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MARYLAND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK • EASTERN SHORE

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EXTENSION HAPPENINGS

If you would like to become certified to apply restricted herbicides on your pasture, MCE offers both training and testing services that allow you to do so. The following counties have dates in November for Recertification, Training and Testing at their MCE offices:

Private Applicator Certification Training:
Frederick County..... November 3, 10am-noon
Harford County..... November 8, 7-9 pm

Private Applicator Certification Exam:
Frederick County..... November 10, 10 am
Harford County..... November 15, 7 pm

Private Applicator Recertification:
Frederick County..... November 3, 1-3 pm
Harford County..... November 1, 7-9 pm
Somerset County..... November 30, 7-9 pm
Wicomico County..... November 9, 7-9 pm

OTHER EVENTS:

Montgomery County (301-590-2809): Horse Farm Management Workshops at the Extension Office in Derwood, MD on Nov. 10 & 17 from 6:30-9pm. For registration info., contact Doug Tregoning at 301.590-2809.

Q. I just moved my horse from a boarding stable to my home and was wondering what I need to do in order to prepare for winter. Is there anything in particular I need to do for my horse or my barn?

A. Although it may still seem like summer, winter is approaching quickly! There are several things you should consider having before cold temperatures start in earnest. As far as your horse goes, make sure you have plenty of hay to get you through the winter. A horse can be expected to eat approximately 2.5% of their body weight per day—that's equivalent to 27.5 pounds of total feed (including both hay and grain) for an average 1100-pound horse. Most bales of hay in this area of the country are somewhere between 30 and 40 pounds in weight, so you might expect to feed just under one bale of hay per day. Keep in mind that hay growers won't be able to make a first cutting in 2005 until sometime in May, so you should make sure you've got enough hay to last you until then. Hay is extremely important for your horse—not only does it provide essential nutrients, but on cold days, digestion of hay generates body

heat, keeping your horse warm. Check your horse often during the winter—a long haircoat may be hiding ribs and you want your horse to keep its weight over the winter.

Blanketing is certainly an option, though there is much controversy as to whether or not blankets are necessary. If your horse is clipped, then a blanket will be a necessity on cold days. However, if your horse has his natural winter coat, adding a blanket actually flattens the hairs against the body of the horse, eliminating an important barrier against the cold, which may actually make your horse colder! If your horse does not have access to a shelter, then a blanket will be a requirement during wet and windy weather, as his ability to keep himself warm will be drastically reduced during inclement weather.

Horses need plenty of water at all times, even in the cold winter months. Make sure you have checked your automatic waterers to be sure they are operating correctly. Research has shown that horses are much more willing to drink water in the winter if it is warm. If your waterers are not heated, you'd better have a plan B for providing water to the

horses during freezing weather. If you use the bucket and trough method for watering your horses, be sure you have bucket de-icers, water tank heaters, etc. and that they work. These heaters can deteriorate over the years, and may develop shorts—you don't want your horses getting shocked when they go to get a drink of water, so check them thoroughly before using them.

As far as health goes, make sure you keep up with deworming and vaccination. This is especially important for our older equine friends as they are much more sensitive to environmental changes. Keep your farrier appointments, even if you plan on cutting back on your training over the winter. If your horse doesn't need them, then have his shoes pulled. If the shoes will be staying on, consider adding snowball pads or spraying the bottom of the hoof with cooking spray to eliminate iceballs forming during snowy conditions. Hoof growth slows down to some extent over the winter, so you may be able to get by on less frequent farrier visits.

*Erin Petersen
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Meet This Month's Expert Erin Petersen

Erin Petersen is a native of Colorado. She grew up with a passion and love for horses and followed that passion by attending Colorado State University and majoring in Equine Science. She followed up her bachelor's degree with a Master's degree in Animal Science, with an emphasis on nutrition. Her research was

aimed at studying the effects of rapid growth on bone development in weanling horses. She is still very interested in nutrition of growing horses, but is currently working on a research study at the University of Maryland investigating nutrition of the starved horse.

Ms. Petersen teaches five courses at the University of Maryland including Pasture Management, Equine Nutrition, Equine Reproduction,

Equine Health Management and Equine Behavior. Her particular areas of expertise within extension are in the areas of pasture management, weed identification/management, nutrition, and health management. As a State Extension Horse Specialist based in College Park, Erin speaks at regional and county-level extension seminars, gives presentations to 4-H and Pony Club groups, equestrian

clubs and others on all things equine. She is also responsible for organizing the University Seminars at the Horse World Expo every January. If you have questions regarding horses or horse care and are not able to find the answer on your own or through your county office, Erin is available for consultation and welcomes your questions at 301-405-4690 or petersdr@umd.edu. ■

Weathering Maryland Weather

Maryland Average Winter Temps*

- Lows: from 52 (in October) down to 29 (in January)
- Highs: from 70 (in October) down to 44 (January)

Maryland Frosts**

First frost around Nov. 13 • Last frost around Mar 26

*Weather.com, **Old Farmer's Almanac

An average size horse (1,100 lbs.) with a normal winter coat will be comfortable at temperatures as low as 45 deg. F. If the temperature remains the same, but it starts to rain, that same horse will require an additional 6 lbs of hay per day in order to maintain body temperature. A clipped horse can only tolerate a minimum temperature of 60 deg. F; at 45 degrees F., they'd need an additional 4 pounds of hay to stay warm.