



## Horse Care Procedures

**Daily Shifts:** Every day – Morning and Evening – Rain or Shine - 365(6) days a year

- AM – Start any time after daybreak but no later than 7:30 AM
- PM – Start any time after 3:00 PM but finish before sunset

We do not have outdoor lights at the ranch so you won't be able to do chores in the dark.

**Shift Duties** (in order):

1. Hay – Fill nibble bags (but do not overstuff)
2. Supplement Buckets – Fill buckets, mix well and deliver
3. Water Buckets – Clean (if needed) and fill water buckets\*
4. Mucking – Scoop and dispose of manure\*
5. Anytime – Collect empty supplement buckets, rinse, fill with pellets and soak for the next shift.
6. Fly Masks (during fly season)
  - For the AM Shift – Fly masks should be put on before the flies start swarming.
  - For the PM Shift – Fly masks should be removed at the end of the shift.

\*Water buckets and mucking can be done simultaneously or in reverse order. As soon as you muck, the horses will poop again so it is a job that is never finished!

**Horse Care:**

- If you see that a horse is injured or limping or notice anything else unusual, please report it to Dannielle, a Board Member or responsible volunteer on your shift.
- **Do not** hand feed or give the horses treats. This teaches them bad manners and promotes biting.



## HAY

The hay and hay wagons are located in the barn. Be sure to throw away any twine that is mixed in with the hay so it doesn't end up in the nibble bags. It can be very dangerous for the horses.

Add hay to each nibble bag with flakes and/or loose hay until it's full but you can still clip the top closed. We want to avoid over-stuffing the nibblers. This causes the bags to rip and they are costly to replace.

If it's as difficult to close (like trying to button your pants after Thanksgiving dinner) then it's too full!

If there is clean (no poop) and dry hay on the ground outside the stall, you can pick it up and put it in the nibble bag or leave it on the ground and push it into the stall. The horses will still eat it.

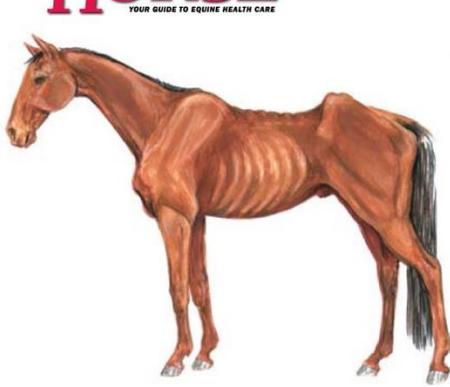
If there is still clean hay in the nibble bags, you can add more hay on top of it as noted above.

**It is imperative that we avoid overfeeding our horses.** Not only is hay our biggest expense and we don't want to waste it but overfeeding the horses can be detrimental to their health. Please refer to the Equine Body Conditions Score chart on the next page.

A score of 1 is considered poor or emaciated with no body fat. A score of 9 is extremely fat or obese. Horse veterinarians consider a body score of between 4 and 7 as acceptable. **A score of 5 is considered ideal.**

## Equine Body Condition Score

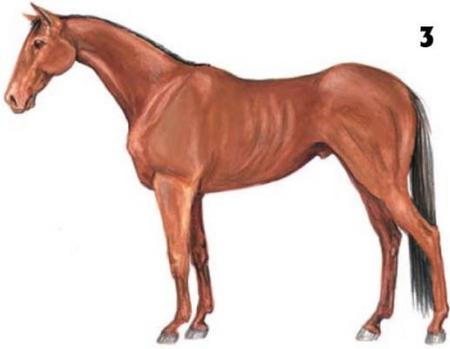
*the* **HORSE**  
YOUR GUIDE TO EQUINE HEALTH CARE



**1**



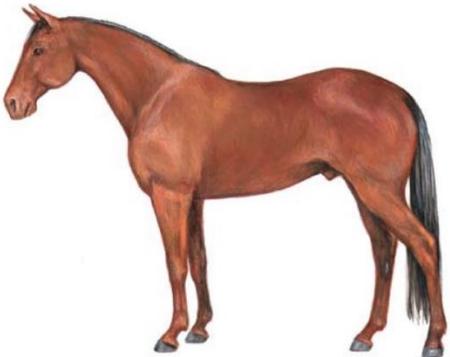
SCORE	DESCRIPTION
<b>1</b>	<b>POOR</b> Horse is extremely emaciated. The backbone, ribs, hipbones, and tailhead project prominently. Bone structure of the withers, shoulders, and neck easily noticeable. No fatty tissues can be felt.
<b>2</b>	<b>VERY THIN</b> Horse is emaciated. Slight fat covering over vertebrae. Backbone, ribs, tailhead, and hipbones are prominent. Withers, shoulders, and neck structures are discernible.



