



Bits from the Barn

Springtime Checklist

Spring 2010 Edition

A springtime tune-up is key in preparing your horse for the active riding season ahead. Use the checklist below to ensure that your equine partner is ready to go...

- Annual vaccinations—wet winters means west nile virus
- Nutrition and body condition assessment
- Dental exam—see list of problem signs below
- Sheath cleaning for geldings—see Linda for an appointment or instructions!
- Review of [deworming schedules](#)—frequency and products
- Discuss fitness and conditioning program
- Check in on your horse's current soundness— address & diagnose any concerns



Jamie gives Tio her spring dose of deworming paste

Notes from Linda

Signs that your horse might need dental care:

- Pieces of hay in manure longer than 1 inch
- Wads of chewed hay spit out on the ground
- Slobbering and/or dropping grain when eating
- Unthrifty condition

If you suspect your horse needs dental care, I can show you how to do an inspection or help you schedule a dental exam.

Dermatitis is caused by a matted winter coat and dander against the skin. The best way to remove the old coat and clean the skin is good old-fashioned elbow grease, a stiff brush & wool rub rag. This will give you the best coat condition. If you're going to use water, be sure to scrub all the way thru the coat to the skin and don't leave soap behind.

Spotlight: Fly Predators

Remember last year? Would you like a summer without flies? Some would like to try [fly predators](#) but it takes everyone's participation to get the program to work. Cost would be **\$18 per horse** for a summer long program (May-Aug). Would you like a summer without flies for under \$20? [Click here](#) to let Deb know that you're in for \$18 & she'll place the order.

Hoof Care & Fitness Program



Mary is getting Cowboy in shape for the summer

It's no secret—it was an unusually cold, wet winter in Reno this year. As a result, horses hooves are particularly tender and in need of careful consideration before trail rides like you did last fall. As well, you will want to steadily develop your horse's fitness and strength after a lazy few months off. Before you hop in the saddle and take off on a lengthy adventure, you'll need to leg him up.

Start his re-conditioning program with short sessions of walking, gradually increasing the duration and then adding some hills. Once you've done at least 2 weeks of slow exercise, you can adding in some trot work or steeper hill walks, or by increasing the length of your rides. As you ask your horse to go back to work after winter idle time, each change in demand should be gradual — adding in a longer duration or a little more intensity, but not both at the same time.

Barn Notes

Now we're into Spring! Here are a few other things for your to-do list:

- Take your blanket home—[clean](#) (think car wash) & store
- [Clean](#) & organize tack, taking home whatever you're not actively using—clearing out the tack room

After a few weeks of careful training, your horse should be ready for more demanding work — trotting, cantering, etc. Once he goes back into work that is hard enough to break a sweat (Linda laughs!), don't forget to give him ample warm-up and cool-down time before and after exercise. A 10 minute warm up equals a mandatory 10 minute cool down—no leaving early! By slowly and steadily bringing your horse back to condition, you will avoid unnecessary vet bills caused by injury to his musculoskeletal system.

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