



Graze the Way to a Great Pasture



The basics on pasture management and maintenance for equines

Goals for a Great Pasture

- Establish a good home base for the heard beyond the basics of
 - Shelter
 - Water
 - Forage
 - Salt
 - Safety
- Improve forage quality and decrease supplemental hay
- Control those weeds!
- Effective irrigation and water control
- Parasite and pest control
- Informed management and regular maintenance



Home Base!

No pasture is complete without the basics of:

- Shelter
 - At equicenter we use primarily run-in sheds
- Water
 - At Equicenter we use both automatic waterers and water troughs cleaned daily
- Forage- grass and supplemental hay
- Salt- free choice trace mineral salt blocks
- Safety
 - At Equicenter we use a combination of vinyl and split rail fence, supported by electric in crucial spots



The Grass is Always Greener!

What do we do to improve the quality of grass so we can feed little to no hay in the warmer months?

Rest that grass!

- Open the pasture to your horses when there is ideally about 4 inches of growth, when 50% of that is gone, relocate the horses
- Allow two to four weeks (ideally) for the pasture to rest before reopening



Weeds Weeds Everywhere!

You and many other horse lovers know all about the “Clover Slobbers” ...that pesky fungus in the late summer/early fall that grows on the back of sweet clovers and can cause excessive salivation in our equine friends, but what can we do about it?

MOW, MOW, MOW

- It may seem counterintuitive but mowing the pasture strategically can cut down on weed growth before it starts. Re-seeding may help as well.
- Fungicide and chemical options like round-up are also possible but they are not environmentally friendly and can be tricky to use in pastures, requiring long periods of rest and careful monitoring.

What Weeds are Bad?

Nightshade, buttercups, dogbane, brackenferns, horsetails, lambs quarters, lily of the valley, milkweed, pigweed, redmaple, red oak, st.johns wort... just to name a few...

Use your technology! If you are not sure, check google! Wonderful time to have smart phones as a resource!



Azalea



Begonia



Dockweed



Black Locust



Boxwood



Flosglove



Bracken Fern



Buttercup



Horse Nettle



Chives



Delphinium



White Clover

Irrigation

Luckily in upstate New York we do not have to worry about pasture drought that plagues most of the nation. (I've seen show barns out west that have in-ground sprinkler systems!) Instead we worry about how to direct the water off the grass and away from critical areas.

- Understand how the horses move in the pastures
 - Most high traffic spots occur around the sheds, waterers, and gates- you can reinforce some of these areas like we do at equicenter with a round stone/sand mix.
 - Rotate manger and ground feeding locations.
- Understand how the water wants to be
 - Water travels downhill so think about how it can flow with the least amount of difficulty and add ditches, culverts and channels to help.



Bug, Worms, Parasites and More!

The best way to control pests and parasites is to keep a clean pasture; remove manure before it has a chance to become a problem

- Removing the poop is a great way to control the spread of internal parasites and decrease the attraction for other pests
- The ammonia in horse waste can also kill the grass



Management- Can We Make it Better?

As compassionate equestrians we are always looking for ways to make our horses home a happier and healthier place by:

- Making pasture groups that decrease stress and allow horse to horse companionship
- Regularly maintaining fences,shelters and waters- clean water is always best!
- Strategic hay mangers to limit waste and keep grass growing
- Create “sacrifice” or “diet” pastures to help with limited space and rotation



Healthy Pastures = Happy Horses



https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=ooy8cGFnkc4&feature=emb_title

