

Horse News and Views



In the late summer and early fall, questions come in regarding the grazing of horses on various crop residues, such as oats, barley or underseeded fields (the grain crop acts as a nurse crop for grass and legumes). Barley, oats and wheat are improved grass species and can be fed or grazed providing care is exercised, including:

- Watch for grain spills. There may be piles of the grain where the combine and wagons were unloaded. Overeating in these areas could result in grain or carbohydrate overload.
- Limit access. Frequently, volunteer grain will sprout in the combined rows. This is very lush material and could result in carbohydrate overload and laminitis similar to grass founder seen in the spring.
- Don't pasture or harvest newly established fields. Commonly, hay and pastures are established by using a nurse grain crop, such as wheat or oats. Once the grain and straw are harvested, the grasses and legumes continue to grow. The forage should not normally be grazed or harvested in the year of establishment. Any grazing at this time will kill or weaken the seedlings and lower the yield the following year.

As of September 22, three horses have been diagnosed with West Nile disease in Ontario. They reside in the North Bay area, the Waterloo-Perth county area, and Niagara. Two of the horses were unvaccinated (third currently unknown).

Fall is the time when horses start reaching over fences and searching out other sources of nutrients. Many pastures are depleted of fresh grass. Even horses with sufficient pasture start looking over the fence, and will consume plants and trees that they otherwise wouldn't eat. Be on the watch for toxic plants, including yew clippings and red maple leaves. Ensure that electric fences are working to properly contain your horses. Start supplementing your horses' diet with hay.

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**

Horse News and Views is prepared by
Dr. Bob Wright, Animal Health and Welfare,
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs,
Wellington Place, R.R. #1, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W3
Telephone: 519-846-3412 Fax: 519-846-8101
E-mail: robert.wright@omafra.gov.on.ca

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

Please retain original format of article.