

How is your horse's "table" set?

Places where horses are regularly fed can cause bare areas in a paddock. This can lead to erosion (wind or water) or cause "pugging" where the horses leave deep hoof prints in the ground which fill with water for extended periods of time.

Feed wastage through loss in mud is a cost issue, as is resulting sand colic from horses who fossick around in loose sand for the last bit of hay.

There are a number of solutions for helping to manage the horse's "table" or feeding areas.

1. feeding bins, large feeders or rubber mats can be provided, and moved around the paddock so that one area does not get all the wear and tear.
2. a surfaced feeding "pad" can be provided
3. yards can be provided

A surfaced area that is in the paddock or directly off the paddock is a great option. Better still is if this area links to several paddocks so that it can be in constant use as you rotate your horses around the property. It may consist of individual smaller "pens", one for each horse or a larger yard for a small herd.

The model chosen will need to reflect the siting of the yards, the number of horses and the amount of time each day you have to move horses in/out.

A larger yard with shelter and water can be used then for locking horses up for periods i.e. when it is too wet or too dry, to limit their intake of grass when necessary. It can also have the gate open when the horses are in the main paddock so the horses can choose to spend time in it just "loafing" around.

This type of yard also suits the busy horse owner who can only attend briefly to feed but not wait around to release horses an hour or two later.

The surface provided needs to be well draining or compacted so that water runs off. A slight slope (2% to 4%) for run off is good. Your surface choice will need to reflect the environmental condition of most concern (dust or mud) and could be as simple as local crushed dolomite.

The feeding yard should have a buffer zone of grass and bushes can be created around the area which will act as



Above: This horse owner, on a steep property, has successfully hardened a feeding surface and uses fixed containers.

Below: Individual horse feeding yards, used also to manage a sloped site.



a filter for any runoff and will help to retain the surface. Sleepers or logs can also be used for this purpose.

Run off water from sheds, roadways, wash bays or other areas should not be allowed to run across the feeding yard. Guttering and downpipes are ideally fitted to any shelters or stables and drainage channels should be installed around the area to channel water around rather than through the feeding yard.

Victorian bushfires

At the time of writing this article, the long-term effect of the Victorian bushfires has still yet to be understood. Horse owners and keepers from around Australia no doubt extend their sympathies to those who have suffered loss, human and equine.

For post-fire horse keeping and land management information, including upcoming workshops, contact Louise Scott: Louise.Scott@dpi.vic.gov.au

HorsesLandWater

Have you bought a new property? Are you upgrading an existing property?

The HorsesLandWater website www.horseslandwater.com contains an "Action Planner" which takes landholders through a series of questions about their property. It helps establish a foundation to further think about the key planning aspects around horse keeping and land management. The website also features links to upcoming workshops & field days, along with a range of free resources and useful links.

Comment sought on draft documents

Horse community leaders (coaches, committee members, and business people) and natural resources community education officers are invited to comment on two documents during March. Both documents are designed to assist those who plan field days, information sessions or communication strategies with a focus on peri-urban horse keepers. The documents have been uploaded to www.horseslandwater.com and can be found under "public consultation"

Your photos are wanted!

As part of a current project being undertaken by Horse SA, to develop tropic and arid zone resources for horse keepers, a request for photos has now gone out. If you have any photos of horse keeping practices (good, OK or not so good!) specifically related to the peri-urban areas around townships, please email them to : Julie, horsesa@horsesa.asn.au for consideration for inclusion. All photographers will be acknowledged.



Photos sent in for use in our resources need to relate to an aspect of good land management practices. This photo shows that native vegetation areas have been fenced off.

Photo courtesy: Brent Watson WA.

This newsletter is a key activity of the project 'Managing Horse Grazing Pressures in Peri-Urban Environments' and has been funded by a Landcare Sustainable Practices grant under the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

www.horseslandwater.com

Please promote through your club or horse-related business website, noticeboard or newsletter.

HorsesLandWater Corporate and Community Programs: HorsesLandWater staff and volunteers are able to offer a range of programs tailored to suit horse keepers in your local area. Specialising in capacity building programs which engage the key stakeholders – horse owners, land management technical advisors, government agencies at all levels, research and educational institutions. The team also has experience in resource development, educational programs and related activities. Please contact Julie Fiedler – email horsesa@horsesa.asn.au or phone 618 8294 2460

Coming Events

March *Horse Know How*, Dardanup, WA
small_landholder@agric.wa.gov.au (08) 9733 7777

April *Veterinary & Land Management talk*, Meadows, SA
horsesa@horsesa.asn.au, Mob 0402 488 306

April *HorsesLandWater Focus Groups*, Darwin, NT
horsesa@horsesa.asn.au

April *HorsesLandWater small group workshops*, Darwin, NT
horsesa@horsesa.asn.au

April 14 *Managing Horses on Small Properties*, Caboolture
jane@equiculture.com.au

May 2 *Horse property management plans*, Yarra Ranges, VIC
(03) 9294 6184 k.jacobson@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

May 3 *Horse property management plans*, near Whittlesea, VIC
(03) 59625203, bindi@mooramooraa.org.au

May 4 *Pasture management on horse properties – for Ag consultants*, near Whittlesea, VIC
(03) 59625203 bindi@mooramooraa.org.au

May 5 *Managing Horses on Small Properties*, Manningham City Council, VIC
Nigel Philpot (03) 9840 9173

May 6 *Horse property P.D. for NRM Managers*, near Manningham, VIC
(03) 59625203 bindi@mooramooraa.org.au

May 18 *Managing Horses on Small Properties*, Beaudesert, QLD
Brad Ricard 0407 001 916

June 27 *Managing Horses on Small Properties*, Boonah, QLD
Steve Lyngcoln 0438 008 668

WA has 3 field days coming up soon. For registrations contact Nikki Mob.0412 777 377

NSW Department of Agriculture also conducts many courses each year, including small farms, heavy horses, buying your first horse,
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/profarm/courses>

If you know of any upcoming events, please contact Julie at horsesa@horsesa.asn.au and they can be listed on the www.horseslandwater.com website.

HorsesLandWater

PO Box 483
Plympton SA 5038

Phone (08) 8294 2460
Email horsesa@horsesa.asn.au
Web www.horseslandwater.com



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY