

Horse Care in Winter

from AIS



Not every horse is as happy about the cold as this little guy!

Let's face it, winter is a time when most of us would much prefer to be wrapped up on the couch than dealing with this...



But for horse owners, the fun doesn't stop just because the weather has changed.

Here are some tips to help keep your horse comfortable and healthy when temperatures drop.



1. MAKE A FEEDING PLAN

At an absolute minimum, you should be providing **1.0-1.5% of your horse's body weight** in forage (hay, pasture, chaff) per day. Over 65% of the horse's digestive system is designed to digest forage, making it the most important dietary ingredient for horses!



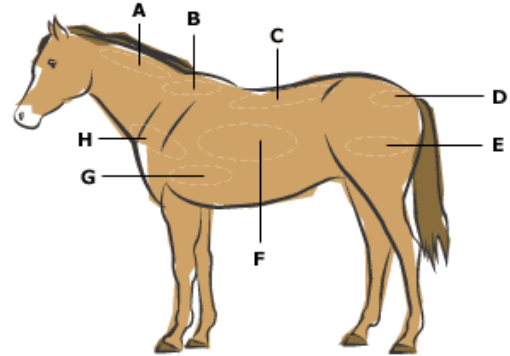
Hay nets/pillows helps boredom, simulates natural grazing, reduces incidents of choke and is recommended by vets.

2. MAINTAIN CONDITION

Ensure your horses are able to ingest their feed properly by getting a **dental check-up**.

Maintaining your **worming** program will also assist to ensure your horse receives all the necessary nutrients from their diet.

Click on the horse for handy information on condition scoring!



3. PROVIDE SHELTER OR CONSIDER RUGGING

Reducing your horse's exposure to wind and rain will in turn reduce their energy spent keeping warm, so this is another helpful factor in maintaining condition. Those with fine coats (e.g. most Thoroughbreds – like Emily's!) will feel the cold more than hardier breeds.



You should check your horse daily if they are rugged to ensure the straps have not broken and that the horse isn't too cold/hot. **Remove rugs regularly** to check for rubbing and to groom away any built up skin or hair.

Woollen rugs allow the coat to breathe and are great under rugs (especially for clipped horses). Choosing **well-fitting, quality rugs over layers** also reduces the potential for slipping and rubbing.



4. MONITOR SIGNS OF MUD FEVER

As paddocks get **wetter and muddier**, the environment for skin infections increases. Mud fever is a general term for **bacteria which thrives in these conditions**, and is often seen on the lower limbs.

Prevent mud fever by restricting your horse's access to areas in paddocks which attract puddles or a lot of mud, so they are not standing in them (often at gates). Temporary fencing or gravel can help in this situation.

If mud fever appears at your property, **do not share boots or bandages** with horses that have had the condition as this will simply spread the infection.

5. EXERCISING IN WINTER

If you are riding often enough that your horse is generating sweat through their winter coat, **ensure they are dry** before returning them to the paddock/stables or risk a very ill horse. When their winter coats are wet, they temporarily lose the ability to create a warming air space around them.



Consider **clipping** so your horse is able to cool down efficiently, however you will need to replace the lost warmth with additional rugs. For the unclipped horse, invest in a cooling rug and lots of spare towels!

A.I.S. HORSE INSURANCE
Contact Natasha Golden & Emily Brewer
from A.I.S. Insurance Brokers Pty Ltd for
further information
Phone: (03) 8699 8888 or 1300 300 715
Email: livestock@aisinsurance.com.au
Website: www.aisinsurance.com.au

Please refer to the Insurance Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) prior to making any decision to acquire that product.