. Leave enough water for the length of time you expect to be gone. Do not trust automatic watering systems in case power is lost.

Emergency Planning Workbook courtesy of EquineU.com

www.thehorse.com/pdf/emergency/emergency.pdf

After the Disaster:

- Be careful about leaving your horses unattended outside after the disaster. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and the horses could easily become confused and lost. It is best to place them in a secure area. Be sure fences are intact as some may be damaged by the disaster. Check fences and pastures for sharp objects that could injure horses. Be aware of downed power lines, racoons, skunks and other wild animals that may have entered the area and could present a danger to your horses.
- If any horses are lost during the disaster contact veterinarians, humane societies, stables, race tracks, equestrian centers, surrounding farms and other facilities that might house animals. Listen to the EBS for infomation about groups that may be accepting lost animals.
- If you find somone else's horse after the disaster, isolate it from your animals until it is returned or can be examined by a veterinarian.
- Use extreme caution when approaching and handling unknown or frightened horses. Work in pairs when handling strange horses.
- Check with your veterinarian, the state veterinary medical association and the Department of Agriculture for information about any disease outbreaks that may have occurred as a result of the disaster.
- Be prepared to identify and document ownership when claiming lost horses.
- Consider establishing security measures on your farm to protect assets from looters, exploiters.

This information prepared by: Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Veterinary Medical Association, Maryland Emergency Management Agency, Maryland Horse Council, Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, Maryland Racing Commission, Maryland Jockey Club

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Equine Line is a bi-monthly publication designed to provide the horse owner/enthusiast with timely, relevant information pertaining to the various segments of the equine industry in the upper Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountain areas of upstate New York. Contact your local Cooperative Extension office for subscription information.

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