



HEALTHY HORSES

Five quick ways to check if your horse property and horses are on track



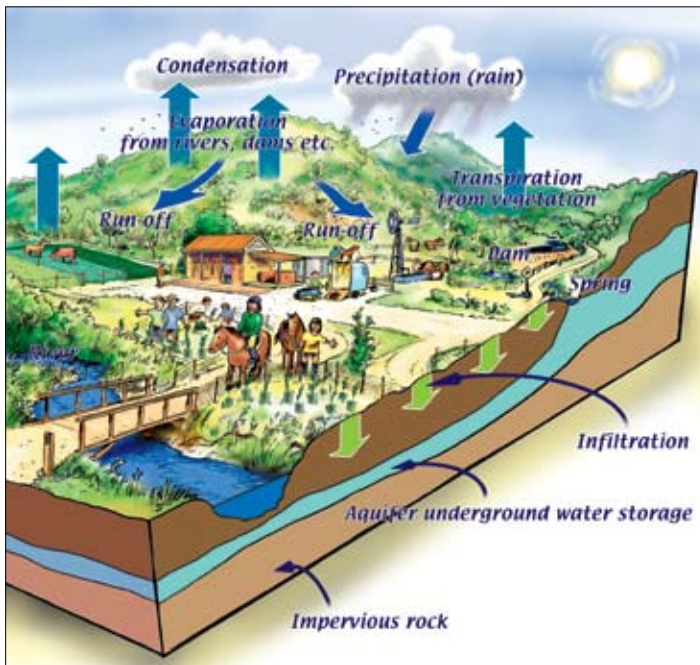
Government of South Australia
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
Natural Resources Management Board



Horse
SA

What is a Catchment?

A catchment is an area of land that catches rainfall and directs it to a creek, river, dam, lake, reservoir or drain which then used for drinking water, irrigation or household and business use. Some water flows out to sea or seeps underground for future use.



A horse property that practices sound environmental management will have good quality pastures, healthier horses, lower incidence of weeds, habitats for native birds, animals and fish, and may even cost less to run due to less need to purchase in hay.

This booklet will help to identify five ways to help your catchment, property and horse's health through good land management practices.

Goal No. 1:

All grazing areas have ground cover of at least 70% (for soil susceptible to water erosion) or 50% (for soil susceptible to wind erosion) and kept at least 3cm high throughout the year.

Ideal

The goal has been reached.

Nearly there

Grazing areas have 70%/50% groundcover for most of the year in most horse paddocks.

Just beginning

Grazing areas have less than 50% groundcover in most paddocks throughout the year.

Haven't thought about it

Little groundcover. Large areas of bare ground for most of the year.

Groundcover on horse properties includes living plants or dry plant residues or stones. Bare soil in paddocks is a problem because it leads to dust or mud. Dust can cause respiratory problems in horses and can lead to colic caused by sand or loose dirt. Mud causes greasy heel, mud fever or other hoof related problems.

Steps for improvement

- Know how much groundcover you currently have in different paddocks, at different times of the year.
- See if any horse management practices need changing, e.g. keeping horses in yards for more time, making better use of rotational grazing, agisting horses off property is often enough to allow for recovery. You may also consider selling/leasing out surplus horses.
- Take a soil test and seek advice on pasture management.

Goal No. 2:

An active pasture weed control program is in place, which is regularly monitored and reviewed.

Ideal

The goal has been reached.

Nearly there

A pasture weed control program exists, but needs to be reviewed.

Just beginning

Some weed control is undertaken on pastures, but no formal program is in place

Haven't thought about it

I don't have a pasture weed control program and am not sure where to start.

Weeds on horse properties reduce the amount of valuable land available for grazing. Importantly, many weeds are toxic to horses and can cause skin irritation, loss of condition or even death.

Steps for improvement

- Identify the weeds on your property.
- Seek advice on how to manage the range of weeds on your horse property.
- Introduce a weed hygiene program which needs to include inspection of introduced hay, encouragement of car parking in one area of the property and the quarantining of new horses for 10 days in a yard to allow weed seeds to pass through the system.

Goal No. 3:

Watercourses are fenced to restrict horse access.

Ideal

The goal has been reached.

