



Howard County Soil Conservation
District
708 Lisbon Center Drive
Suite E
Woodbine, MD 21797

HOWARD SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT HOOF BEAT



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ARE YOU THE HOST WITH THE MOST?

A pasture walk is a wonderful learning opportunity for hosts, visitors and even technical people. If you are interested in hosting a pasture walk please contact us. We are always on the look out for farms to visit and people who are willing to share their experiences. It is an opportunity to tell about your operation, and what has or has not worked for you. It truly is a learning session for all.

There will be opportunities to experience pasture walks this spring. Keep your eyes and ears open for further information to come.



WHAT'S NEXT: TOPICS TO LOOK FOR IN THE UPCOMING ISSUE

- HORSE MANURE MANAGEMENT
- ROTATIONAL GRAZING
- * If there is something you would like to see in upcoming newsletters please let us know.

NAME THE NEWSLETTER CONTEST

Unfortunately there wasn't much response, actually no response, to the contest naming our newsletter. Thanks to Kristen Parris, Equine Specialist, for suggesting the newsletter's new name ... Hoof Beat

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¹ <http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/TN/HeavyUseArea030404final.pdf> USDA NRCS, Heavy Use Area Protection #561

² http://www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/horse_mgt_tips.pdf. "Management Tips: For Horse Owners Seeking Greener Pastures, Cleaner Streams & Healthier Horses", Page 3

³ Page 2, Top Photo [right] found through www.wikimedia.org.

⁴ Page 2, Bottom Photo [left] found through www.toadcake.co.uk/media/13502.jpg

⁵ Front Cover, Back Cover, Pages 5 & 6, Photos found through HSCD office.

Howard County Soil Conservation District
708 Lisbon Center Drive Suite E
Woodbine, MD 21797
410-489-7987
www.howardscd.org



GIVE MUD THE BOOT

Mud can be a big problem wherever animals congregate, especially around gates, water troughs, barn entrances, and feeding pads. If mud in these areas is making you and your horses miserable, "heavy use pads" are an easy and somewhat inexpensive fix.



Stabilize heavy use areas with geotextile fabric and rock. ¹

The main components of a heavy use pad-stone and geotextile fabric-allow water to slowly drain away without mixing with the soil. They are simple to install if you have a front loading tractor and can do simple excavation work. If not, you might want to hire someone with the necessary equipment.

Don't skimp on the size of the pad. If you're installing one around a trough, make it at least the length of one horse on each accessible side of the trough. To give your pad the best chance of working, first divert any runoff, such as from barn, shed and house downspouts, so it moves around, not through, the area. Downspout extenders, gravel trenches and low berms are easy ways to reroute water. Contact your Soil Conservation District for advice on safely rerouting runoff.

More Tips for Preventing Mud Issues:

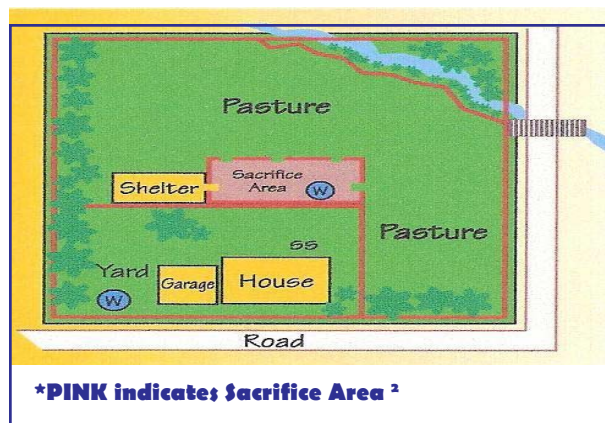
- ❖ Fence animals out of creeks, wetlands, and ponds. Provide watering systems away from streams. Create water crossings or watering points.
- ❖ Practice good pasture management techniques so you have a healthy pasture. Avoid overgrazing and creating bare spots.
- ❖ Create a sacrifice lot and use it to take horses and livestock off pastures in the winter. Also use paddock areas when pastures are grazed down to 3" during the summer.
- ❖ Maintain a grassy area of at least 25 feet in width around winter paddocks. Increase this dimension if near a stream. The grass will serve as a filter for any runoff that occurs.
- ❖ Install gutters and downspouts on all buildings to divert water away from confinement areas.

¹Excerpts from "Give Mud the Boot" and "Management Tips: For Horse Owners Seeking Greener Pastures, Cleaner Streams & Healthier Horses" used with permission



SACRIFICE AREAS: HELPING PASTURES

So you want to maintain nice, green pastures for your horses? Why not set up a sacrifice lot for your horses to use when pastures are unable to sustain them? A sacrifice lot is a small nongrazable paddock or exercise lot for your horses. It requires little maintenance and can be used whenever your pastures are muddy, over-grazed; or under renovation.