**3**

<b>3</b>	<b>THIN</b> Fat built up about halfway on vertebrae. Slight fat layer can be felt over ribs, but ribs easily discernible. The tailhead is evident, but individual vertebrae cannot be seen. The hipbones cannot be seen, but withers, shoulder, and neck are emphasized.
<b>4</b>	<b>MODERATELY THIN</b> Negative crease along back. Faint outline of ribs can be seen. Fat can be felt along tailhead. Hip bones cannot be seen. Withers, neck, and shoulders not obviously thin.

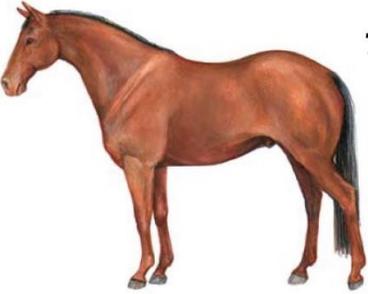
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBIN PETERSON, DVM; BASED ON TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY BODY CONDITION SCORE



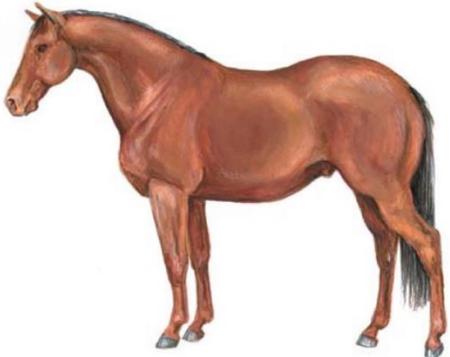
**5**



<b>5</b>	<b>MODERATE</b> Back is level. Ribs can be felt, but not easily seen. Fat around tailhead beginning to feel spongy. Withers are rounded and shoulders and neck blend smoothly into the body.
<b>6</b>	<b>MODERATELY FLESHY</b> May have a slight crease down the back. Fat on the tailhead feels soft. Fat over the ribs feels spongy. Fat beginning to be deposited along the sides of the withers, behind the shoulders, and along the neck.
<b>7</b>	<b>FLESHY</b> A crease is seen down the back. Individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable filling between ribs with fat. Fat around tailhead is soft. Noticeable fat deposited along the withers, behind the shoulders, and along the neck.



**7**



**9**

<b>8</b>	<b>FAT</b> Crease down back is prominent. Ribs difficult to feel due to fat in between. Fat around tailhead very soft. Area along withers filled with fat. Area behind shoulders filled in flush with the barrel of the body. Noticeable thickening of neck. Fat deposited along the inner buttocks.
<b>9</b>	<b>EXTREMELY FAT</b> Obvious crease down back. Fat is in patches over rib area, with bulging fat over tailhead, withers, neck, and behind shoulders. Fat along inner buttocks may rub together. Flank is filled in flush with the barrel of the body.



## **SUPPLEMENT BUCKETS**

All of the supplements, feed, and buckets are kept in the Feed Shed.

Each horse's AM and PM requirements are listed on the white board.

Add the prescribed items to each horse's bucket and mix the contents with a spoon, making sure to loosen the soaked pellets from the bottom of the bucket and blend all the ingredients.

If any feed or supplement supplies are running low, list those items on the small white board on the side of the refrigerator so we can place an order right away.

Take the buckets to the mares (girls) first, and then to the geldings (boys). You can use the wagon or the golf cart to deliver them, whichever you prefer.

Hang the supplement buckets with the 2 hooks on the low or middle fence rail. The wide shallow black bowls and oversized buckets will go on the ground just inside the stall.