Nearly there

Most watercourses have been fenced to restrict access

Just beginning

Horses have access to watercourses and water troughs

Haven't thought about it

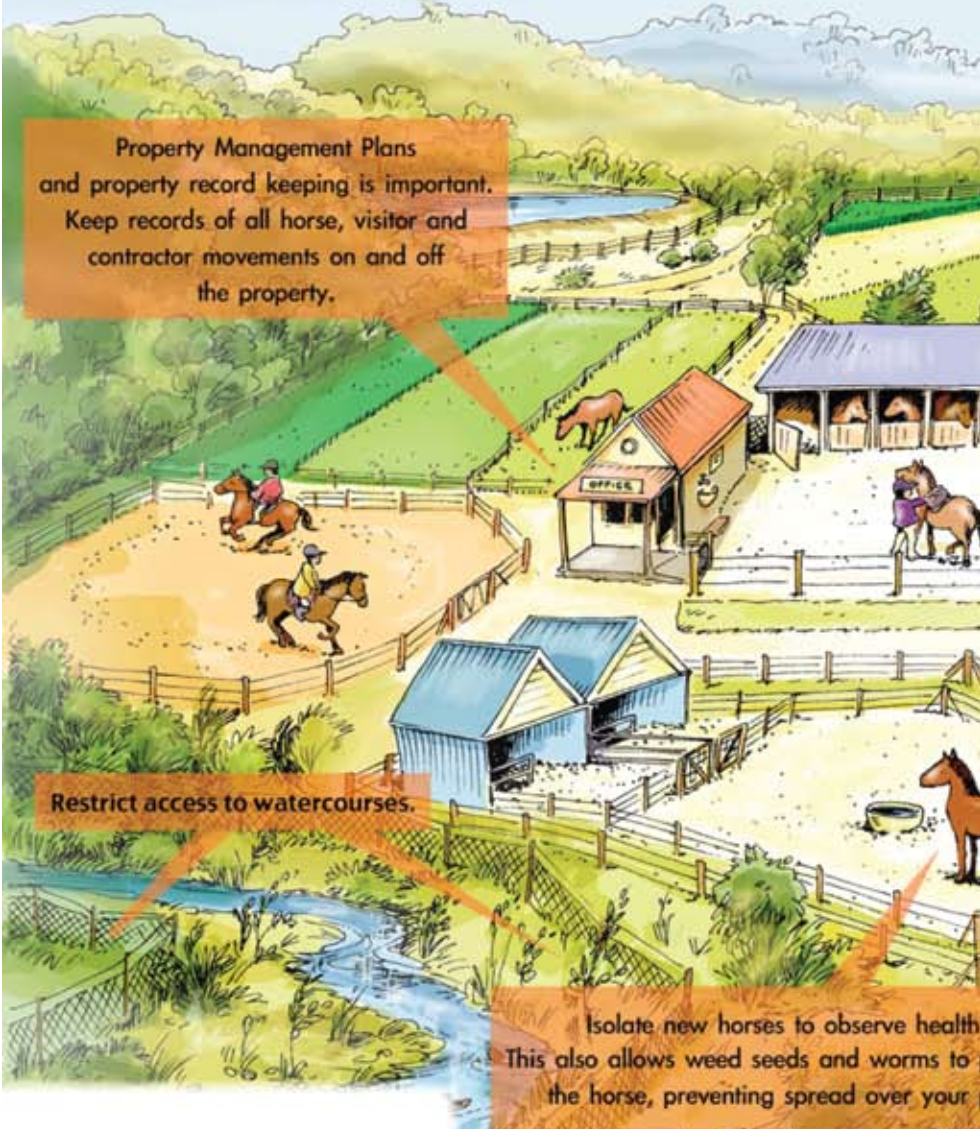
Horses have access to watercourses. This is their only water supply.

Watercourses include erosion gullies, dams and major drainage lines. Studies have shown that livestock do better when provided with reticulated water, as water quality varies throughout the year. Summer water supplies often have higher concentration of salts and other nutrients which affects the taste, leading to stock drinking less than their body needs.

Steps for improvement

- Set up a reticulated water system (troughs, tanks).
- Plan to fence off creek lines and restrict access.
- Plan stock crossing or access points.

