

Horse Care Level 1 105 Principles of feeding and watering horses

1. Know how to provide feed and water to stabled and grazing horses

1.1 Describe methods of feeding and watering horses throughout the year

Routine watering, water buckets, automatic waterers, field troughs.

Check the horses water trough in the field once a day and top up as needed. Clean the trough at least every 6 months. Water buckets in the stable should be cleaned and filled daily with fresh water. Some horses might need a larger water bucket than others. Automatic waterers can be very useful as you do not need to keep checking the water as it will fill up automatically when the water runs out. Horses will need to have 5-10 gallons of water per day. Use a hose and scrubbing brush to clean the water buckets and troughs out with. Never use detergent to clean the buckets out with as it can be dangerous for the horse. You can get animal safe cleaning detergent.

Routine feeding, feed bowls, mangers, feeding in a field and stable

Horses should have access to grass so that they can graze freely throughout the day and they should have hay in a hay net or manger to eat during the night. Feed bowls are used for more concentrated feeds such as sugar beet, chaff and pony nuts. You should clean out the feed bowls every day with water and a brush. Use hot water if necessary to clean out any unwanted feed.

1.2 State the normal feeding habits of horses and why it is important to report any changes

Routine activity - when to feed, how many times per day

Concentrated horse feed should be given 1-2 times per day mainly during the winter. Horses should have access to good grazing where they can eat grass for the majority of the day. Horses can then be given a hay net if they are brought into the stable. It is important to tell the manager immediately if the horse has any dietary changes as the horse could be unwell. Changes to eating is often the first sign of illness for horses.

Unusual behaviour, left over feed, causes of:

Horses that have stopped eating should be reported to the manager in case of colic. They will often go off their food and may be rolling around on the stable floor. Teeth problems can also be a reason for why horses are not eating properly.

Natural grazing habits - Horses are natural grazers and will eat little and often. Feeding forage at floor level is good for a horse's respiratory health.

1.3 List the types of changes in horses' feeding habits which may occur

Slow eating - Could be a sign of dental pain or illness. Older horses usually eat slower because it is harder for them to chew properly.

Greedy eating - Horses tend to take what is on offer so it is important to monitor their feed that they do not have too much. It can also be a sign of stress.

Problems swallowing - Could be a sign of dental disease, pain in the esophagus, pain in the back of the mouth or pharynx, or a neurological or muscular abnormality involving the swallowing reflex. Inability to swallow is easily confused with difficult chewing.

Spitting out feed - Also referred to as quidding and can mean the horse has problems with its teeth.

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Choking - Food that is either too dry or too coarse can make the horse choke.

Changes in weather conditions - variable weather can increase the chance of colic.

Times of year - Spring and summer time, when the grass is coming through can cause a horse to have laminitis if allowed to much grass. Winter time - horses may need hay to substitute for lack of grazing.

1.4 State how equipment should be cleaned, maintained and stored

Feed bowls & Mangers, feeding utensils, buckets - Remove excess feed into the correct waste area, use hot water and a brush to scrub the feed bowl and manger. Leave to dry or wipe with a clean cloth. Use an animal safe detergent to clean any stubborn stains but make sure you rinse thoroughly. All buckets etc should be cleaned regularly i.e. daily and you should keep the items in a dry place such as a feed room or tack room away from direct sunlight. Replace any broken buckets etc. immediately as they could harm the horse.

1.5 State the hygiene requirements of horses, self and others

Cleanliness of air - horses need a well ventilated stable that is free from dust. All areas should be free from dust and bad odours that could be potentially harmful.

Surroundings - should be clean and tidy, well maintained and things should be put away in the correct place to avoid any accidents or trips.

Environment - clean, spacious, not over crowded, access to fresh air, water, good hygiene sanitation. Shaded areas away from the sun abs sheltered areas that are warm for during the cold weather.

1.6 State changes in horses' behaviour at feeding time, and safety awareness

Possessive or aggressive - Horses ears will go back, may lunge at you to bite and may kick out. They may also paw at the ground with their hooves. Give the horse space, tie up whilst feeding, do not attempt to change rugs until the horse has finished.

Submissive - fearful to approach feed, will allow other horses to eat before them. Provide horse with another place to eat feed away from other horses such as their stable. Younger horses may be lower on the pecking order and they could potentially lose weight if they are not able to get to hay or feed.

2. Know how to work safely

2.1 State the health and safety policy, and own responsibility under health and safety legislation

Environment - Follow all yard rules, do not run around the yard but walk sensibly. Take care in adverse weather. Empty wheelbarrow in correct place. Tie horses up correctly. Do not shout or scream around the horses. Keep yourself and others safe and abide by all rules that are agreed with your manager. Close all gates and doors securely.

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Physical - Wear the correct clothing when working with horses: hats, gloves, boots, body protectors. Follow managers instructions on how to lead a horse safely. Understand horse behaviour and adapt accordingly. First aid kits should be available in the event of an accident and you must report accident to manager and get help if you need it. Do not stand directly behind a horse.

PPE - wear a safety helmet when working around the horses and for riding to protect your head. Gloves will protect your hands and give you a better grip when leading the horse. Correct footwear such as boots or wellingtons. Do not wear jewellery.

Working in and out of stables and fields - Always close field gates securely to prevent a horse from escaping. Never get in the middle of a herd when bringing horses in, first move them away from the gate to allow space and to stop you from getting trapped. Tie horse up in stable when grooming or tacking up.

2.2 State how waste should be disposed of

Drains - never put fats and oils down the drain or food waste. Empty water buckets down the drain.

Bins - place waste in a bin bag before placing in a bin. Separate recycling waste first and dispose of in blue bin.

Muck heap - Horse manure and old bedding can be put on the muck heap. Rake it back and remove regularly. The manure will naturally compost and turn to compost eventually.

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