

Looking after your horse.

Just a few reminders to make your horse a happy horse, during the bad weather.

Rugs: Take them off, groom your horse, check for rubs, cuts etc., make sure there comfy. Just remember, how cold it gets at night, check the temperature so you can put extra rugs on if necessary, layer thinner rugs underneath to help them keep warm.

During the day take off some of the rugs so that the horse feels the benefit at night time.

A thick out door rug with a neck gives good protection, while out during the day.

If your horse isn't doing a lot of work, don't forget to cut down the feed, he still needs to have enough to maintain the warmth etc., give him an extra scoop of sugar beet and cut down on the cereals. Make sure at all times the horse has plenty of clean water, when it freezes, break the ice and take it out of the bucket or trough to stop it freezing again. If you have a ball put it in the bucket/trough to stop the water freezing. Add hot water to the bucket and trough, if your horse doesn't have enough water and is eating more hay than normal, and less exercise it will end with impacting colic, causing your horse a lot of pain and may be death, plus large vet bills. If you paddock is frozen make sure your horse has plenty of hay to eat, he needs to be eating all the time. Frozen grass is not good for him.

In the stable your horse needs a good thick bed of straw, shavings etc., enough room for him to lay down, he doesn't want to be laying on a thin bed with concrete underneath, causing him to be cold, and then when he tries to get up, he scuffs his knees and hocks, not good.

When you get back on your horse after a fair amount of time off, walk him for a few days, don't go blasting him over fields and jump him etc, hes not fit enough for that, he will end up with pulled tendons/muscles/ backs etc.,

Horses are expensive, and it is your responsibility to look after their welfare. If you cant afford to look after him properly then perhaps its time for him to go to another home that can.

Watch out for mud fever – get teeth checked yearly and have regular visit by the blacksmith.

While you cant ride, clean and oil your tack, give your grooming kit a wash, there is always loads of jobs to do. Get your horse first aid kit checked sorted and up to date, check when your horse needs vaccinating.

Most of all give him a big hug every day.....