Linking good land management



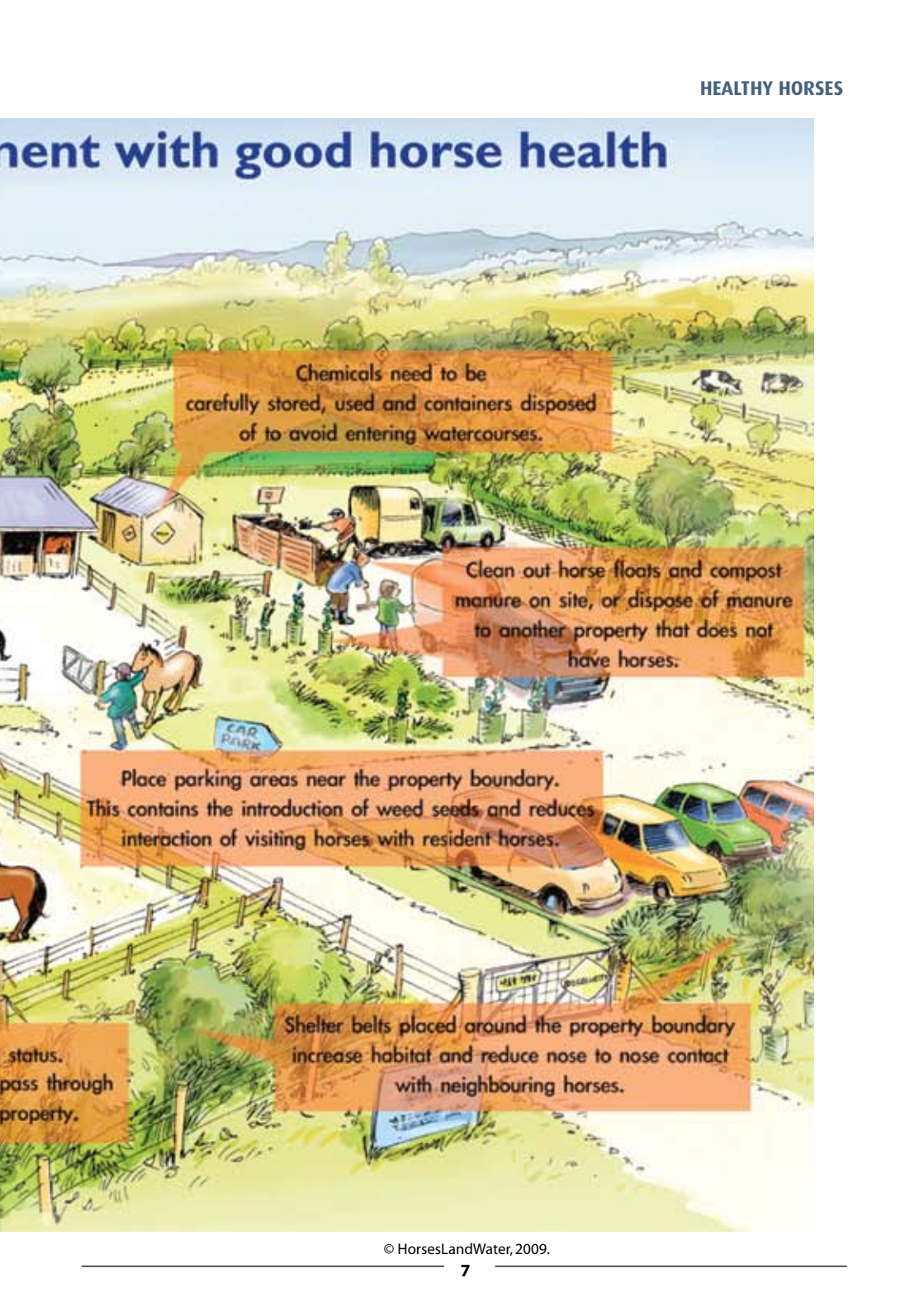
Property Management Plans and property record keeping is important. Keep records of all horse, visitor and contractor movements on and off the property.

Restrict access to watercourses.

Isolate new horses to observe health. This also allows weed seeds and worms to the horse, preventing spread over your

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ment with good horse health

An illustration of a farm scene. In the foreground, a person leads a brown horse. To the left are two horse stalls. In the center, a person is loading a horse trailer with a horse. A green car is parked nearby. A sign reads 'CAR PARK'. In the background, there are rolling hills and a fence with two cows. Several orange text boxes are overlaid on the scene, providing advice on horse management.

Chemicals need to be carefully stored, used and containers disposed of to avoid entering watercourses.

Clean out horse floats and compost manure on site, or dispose of manure to another property that does not have horses.

