



Keeping Pastures Safe for Horses

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Pastures are more than a pretty place for horses to play. They are a source of nutrition and enrichment. **Here are some tips for making them safe and beneficial for your horse.**

REGULARLY WALK YOUR PASTURE

- **Inspect your pasture regularly for any dangerous situations for your horse.** Are there animals living in your pasture (such as groundhogs) that might make footing unsafe? Are there holes that need to be filled in? Is there fencing or wires in need of repair that could pose a risk of injury or allow horses to get out of the pasture? Are there areas of deep mud that need to be avoided to prevent injury?
- **Regularly inspect pastures for the presence of toxic weeds, trees, or shrubs.** Horses are more likely to eat

toxic plants during times of drought, in the early spring, when pastures are overgrazed, if herbicides have recently been used, if they are thin or in poor condition, if clippings have been thrown over the fence or if a recent storm has blown down tree limbs. If any of these conditions are present, be extra vigilant about detecting and eliminating toxic plants.

- **Keep weeds down in the pasture by using good pasture management and grazing practices.** When found, eliminate toxic weeds by manually removing them or by using herbicides (see below for tips on using herbicides

safely). Even weeds that don't pose a risk of poison are lower in nutritional value and can prevent your horse from getting adequate nutrition. Consider renovating the pasture if it is overgrown or there are a large number of weeds.

USING HERBICIDES SAFELY ON OUR PASTURES

- **Herbicides are not a sole method of weed control** but can be a very valuable tool in your arsenal against weeds.
- **Herbicides should be used according to labeled directions**, should be labeled for use in horse pastures, any withdrawal times should be noted and horses should be kept off the pasture until it is safe to return.
- **Be aware that herbicides may make some plants more palatable as they wilt.** Horses may eat plants that they normally leave alone. Be sure that there aren't any poisonous plants in the pasture prior to spraying with a herbicide. You may need to keep horses off the pasture for 7-10 days if there are poisonous plants.



Applying sound pasture management techniques results in productive, high-quality pastures. Grass is a horse's natural food source and good pasture management goes a long way to keeping your horse happy and healthy.

Even with good pasture management, accidents can happen. The ASPCA® Pet Health Insurance program for horses, the first stand-alone insurance coverage for the health of your horse, can help with veterinary costs related to accidents*.

To learn more about plan details go to www.ProtectYourHorse.com.

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