***PINK indicates Sacrifice Area ²**

A sacrifice lot is an excellent tool that allows your horses freedom of movement and exercise, while keeping them off of sensitive pastures that should not be grazed. Horses can be very destructive when allowed access to a pasture that is wet. They cause soil compaction which leads to decreased growth of desirable plants and more competition from weeds. If your pasture is too wet to drive a tractor on, then it's too wet for your horse to graze on.

If you utilize a rotational grazing scheme for your pastures, then a sacrifice lot is a necessity! You can use a sacrifice lot if additional regrowth is needed in your pastures. It is very hard to predict the weather. We never know when the next rain, snow or prolonged drought will begin, but if you have a sacrifice lot, you'll have a safe place for your horses while protecting your pastures. During a drought, grass growth

declines, while forage consumption continues at the same rate, increasing the risk of over-grazing. An overgrazed pasture favors weed growth and desired grass species will be smothered out. Depending on the condition of the soil in the pasture and your management techniques, horses can stay in a sacrifice area for several months. The more limited your pasture space is, the more important it is for you to have a sacrifice lot and use it wisely.

²Excerpt from "Sacrifice Lots" used with permission

EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- Main federal cost share program
- Pay up to 75% of some best management practices
- Most other practices may be eligible for 50% cost share – these include the riparian forest buffers
- Eligible land is land that is in agriculture, including cropland and pasture
- Compete for funds with other applicants through environmental benefits ranking – this is on a statewide basis

CREP – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

- Program goals are water quality improvement and wildlife habitat enhancement
- Pays up to 87.5% of eligible cost of practices
 - o 50% paid by federal government through Farm Services Agency (FSA)
 - o 37.5% paid through the state of Maryland's MACS program
- Offers annual rental rate for keeping the land in the conserving cover
- Eligible land is cropland, highly erodible land or marginal pasture
 - o Continuous sign up and no competition for funds
- Current practices are: riparian forest buffer, filter strip, conservation cover on highly erodible land, and shallow water areas for wildlife.
- Enrollment goal in Maryland of 100,000 acres. There are currently over 70,000 acres enrolled in the state.
- Requires at least a 10-year contract. Riparian forest buffers can be enrolled for 15 years.

WHIP – Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

- Pays up to 75% of the eligible costs for several wildlife practices in Maryland
- Eligible land is private land that can support wildlife habitat improvement
- Practices include conservation cover like warm season grasses or cool season grass mixtures, riparian forest buffers, filter strips, and shallow water areas
- Competitive statewide – all applicants compete based on wildlife benefits.
- Requires a five year contract with no annual rental
- Some grants are allocated to schools for educational projects

Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed Program – local to Montgomery and Howard Counties

- Pays up to 80% of the cost of a project to improve water quality
- The program is administered locally and is for the Patuxent watershed only
- Geared towards those tracts that do not meet the eligibility requirements of other programs. This is usually the number of animals required or non-eligible land.
- Main cost shared practices include – stream bank fencing, stream crossings, water troughs, riparian forest buffers, and filter strips.
- Tract of land must have a stream to be eligible and the conservation practice must be installed within 300 feet of a stream.



Small Farm Equine Program

- Have less than 8 (equine) animal units
- Program funded through grant monies received
- Must not be eligible for MACS or EQIP funding
- Pays up to 75% of following practices:
 - o Animal Waste Management System
 - o Roof Runoff Structure
 - o Heavy Use Area Protection
 - o Pasture and Hayland Planting
 - o Watering Trough System
- Maximum \$3,000 per applicant



All Cost Share programs are administered by the local soil conservation district office and NRC's office.



NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN:

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT AND HOW IT CAN HELP YOU

A nutrient management plan is a useful management tool for your horse farm. It balances nutrient inputs with plant requirements. Utilizing the free nutrients available in manures to meet the requirements of your pastures could mean less money spent on commercial fertilizer. Another component of the plan is record keeping. Documentation of what is being done on the property and why is beneficial if someone should have questions or a problem arises.

If you have any questions or to get a free nutrient management plan, less the costs of soil and manure analyses, contact Krista Mitchell, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension, Howard County Office (410) 313-2709.



EQUINE ROTATIONAL GRAZING SHOWCASE NEARLY COMPLETE

by Dr. Amy Burk

The equine rotational grazing and pasture management showcase at the University's research and education farm in Howard County is nearly complete. The showcase comprises 5.5 acres of land for year round rotation of four horses. It is configured with four 1.2 acre pastures, a bluestone sacrifice lot with hay feeder, waterer, and run-in shed, and two vegetative sacrifice paddocks planted in novel hardy turfgrass species.

The site is quickly becoming a major educational site and land and pasture stewardship with research to begin at the site in the spring.

