During the winter, horse lovers dream of balmy summer days, when we can gallop across the countryside on our favorite horses. However, once those lazy and hazy summer days arrive, (and they’re definitely here), you must take extra precautions to keep your horses cool!

**WATCH FOR HEATSTROKE**
A horse’s normal body temperature is 100°F. If it rises much over that, a horse can quickly develop heatstroke. In severe cases, this can cause neurological problems or fatality. Overweight or overexerting horses are particularly prone to this. Horses suffering from severe heatstroke may need a few weeks of rest from work, as part of the recovery process.

**GUARD MARES AND FOALS CAREFULLY**
Nursing mothers must be protected from heatstroke and dehydration, as they must continue healthy lactation to feed their foals adequately. Foals are typically born in the spring and summer. Newborns are particularly at risk for overheating on hot, humid days. Simply put, their internal thermostats are not ready to deal with drastic temperatures. Foals should not be left out in a hot sunny pasture during the peak hours of the day (10 am to 3 pm).

**AVOID ANHYDROSIS**
Anhydrosis is the inability to perspire. Arabians, Quarterhorses, Standardbreds, Thoroughbreds, and other racing and endurance horses may suffer from this on hot, humid days.

Working horses typically sweat profusely on hot days. As with humans, this is a natural means of self-cooling. If a horse fails to do so, this may be a sign of anhydrosis, particularly if he also seems to pant through his mouth.

If this occurs, it's time to call the veterinarian. Bathing the horse with cold water, especially around the head and neck, can provide quick relief and help reduce his body temperature.

**DETERM DEHYDRATION**
Horses require plenty of water each day, especially in the summer months. Keeping buckets and water troughs filled with fresh water will prevent dehydration.

Test for dehydration by pinching a flap of skin on a horse’s neck. If it immediately pops back into place, the horse is OK. If the flap holds for a few moments, that horse is in danger of dehydration.

**LIGHTEN THE WORKLOAD**
On truly oppressive hot days, a caring rider will not expect a full workout from his horse. Long warm up walks and even...
longer cool outs will bracket an abbreviated work session. Following up with a cool hose-down and hand-walk are extra important!

**PROVIDE SALT AND MINERALS**

Sodium, electrolytes, and key minerals are essential to the health of active horses. Install a salt or mineral lick in each horse's stall. Offer mineral tubs in the pastures. These will provide important nutrients and also encourages horses to drink greater quantities of water.

**PROTECT AGAINST FLIES AND PESTS**

Lightweight, breathable flysheets may deter insects from biting your horse. At the same time, these may cool the horse from the sun. Select open-weave mesh fabrics, rather than tightly woven textiles, which can become dangerously hot.

Flysprays can help to keep flies off your horse, so he does not have to overexert on a hot day, just to keep the bugs away!

**PROVIDE SHADE IN PASTURES**

If pastures do not include shady areas, consider adding an open lean-to or run-in shelter. Horses may not use it often, but there may be occasions when they need to get out of the sunlight or elements.

**KEEP STALLS CLEAN AND VENTILATED**

If your horse is stabled, be sure to provide adequate air circulation. Open windows and barn doors. Remove soiled bedding, as this creates pungent fumes in the heat.

Adding a box fan to the stall bars can greatly improve ventilation and cool down the stall. Be sure to unplug all fans before leaving the barn for the night, to avoid potential fire hazards.

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**Feed Your Horse by Weight Rather Than Volume**

If you hold a coffee can filled with corn in one hand and another can containing oats in the other hand, you will notice a significant difference in weight - corn is heavier, and it's also higher in calories than other feeds. Of course, we're all used to scooping out a uniform portion of feed at mealtime, but when it comes to calculating nutrition, it is the weight that matters, not the volume - something to keep in mind whenever you change feeds.

Even pelleted and sweet feeds can vary in density and volume. Two different manufacturers can make feeds seem similar on the tag in fat, fiber and protein but the density could be very different. You can weigh a number of different feeds in a large coffee can and find that some of them weigh close to one pound difference in weight but can still be equal in volume.

When you’re planning to change or adjust the feed for your horse, be sure to read the bag for the nutritional content per pound, and then use a kitchen scale to determine how much a pound really is.

