

Domestic Animals, Hobby Farms, Stables

Best Management Practices For: Boarding Stables, Equestrian Centers, Small Farms, and Urban Horse Owners, Kennels

Animal waste contributes to water pollution when it is improperly stored or left uncovered near small streams and storm drains. During rainfall, it is washed into storm drains and flows untreated, directly into surface waters.

Animal waste contains some nutrients--phosphorus and nitrogen--as well as bacteria. The nutrients fertilize the aquatic plants causing their proliferation which depletes oxygen in the water, killing water life. The high bacteria levels in the water can cause gastro-intestinal disorders and other medical problems.

Sediment is also a common pollutant washed from pastures and hobby farms. It creates multiple problems once it enters surface waters. It harms water life by clogging the gills of fish, blocking light transmission and increasing water temperature.

Corral Location and Facilities Design

Site barns, corrals and other high-use areas on the portion of property that drains away from the nearest street or storm channel. Install gutters that will divert runoff away from livestock area. Design diversion terraces which drain into areas with sufficient vegetation to filter the flow. Protect manure storage facilities from rainfall and surface runoff.

Pasture Management

Confine horses in properly fenced areas except for exercise and grazing time. Corrals, stables and barns should be located on higher ground when possible and surrounded by pasture to act as a natural filtration system. Utilize fencing to keep horses away from environmentally sensitive areas and protect stream banks from contamination. Use manure and soiled bedding sparingly to fertilize pastures and croplands.

Grazing Management

Establish healthy and vigorous pastures with at least 3 inches of leafy material present. Subdivide grazing areas into three or more units of equal size. Clip tall weeds and old grass to control weeds and stimulate grass growth. Rotate animals to clean pasture when grass is grazed down to 3-4 inches. Let pasture regrow to 8-10 inches before allowing regrazing. Keep animals away from wet fields when possible. During heavy rainfall, consider indoor feeding, a practice which keeps more manure under roof and away from runoff.

Manure Collection and Storage

Collect soiled bedding and manure on a daily basis from stalls and paddocks and place in temporary or long-term storage units. Store in sturdy, insect resistant and seepage free units such as:

- Plastic garbage cans with lids.
- Fly-tight wooden or concrete storage sheds.
- Composters.
- Pits or trenches lined with an impermeable layer.

Manure Use and Disposal

Compost soiled bedding and manure for your own use. Give away composted material to local greenhouses, nurseries and botanical parks. Transport manure to topsoil companies or composting centers. Fertilize pastures, cropland and lawns with manure and soiled bedding. Pesticide Alternatives

Integrated Pest Management is a more common sense approach for a long-term solution. Plan your "IPM" strategy in this order:

- Pheromone Traps
- Tarps
- Bug Zappers
- Fly-Tight Storage Sheds
- Chemical Controls Use these least-toxic products:
 - Pyrethrin-based insecticides
 - Dehydrating dusts (e.g. silica gel)
 - Insecticidal soaps
 - Horticultural oils