

Horse News and Views



If you love horses and want to work with them, consider **Groom One Online**, a grooms' skills training program, presented by Equine Guelph, University of Guelph. (Next offering: September 10, 2007, to March 9, 2008) For more information, refer to www.groomone.ca

To ensure persistence of a field of alfalfa and optimize harvest yields in succeeding years, abide by the start of the critical fall harvest date for your area. The critical fall harvest date is the last cutting date for a crop of alfalfa, based on the date of the first killing frost in an average year. Alfalfa needs a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the expected killing frost to store nutrients in its roots before the start of winter. These dates vary: August 10-15 in the far north of Ontario; August 20-30 in central and eastern Ontario; and September 4-14 in southwestern Ontario. In addition, the alfalfa must maintain sufficient growth to hold snow, creating an insulation layer to protect the plants from extreme temperatures.

Horse owners are often looking for supplemental feed and pasture. Sorghum, sudan grass, and their hybrids, are often suggested as alternate feeds. There are two distinct problems when horses consume these grasses:

< Horses can develop a cystitis (bladder infection) or paralysis of the bladder.

< Horses can die of cyanide (prussic acid) poisoning if the plant is frozen and then consumed.

Better alternatives are pasture rotation and fertilizer application to reduce stress on pasture plants and ensure feed is available for late summer grazing.

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



Ontario

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Ontario Association
of
Equine Practitioners

**UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH**

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