

Horse News and Views



Good fertility, clipping of pasture a few times a year, aeration of compacted soils and rotational grazing will prevent or solve most of the pasture problems seen on horse farms. When pastures are well managed, only a few noxious weeds will be present. These can be removed by digging them up or selective use of herbicides when the horses are not on the pasture for a few weeks.

The acute toxins that kill horses in 24 - 36 hours include;

- Botulism (*Clostridia botulinum*) – usually associated with feeding haylage;
- Ionophore toxicity (Monensin, Rumensin) – associated with horses eating chicken or cattle feed, or mineral, containing or contaminated with ionophores;
- Yew (taxine) toxicity – associated with horses eating clippings from this common ornamental shrub;
- Poison-hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) – found in swampy areas;
- Red maple (*Acer rubrum*) leaf poisoning – seen when horses eat wilted leaves in paddocks or leaves that are disposed of into manure piles adjacent to paddocks. Fallen leaves remain toxic for a few weeks or more.

Make every effort to ensure these toxins are not present on your horse farm !

Anthrax is caused by spore-forming bacteria that can spread among animals through contaminated feed, soil or pasture during grazing. Particular environmental conditions, such as a flood or drought, can bring out and expose animals to the spores in the soil. Twenty-four cattle and one horse died of anthrax on farms in Manitoba. More than 200 animals died on 47 quarantined farms in Saskatchewan. Forty-two of these tested positive for anthrax.

For further information, contact Dr. Bob Wright (519) 846-3412 or visit our website: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock>

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This version is available for distribution after August 1, 2006.

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