



HORSE

Caring for your horse during the winter months

Living outside and surviving through the winter months can be stressful for a horse. However, by following a few simple health care practices and managerial procedures, University of Wisconsin-Extension equine specialist Liv Sandberg says horse owners can provide more desirable living conditions and keep horses more comfortable during the cold weather. Most horses can acclimate to the colder temperatures. They have two lines of defense against the cold weather -- having ample body flesh and growing a thick hair coat.

Increasing available energy is the most important feeding requirement for the winter months. An ample supply of high quality hay will help provide a continuous source of energy and heat throughout the day. You also can feed concentrates twice a day to horses that are harder to keep in good flesh. Continue to provide salt and minerals using a salt/mineral block or as part of the concentrate ration. Because horses are consuming more fiber, it's important to provide plenty of fresh water, at a temperature higher than 45 degrees F, to maintain proper digestive activity and decrease the risk of impaction colic.

Exposure to cooler temperatures through the fall will stimulate a thicker hair coat, preparing the horse for the cold weather. You should also provide additional shelter as protection from freezing rain, sleet, wind and severe storms. Common forms of shelter include a grove of trees, a windbreak wall, a three-sided open shed, or a stall. Regardless of the type of shelter, make sure all horses can take shelter when needed, including the inferior horse within the herd.

Maintain routine hoof care through the winter. Shoes should be removed unless the horse has hoof problems or will be ridden during the winter. Normal shoes decrease traction and collect "snow balls," which cause unnecessary strain on tendons, ligaments and muscles in the legs and make it difficult for the horse to move. Applying a form of oil on the soles can temporarily decrease snowball buildup. If shoes are necessary, your farrier can recommend snowball pads and traction enhancers.

Before winter, update fall vaccinations and plan to vaccinate pregnant mares for Rhinopneumonitis during their fifth, seventh and ninth month of gestation. Continue rotational deworming practices through the winter months. Following a hard frost and the decline in the fly population, administer a deworming product that is effective in breaking the bott parasite cycle. Effective products contain ivermectin, avermectin, or moxidectin. If you remove visible bott eggs from the skin, there will be less parasite winter carryover. As always, to ensure appropriate vaccination protocols, deworming protocols and special health care needs for your horses, consult your attending veterinarian.

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SUBMIT CLUB NEWS TO THE BUGLE



The 4-H Publicity and Promotion Committee would like to encourage all clubs to submit club news for publication in the Bugle. Sharing club happenings is a great promotion for 4-H programs and a wonderful way of sharing ideas with other clubs. We hope to have lots of great happenings in the February issue of the Bugle!

Contact Kristi Melin, 488-2255, or Craig Bowman, 463-2684, with any questions concerning what to submit.

Please send or email your contributions to: Colleen Allen, UWEX, 7410 Cty. Rd. K, #107 Siren, WI 54872. Email: colleen.allen@dss.co.burnett.wi.us

Thank you!

Fun Fur Facts



Do you know what makes a mammal a mammal? One of the things is hair. Its anatomy is closely related to fingernails, snake scales, and feathers because all are made of keratin. Hair does a number of things for mammals. It protects the skin from sun and abrasion, sends sensory messages to the brain, and provides insulation from cold and heat. The shape of hair also gives a mammal a unique look with its different shapes; round hairs tend to be straight; oval or flattened hairs are curly.

Hair Types

Not all hair is the same. If you have a dog or cat at home, take a close look and see if you can find these different types of hair.

- Guard hairs : are the ones most obvious to see. They are protective or “guard” outer hairs of a mammal’s coat. They are typically firm and glossy. Some hairs grow to a particular length and stop; others grow continually, like human head hair, horse manes, and quills of a porcupine.

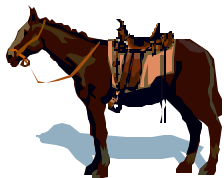
- Vibrissae or whiskers : stiff hairs, usually long, with many nerves at their base. They are extremely sensitive to touch. These hairs give the mammal clues about its immediate surroundings. Facial whiskers are most familiar, but they also appear in other places on a mammal’s body such as on the ankles of a squirrel or the rump of some crevice-roosting bats.

- Under hairs : these hairs are short, curly, wooly, and are called down or fuzz. Insulation is the most important role of these hairs. Special glands secrete oil to waterproof the skin and hair. Deer have hollow hairs in winter, which provide warmth and buoyancy for swimming.

Coats of Color

Pigments in the inner layers of hair filter harmful ultraviolet radiation just like sunscreen, and may help regulate body temperature. Dark hairs absorb heat, warming an animal, while light colors reflect sun, keeping an animal cooler.

Hair color helps camouflage animals from predators or prey, by matching the environment they live in. Some northern animals like the snowshoe hare, alternate between brown and white as the seasons change in order to be concealed against their surroundings. Patterns in the hair or fur also help protect mammals. Think of a fawn’s spots which helps hide it from predators. Color can also provide a warning, like a skunk’s stripe which announces the presence of an especially good and stinky defense system. The under-color of a white-tailed deer’s tail serves as a flag to warn other deer of danger. Hair can also communicate social information about a mammal’s state of mind, such as the erect hair on the back of a wolf or dog which indicates that it feels threatened or is ready to attack. And, in the case of the porcupine and its quills, hair can provide protection from predators.



The following information was provided by: EEK!--Environmental Education for Kids (www.dnr.wi.gov/eeek/), Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources