

# Horse News and Views



In 2003, the number of West Nile virus (WNV) cases in Ontario horses has greatly reduced over 2002. The surprise is the presence of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus in Ontario. As of November 18, ten confirmed or probable cases of WNV and 11 confirmed or probable cases of EEE have been reported. Previous to 2003, EEE had only been detected in Ontario four times since 1937. This year, EEE has affected a horse on Manitoulin Island, three in the Midland area, one in Northumberland county and the largest outbreak affected six horses in Eastern Ontario (Ottawa-Carleton, Lanark and Dundas counties).

Frustrated with those muddy, swampy areas around gates, water bowls and feeders? Why not try to eliminate them. Remove all manure and topsoil from these areas. Obtain a roll of landscape/filter cloth from a local supplier. The cloth is available in various thicknesses, widths up to 10 or 12 feet and lengths of 100 feet. Lay the landscape cloth onto the prepared site and cover with a 4-inch layer of limestone screenings or gravel. The landscape cloth will prevent hooves from penetrating the ground and a mud hole from developing. In very wet areas, drainage, using a French drain or subsurface tile drain below the landscape cloth, may also be required.

Bird's-foot Trefoil, a perennial legume, can spread throughout pastures and hay fields. Since it can fix nitrogen from the air, it does not need supplemental nitrogen fertilization. Because of its tendency to increase each year, it is promoted as a permanent pasture. Trefoil also does well on poorly drained soils. It makes a soft hay but has a high calcium to phosphorus ratio (7:1), with a potentially high protein level. However, it contains a bitter tannin that many horses dislike and refuse to eat. Some horses, which have been accustomed to it, graze it readily. In many cases, horses will eat their straw bedding rather than eat the trefoil.

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



Ontario Association  
of  
Equine Practitioners



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