

Horse News and Views



Owners who feed their horses directly on the ground lose 25-30% of the hay value in wasted and spoiled hay. Feeders can be problematic, but are worthwhile. Some of the “do’s” and “don’ts” about hay feeders include:

1. Don’t use feeders meant for feeding round bales to cattle, i.e. the tombstone feeder. They are not safe for horses. The tombstone feeders were designed for cattle to reach over and into the centre. The reverse motion is necessary. This prevents the cow from pulling hay out of the feeder. The feeder height is too short for horses and, with their smaller heads, they can often reach directly into the centre of the feeder. Accidents happen and horses get their heads or parts of their bodies stuck between the bars. Smaller horses, foals and miniature horses can get stuck in the feeder, particularly when the hay builds up on the outside of the feeder reducing its height even further.
2. Don’t use old, damaged feeders with sharp edges.
3. Do use “V” feeders designed for horses. Good designs will incorporate a catch pan to hold the plant leaves. Refer to the OMAFRA web site for the design of a homemade “V” feeder.
4. Simple foot-square plywood boxes built on a skid, with two-foot sides and a solid floor, work well to keep the hay off the ground and are easily moved around.
5. Round bale feeders for horses should be a minimum of 6 feet high with a chest bar height of at least 32 inches. Those with a centre basket and pan to catch the leaves work well.

EquiMania!, Equine Guelph’s youth education program, has unveiled its latest instructive resource, a full-size fibreglass horse painted with remarkable anatomical detail. Youth, 14 years of age and under, are invited to help name the horse by entering online. See <http://www.equineguelph.ca/news/NEWS27.shtml> for details.

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

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