Visit www.equinestudies.umd.edu for more information on our equine rotational grazing and pasture management showcase.



*Reprinted from University of Maryland Equine Studies Update Newsletter, with permission



HIGHLIGHTS OF COST SHARE PROGRAMS

All of these programs are administered by the local soil conservation district office and NRCS office. All programs require an agreement between the landowner or farm operator and the government entity. Agreement length varies by program. For more details, in Howard County, contact the Howard Soil Conservation District at 410-489-7987. Or visit the office at 708 Lisbon Center Drive, Suite E, Woodbine.

MACS – Maryland Agricultural Cost Share

- Pay up to 87.5% of eligible costs for Best Management Practices to solve water quality or erosion problems on agricultural land
- Eligible costs are based on flat rates for the county
- Administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture with support of local soil conservation districts
- This program can be piggybacked on the EQIP programs to get 87.5% cost share for a project.



TIPS FOR CLIPPING YOUR HORSE THIS WINTER

Ah, the lovely joys of winter. The time of year when your sleek show horse turns into a fur ball. All that hair is great for protecting him if he spends his winters outside just being a horse. If he is in work, or showing, it's a major problem. Some use stall lights to reduce or eliminate the growth of winter hair, by far the most common solution to your fuzzy horse is to clip it off.

If you've been around show or sport horses very long, chances are you have seen how a good professional clip job can look, and how bad an unskilled novice's efforts can turn out. The best way to learn how to clip well is to watch an experienced clipper, and then practice until you master the techniques. To help you shorten your learning curve, here are a few tips to keep in mind.

Start with a clean horse. Precede your clipping efforts with a thorough bath using Quic Silver, Quic Color, or Quic Black. Scrub with a mitt or curry to work loose dirt and dander trapped in long winter hair. If the weather makes getting the horse wet inadvisable, Quic Groom waterless shampoo should be used instead.

Use the most powerful clippers you can handle. The stronger the motor, the faster the blades move. The faster the blades move, the better they'll cut through thick winter hair, and the fewer tracks they'll leave.

Make sure blades are sharp and well lubricated. Sharp, oiled blades require less power from the clipper motor, resulting in a better clip job. Plus the clippers run cooler, which both your hand and your horse will appreciate.

Slow down! Give the clippers time to do their work. A slower stroke will always yield a smoother job. The less powerful your clippers, the slower you will need to go. The blades should feel as though they are gliding through the hair, like the proverbial hot knife through butter.

Keep the blades parallel to the skin. Holding the blades at a steep angle to the skin is one of the most common mistakes novice clippers make. If the blades are parallel to the skin, especially on the large flat surfaces, they're much less likely to nick and gouge the horse.



The best way to learn how to clip well is to watch an experienced clipper, and then practice until you master the techniques.⁴

Clip against the lay of the hair. Pay attention to which way the hair is laying, as it can change at any time. In some places (flanks and armpits) there may be hairs that lay in several directions, meaning you'll need to make two or three passes from different angles to get a good result.

Secure equine operation, one way or another. There's no way to get show quality results if you're clipping a moving target. Teach your horse to stand still, and accustom him to the clippers during regular grooming well before you try and clip. If you absolutely need to get him clipped before you have time to do the training, talk to your vet about sedating him. Make sure you do it far enough before a show, so you don't inadvertently violate the drug rules.

Restore color and moisture to the hair after clipping. When you're finished clipping, spray the whole horse with Quic Sheen. It's color intensifying formula that helps restore the rich natural color of your horse's hair. The moisturizers alleviate the dry, rough feeling of skin and hair that often follow a body clip job.

Blanketing- Remember if you are going to clip your horse, you need to make sure that they have adequate blankets to keep them warm. From a light sheet on cooler days, to a heavy blanket in the dead of winter. You may also need to invest in a quarter sheet while you are riding. This enables your horses hindquarters to stay warm while you are riding.

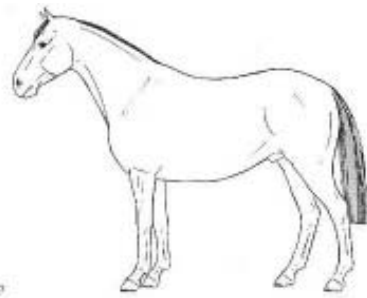


Winter - the time of year when your horse turns into a fur ball.³



STYLES OF CLIPPING

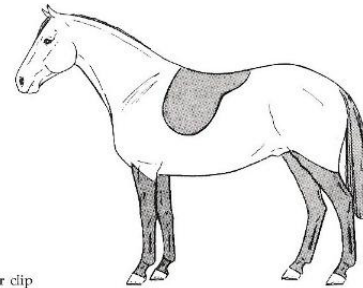
Just as there are a variety of equine disciplines there are also a variety of clipping styles – though not quite as many.



