

## Horse welfare

- Always treat any disease or injury promptly.
- A horse should not be allowed to get too fat or too thin.
- A horse with bad teeth can't eat properly, so have the teeth checked regularly by a vet or horse dentist.
- If good pasture is not available in sufficient quantity, good quality hay will be necessary. If your horse is young or if you ride it often, you will also need to feed concentrates or grain.
- A constant supply of fresh, clean and cool water is essential. A horse can drink a lot in hot weather.
- Keep your horse's hooves properly trimmed and shoe if necessary.
- Old horses need extra care, including a good rug to help them keep warm and dry in winter.
- Always report any cruelty to horses, including neglect, to the RSPCA on 1300 139 947 or to the local council
- If you are agisting your horse onto someone else's property, always satisfy yourself that the owner is capable of properly caring for your animal. Tragically, not all those who offer agistment can be relied on to do this. If in doubt, check with the RSPCA or your local council whether the person has any history of animal cruelty or neglect.

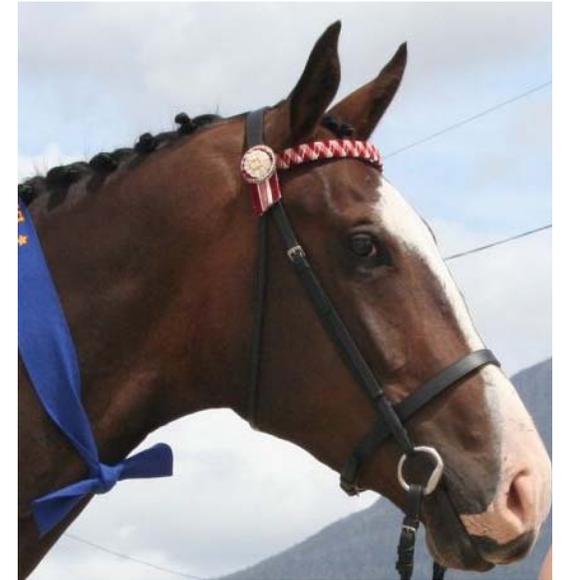
## Regular tasks

- **Daily** – check the horse's eyes; check for any sign of lameness; check the horse has clean, cool water; check your horse is okay at least twice daily; if using supplementary feed, it is better in small amounts 2-3 times a day; if the paddock is small, pick up and dispose of droppings. Always treat any disease or injury promptly.
- **Monthly** – check the teeth of younger horses; check the paddock for toxic weeds; check the saddlery for worn stitching, cracked leather.
- **Every 6-8 weeks** – worm your horse; unshod horses should have their hooves inspected and trimmed if necessary; shod horses should be inspected for adjustment or replacement of shoes.
- **Yearly** – vaccinate for tetanus and strangles; check teeth of older horses.
- **Each riding** – clean the horse's feet and check for anything embedded; sponge off sweat (or hose down in hot weather); wash the bit.
- **Every two or three rides** – change or wash the saddle cloth.

*For more information-  
visit us at  
[www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au)  
or contact your local  
vet.*



# HORSES and the Smallholder



## Some biosecurity tips

## Before you buy

- ❑ Understand the real cost of owning a horse. The purchase price is the cheapest part. It's worth doing a budget that includes costs such as saddlery, agistment, feed, vet fees, farriery and the rider's gear.
- ❑ Unless you already have a good knowledge of horses, take an experienced horse person with you when you look at a horse. You need to check that the horse does not have any serious vices such as biting, bolting, kicking.
- ❑ Don't even think of buying an unbroken horse unless you are an experienced rider.
- ❑ Learn to ride before you buy your own horse.
- ❑ You should ride the horse a few times before deciding whether to buy it.
- ❑ Check whether your local council has special regulations (usually minimum paddock size, type of stable, waste disposal etc) relating to horses.
- ❑ Once you have found what you think is a suitable horse, always have it checked by an experienced horse vet.

*The information in this pamphlet is general advice only and is intended for smallholders and hobby farmers. You should always get professional advice for your specific situation from your local vet*

## Horse basics

- ❑ Horses are harder on fences than most other animals, so ensure the fencing around the paddock is in good condition.
- ❑ Fencing for horses should not include barbed wire, which is dangerous for the animal and costly to you in vet fees repairing the resultant wounds.
- ❑ Shelter is essential. Trees or hedges may suffice, but a proper stable is much better.
- ❑ To avoid sand colic, keep the horse off bare sandy paddocks and feed from hay racks or other feeders (ie not on bare ground).
- ❑ Use only good quality saddlery that fits your horse well. If regularly cleaned and oiled, it should last a long time. But if yours is a young horse, you will need to replace some of the saddlery as it grows.
- ❑ Saddle sores are likely to indicate that the saddle needs to be repaired or replaced.
- ❑

***All livestock owners are required by law to report any signs of an emergency animal disease. If you think your horse is showing the signs, contact your local vet or the DPIPWE all hours hotline on 1800 675 888***

## Horse health

- ❑ **Colic** is abdominal pain. The causes include poor feed, sudden change of feed, worms, bad teeth and sand impaction. Always consult your vet if you suspect colic.
- ❑ **Tetanus** results from some kinds of wounds – in particular a deep puncture wound. If your horse suffers a puncture wound or tear, consult your vet immediately, even if your vaccination program is up to date.
- ❑ Make sure you have an effective **worm control** program for your horse. A typical worm control program involves good paddock hygiene in addition to regular worm treatments. Your vet will help develop a program that suits your circumstances..
- ❑ **Laminitis** (also known as founder) is all too common in horses. Causes include the horse being overfat and lacking exercise, a sudden change of feed, lush feed or excessive grain. If your horse founders, get veterinary help immediately to prevent permanent feet damage.
- ❑ Other causes of lameness include a puncture wound (even a small pricking wound), an abscess or stone bruising of the foot.
- ❑ Never ride a lame horse. A lame horse needs to be examined by a vet promptly.
- ❑ Never ride a horse with saddle sores.