Place parking areas near the property boundary. This contains the introduction of weed seeds and reduces interaction of visiting horses with resident horses.

status.
pass through
property.

Shelter belts placed around the property boundary increase habitat and reduce nose to nose contact with neighbouring horses.

Goal No. 4:

Action is taken to prevent manure build up in paddocks.

Ideal

The goal has been reached.

Nearly there

Action is only occasionally taken to reduce build up of manure in paddocks.

Just beginning

I am investigating how to prevent manure build up in paddocks.

Haven't thought about it

No action is taken.

Manure build up in paddocks can lead to what is called "horse-sick" pasture. This means rank areas of grass grow that horses won't touch, both due to the concentrated nutrients and the fact that horses dislike grazing near their own manure. Poor manure management also reduce the effectiveness of your horse's internal parasite control program.

Steps for improvement

- Identify how to best manage manure on different parts of your horse property. This may include a combination of complete removal, harrowing, composting, introducing more dung beetles, rotational grazing or pasture spelling.
- Plan to fence off creek lines and restrict access.
- Plan stock crossing or access points.

Goal No. 5:

Intensive horse keeping areas are managed to prevent dust, mud and manure build up (which leads to stormwater and watercourse pollution).

Ideal

The goal has been reached.

Nearly there

There is some dust, mud or manure build up, but the areas are being upgraded.

Just beginning

There is some dust, mud or manure build up, but I am investigating what I can do.

Haven't thought about it

Intensive areas create dust, mud and manure build up.

Intensive areas include stables, yards, riding arenas, gateways or roadways. Often these areas form part of a workplace or eating areas and there are human as well as horse safety issues to consider. Mud can lead to skin infections on the legs and hoof problems. Dust can lead to respiratory or eye problems and slow down wound healing. Manure build up reduces effectiveness of de-worming programs.

Steps for improvement

- Harden the high traffic areas with materials such as cement, gravel or rubber matting.
- Add drainage.
- Regularly collect manure, consider storage and regular disposal.
- Have stable-yard rules about areas to be used for washing horses, grooming or parking to manage impacts.

Tips for keeping your horse healthy

- Teeth:**
Need to be checked every 6 – 12 months by vet or horse dentist or more often if there are problems.
- Worming:**
A regular de-worming program using commercial products combined with good management practices such as rotational grazing, keeping eating areas clean, a good manure management program.
- Vaccinations:**
Tetanus and strangles need to be kept up to date. Ask your vet if any other preventative medications are required.
- Hoof care:**
Hooves should be trimmed or shod every 5 – 8 weeks. Problem hooves may require more attention.
- Insurance:**
Optional, but worth considering public liability, insurance for veterinary expenses, theft of float or tack and personal accident.
- Water:**
Keep it clean and fresh and change regularly. Remember horses drink more on hot days, if they are growing, pregnant or have been exercised. If they are drinking less water, it could be a sign of illness.
- Feed:**
Clean and sweet smelling. Feed according to your horse and work done. Remember to check that weed seeds are not introduced to your property through hays and other feeds. A horse which is not eating or has abnormal manure, is not feeling well.
- Manure:**
Keep a clean and healthy environment for your horse by keeping to a regular manure management program.
- Rugging:**
As required – be careful not to over rug. Horses do quite well with natural or artificial shelters in paddocks, provided they are well fed.
- Paddock, yards and stables:**
Ensure that it has shelter and is free of rubbish and weeds. Check that fencing is safe on a regular basis. Check for and fill in rabbit holes etc.

Trail Riders' Code of Conduct

1. Ride only on designated trails.
2. It is not environmentally sustainable to take short cuts or form new trails.
3. When muddy or eroded avoid using trails.
4. Comply with signage.
5. Respect the rights of other trail users.
6. Politely indicate to other trail users how to pass.
7. Ride appropriately to suit the terrain, visibility and possible interaction with other trail users.
8. The best way to minimise impact on plants and animals is to stay on the trail.
9. Remove all rubbish, manure and excess feed from the float parking area.
10. Let others know of this Code.

Keep trails open by setting a good example of environmentally sound and socially responsible horse riding.



HEALTHY HORSES

Where to go for further information

Horse Owners of the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges

www.horseowners.info

A community group promoting land management practices and recreational trails.
New members welcome.

Horse SA

www.horsesa.asn.au

Horse Keeping

www.horseslandwater.com

Land Management Information, free field days and courses

www.amlnrm.sa.gov.au