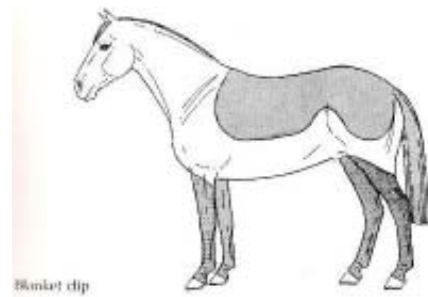
Full clip

● **Body clip or Full body clip:** the horse's entire body is clipped, including the head and legs. This is the most common body clip in the USA, used in many disciplines. It provides the most "natural" clip, resembling a horse's normal summer coat, plus it is a relatively straightforward clip for a groom to complete. However, it provides the least amount of natural protection for the horse.

● **Hunter clip:** The entire horse is clipped, except for the legs and a patch of hair under the saddle. This clip traces back to the hunt field, and is still used there today, as it provides extra protection to the back of the horse (essential during several hours of hunting) as well as to the lower legs (which may be cut by brambles), but still allows for the horse to stay cool while galloping.



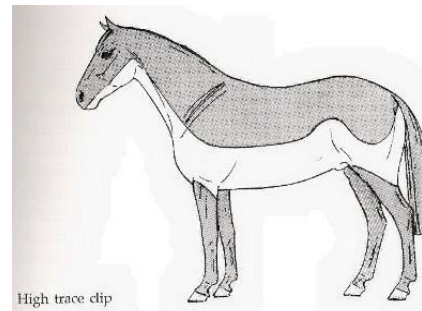
Hunter clip



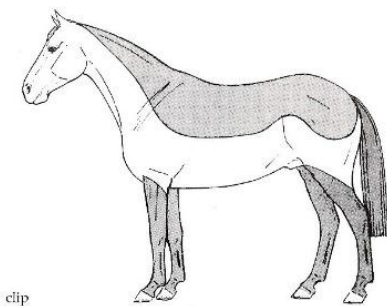
Blanket clip

● **Blanket clip:** Long hair is left in a blanket-shaped area on the horse. The shoulders and neck are clipped, the legs are left unclipped.

● **Trace clip:** varies, but generally the horse is clipped from under his throat, down along the jugular groove, and then clipped half-way up the shoulder and belly. Variations include clipping higher along the neck, shoulder, and belly, and clipping a strip off the side of the hindquarter, to the buttock. Additionally, many clip a strip half-way up the cheek to the muzzle. The back and legs are left unclipped. The clip is named after the traces of the carriage, as it follows a similar pattern. The amount of hair removed is based on the work the horse is in, the amount he sweats during work, and the areas where he sweats the most. It is most commonly seen used by eventers.



High trace clip



Chaser clip

● **Chaser Clip:** Hair is removed from a line below the poll to the stifle, legs are left on. This is a popular clip for steeplechasers as it keeps the horses back w arm but also allows for hardwork.

● **Strip clip or Belly clip:** Hair is clipped along the jugular groove, chest and under the barrel. This is a minimal clip, and many horses with this clip do not need extra care beyond regular blanketing.



FIRST AID

As you are gearing up for the show season you should always keep in mind the safety of you and your equine companion.

EQUINE FIRST AID KIT

All of these items are recommended, but not necessary. Please feel free to add items and customize your own kit. Horses are unpredictable, so rest easy that you are prepared if an emergency should arise.

*It is important to make others aware if your horse has any known allergies *



- Petroleum Jelly
- Veterinary Thermometer w/ Thong & Clip or Digital Thermometer
- Body Wash or Liniment
- Epsom Salts
- Alcohol
- Antimicrobial or Antiseptic Scrub
- Topical Antibacterial or Antibiotic Agent
- 4" Sterile Gauze Pads
- Rolled Gauze
- 1 lb. Roll 12" Absorbent Cotton
- Vet Wrap
- Adhesive Tape
- Bandage Scissors
- Wire Cutters
- 4 Leg Bandages w/ Appropriate Padding
- Easy Boot
- Stethoscope
- Eye Wash Solution
- Flashlight & Batteries
- Phenylbutazone (Consult Veterinarian)
- Banamine (Consult Veterinarian)
- Duct Tape
- Syringes

While getting your kit together, consider a Human First Aid Kit for yourself!

HUMAN FIRST AID KIT

All of these items are recommended, but not necessary. Feel free to customize your own!

It is important to make others aware if you have any known allergies

- Band-Aids
- Triple Antibiotic Cream
- Latex or Vinyl Gloves
- Sunscreen (Depending on Weather)
- Bug Spray (Depending on Weather)
- Ice Pack
- Ibuprofen (Pain Reliever, Fever Reducer)