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**HORSE SAVVY ANSWERS**

The oldest horse on record (According to Guinness Book of Records) is Old Billy. He was foaled in 1760 in Woolston, Great Britain. He died at the age of 62 in 1822. He was a draft horse cross-bred.
Even in rural areas there is no question that traffic levels are increasing. Worse yet, people are driving faster and often distracted by cell phones and a hectic lifestyle. Most motorists are not educated about horses. I have experienced driver's that blow their horn, release their air brakes with a loud “psssttt” or even throw something at a horse and rider as they drove past. Clearly, these drivers had no idea how dangerous this was for the horse and rider. How can you increase your safety while road riding? These three safety concepts, “be seen”, "be safe" and "be aware" can help you prevent an accident.

Be Seen - Bright, reflective clothing for the rider is a must when road riding. Reflective leg wraps, brow bands, breast collars and stirrup bars make your horse visible from all four sides. I highly recommend attaching a LED safety light to your saddle or person. These inexpensive blinking red lights were designed for bicyclists and work well for the rider, too. The intermittent flash of the light attracts a driver’s attention. These items make you more visible to drivers.

Be Safe - Before venturing out onto a roadway, ask yourself, "Am I ready?" Are you a competent rider, capable of handling a problem on the road? Evaluate your horse. "Is he reliable and road ready?" Has he been desensitized to the noise and movement of traffic? If not, invest in his education. Find the time, a trainer or a clinic to help prepare you both for road readiness. When crossing a roadway, select a safe spot to cross. View every bend in the road, intersection, crest of hill or construction zone as a hazard. Choose an area to cross where approaching cars are easily seen and heard. Stop before crossing the road. Get your horse's focus and full attention before asking him to cross. Use all your senses. Be aware of everything going on around you. If you are riding in a group, wait until everyone is ready. Then cross as a unit, walking single file. Keep the "herd" intact for safety. Never try to stop traffic to cross.

Look - all ways. Check both directions for oncoming traffic. Check in front to see what's ahead and behind for any potential hazards. Look at the road surface to access it's footing. Mailboxes, flags or garbage tossed in ditches could startle your horse. Evaluate what you see to determine whether this is a good location for you to cross.

Listen - for approaching cars. Engine sounds give you clues on what type of vehicles are approaching and the speeds they are traveling. Pay attention to where your horse is listening. They use their ears to focus on sounds and may hear something before you do.

Be Aware - Rider tension and nervousness is transmitted to your horse. If you anticipate a problem and tense up every time a vehicle approaches, your horse will too. Relax and stay cool, calm and centered for your horse’s benefit. He looks to you for confidence and leadership.

Be aware of road surface dangers
Asphalt roads can be very slippery especially when wet. Gravel roads with large stones can cause "stone bruises", tender footedness or cause your horse to stumble. Riding on these road surfaces requires special shoeing considerations.

When you choose to ride on a roadway, select one with minimum traffic levels, lower speed limits, good solid footing and a wide shoulder. This gives you maximum response time and room to maneuver when you need to. To make your ride as safe as possible, remember to "be seen", "be safe" and "be aware". The life of your horse, yourself, and the lives of others could depend on it.
GOOD BUILD AND GOOD PERFORMANCE MEAN GOOD STYLE

Major contributions to a good-bodied horse include long, sloping shoulders, a short, strong back, long underline and a long, rather level croup.

If shoulders are long and sloping, they extend the stride in running, absorb shock, reduce stumbling, move the elbows away from the girth, and raise the head slightly. They should be surmounted by clean, high withers that extend well backward to afford maximum security of the saddle.

Short backs and long underlines move raise the croup and head, contribute length of stride. Also, short backs are bone to last rib), and are usually more that blend into hips and shoulders short backs.

Long, rather level croups accommo- date more muscling, increase style and balance and are less often associated

Since all of the power used in motion opment should be extensive, com- ing, thighs and gaskins should be espe- ferred to short/bunchy muscles.

Leverage is gained with maximum length from hip to hock and minimum length of cannon. These dimensions are de- veloped to a high degree in breeds that race.

Smoothness, balance and symmetry are a result of all parts blending together, being of proportionate size, and each contributing equally to the whole of a symmetrical individual. These combined with refinement, alertness and a proud carriage contribute to style.

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FUNDAMENTALS OF CONFORMATION

Horses must be "athletes" to be useful. Certain qualities of conformation are necessary for good performance. Fundamentals in this article can be applied to any breed or weight of horse.

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