

Healthy Horsekeeping for Water Quality includes:

- ❖ Pasture Management
- ❖ Manure Management
- ❖ Composting
- ❖ Mud and Dust Control
- ❖ Dedicated All-weather Paddocks
- ❖ Streambank and riparian vegetation
- ❖ Rainwater capture and reuse
- ❖ Smart irrigation
- ❖ Off-stream watering



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Horse Health & Water Quality

Keep the pasture green and
the water clean!



***West Multnomah Soil & Water
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Management Tips for Healthy Horses and Clean Water

What's good for the horse is good for the water!

Proper grazing, parasite control, and manure and dirt management will help keep horses healthy and streams and irrigation water clean. Keeping water clean is a legal requirement and a priority in Oregon.

STREAMS

Vegetation along streams protects the water from excessive heating, filters out potential pollutants in runoff, and stabilizes banks.

Horse access to streams can result in trampled and muddy banks, manure in the water and horse injuries. Protect your stream, and horse safety and health by maintaining an ungrazed vegetated buffer next to the stream and providing off-stream drinking water.

IRRIGATION WATER

Many people don't think of irrigation water as needing to be "clean". But, that water may drain to a stream or provide irrigation or livestock water for a neighbor. To avoid contamination, fence horses out of streams and provide them with safer access to clean drinking water. Use of a nose pump or water trough, for example, works well.

PASTURES

Over-grazed pastures lead to soil erosion, surface water run-off, noxious & potentially toxic weeds, and a continual decline in forage every year. Horses suffer from inhaling dust and eating lower quality forage. Healthy pastures produce more economical forage: estimated at \$30 / ton vs. \$270 / ton for hay!

A simple rule of thumb for pasture management is to "**graze at 8, no more at 4.**" This means graze when grass is about 8" tall and take horses off at 4," to allow the grass to re-grow. And keep livestock off wet pastures, which are easily damaged.

Cross-fence to divide your pasture into at least 3 smaller pastures. Rotate your horses through the pastures, providing at least 3 weeks of pasture rest, which allows parasite larvae to die in the sun.

MANURE

The average 1000-pound horse produces 50 pounds of manure per day! That's 9 tons or 6 pick-up loads per year, and approximately \$1,250 in fertilizer value!

Harrow your fields regularly, if possible, to incorporate standing manure into the soil. This prevents bacteria and excess nutrients from entering water and helps make these valuable nutrients available to your pasture grasses. And it increases exposure of parasite larvae to sunlight.

Harrowing also encourages horses to graze pastures more uniformly. They otherwise tend to designate one area as a "bathroom," which they will under-graze while over-grazing other areas.

Keep your horse on a regular worming schedule to avoid a cycle of disease.

COMPOST

Compost your manure to reduce the volume of waste, make great fertilizer, and kill weed seeds and parasites with the heat generated from the process. Cover your pile during wet weather to keep nutrients from leaching out. Give away compost or apply to fields after letting sit 6 months.

MUD & DUST

An "all-weather paddock," or sacrifice area, is a key part of most well-managed horse properties. Keep your horses here in winter to allow pasture grass to re-grow, protect saturated ground, and manage the amount of green grass your horses are eating. Think of it as a horse's "living room," with the pasture as the "dining room."

Use surfacing such as gravel and sand to provide adequate drainage and reduce mud and dust. Regularly clean your all-weather paddock for pollution control and horse health. If you would be concerned about standing in your own waste, think the same for your horse!

Direct run-off toward a vegetative buffer to avoid contaminating surface water or nutrient leaching to groundwater. Divert rainwater around the paddock

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