When the horses are finished eating their supplements, gather the buckets. Some horses eat slower than others. If a horse is not eating at all, this could indicate a problem. Please report it to your shift leader or a board member.

Take the empty buckets to the wash area behind the Feed Shed to clean them. Also rinse off the spoon you used to stir the supplements. Then return them to the Feed Shed.

Mare buckets will go on the table closest to the door. Gelding buckets will go on the table against the back wall. If necessary, some gelding buckets can go on the mare table but keep them separate.

Add only the Bermuda Blend Pellets to each bucket according to the amount listed on the board to prepare them for soaking.

Bring the hose in through the open window to add water to the pellets so they can soak until the next feeding. This will make the pellets loose and crumbly so they are easier for the horses to eat and digest. Add just enough water to cover the pellets but don't add too much water as the pellets will become soupy.

Cover the buckets with the sheets that were draped over them when you arrived. This keeps flies and other critters out of the buckets.

Return the hose to the wash area, turn off the water supply and drain the hose.

Make sure that all feed containers are closed tightly and bungee cords are secure. Close and latch the window. Turn off the lights, and slide the Feed Shed door shut.



## WATER

Horses require 5-10 gallons of water per day, probably more during our extremely hot summers, so it's important to keep plenty of fresh water in their buckets.

All the cleaning supplies including pool skimmers, bleach, scrub brushes, rags and small pails are found in the Volunteer Sign Out room in the barn.

Before adding the water to each bucket, assess the condition of the water and the bucket. If the water looks clear and the bucket isn't green or muddy, use a pool skimmer to remove loose dirt and debris from the water and fill the bucket to the marked line with fresh water.

If the bucket is just starting to grow a small number of algae but it's still at least half way filled with water, use a rag to swab the algae off the inside of the bucket and use the pool skimmer to remove loose dirt and other debris from the water. If the water looks clear, fill the bucket to the marked line with fresh water.

However, if you swabbed the bucket and skimmed the dirt and debris but you feel the bucket should be cleaned, don't add any more water so the horse can drink it down making it easier for the next shift to clean the bucket.

We want the horses to have clean water while also conserving water so use your best judgment.

If the bucket is green and/or muddy and the water level is below the half way point, it's time to clean it.

- Empty all of the water from the bucket. **Make sure the water is dumped outside of the stall.** You can use a smaller pail to scoop the water out until you can slide the entire large bucket out of the stall. Dump the remaining water away from the stall. We want to avoid the water getting inside the stall because it can cause problems for the horses' hooves.
- Remove the bucket from the stall and scrub it. Add a little bleach, and scrub again. You can let the bleach sit in the bucket for a few minutes to make sure it's really clean.
- Empty the bleach from the bucket, and again, this needs to be done away from the stall.
- Rinse the bucket and empty it again to ensure there's no residual bleach. Return the empty bucket to the stall and fill it to the marked line with fresh water.
- Don't use a bucket if it has cracks in it. There are spare buckets near the Feed Shed.



When you are finished with the water, turn the water supply off, and drain the hose.

**NOTE:** During the hot months, the water that's sitting inside the hose gets extremely hot. When you first turn on the hose, make sure it's pointed away from the horses or their stalls and run it until it's cool to the touch. Then proceed with filling the buckets.

You can set the nozzle to constant spray and leave the hose running in the bucket to fill it while you do other chores. Just be aware that some horses like to remove the hoses and you will most likely get wet!



## MUCKING

Mucking rakes and wheelbarrows are kept in the Barn.

If you are able and confident, you may bring the wheelbarrow into the stall with you. If not, you can leave it outside the stall and reach the mucking rake through the fence rails to put the manure into the wheelbarrow.

**Don't leave the wheelbarrow unattended in a stall.** Curious, mischievous horses can get into trouble by knocking over the wheelbarrow. Yes Comet, we're talking about you!

Scoop up the piles of manure and scattered manure.

Make sure the gate is securely locked when you leave the stall. Attach the chain if there is one.

Empty the full wheelbarrow in either of the two trash dumpsters located northwest of the Feed Shed.

Put the wheelbarrow and mucking rake back in the Barn when you are finished.

Please keep the hay barn and common areas tidy:

- Clean up dropped hay and spills.
- Rehang tools (rakes, brooms) on the hooks provided.