Think Prevention: Resources for Horse Owners

Education: Equine Training

The Ohio Equine Environmental and Liability Assurance Program is a voluntary program designed to assist horse farm owners, operators and managers in economically addressing the environmental challenges on their horse farm. The program helps to create awareness among Ohio's equine industry that priority should be given to protecting the environment and natural resources through the adoption, development and implementation of various management practices and technologies. Periodically, SWCDs partner with other agencies and groups to host equine training workshops at the local level. Topics covered at the workshop include keeping horses and protecting water quality, manure management, pasture management, facility management, conservation measures to improve water quality, neighbor relations, key regulations, line fence law, equine liability law, and cost share opportunities for structures. The workshops are a great opportunity to ask questions and take advantage of the speakers' expertise.

Technical Assistance & Cost Share

Representatives from the local SWCD are available to visit your operation, upon request, to provide technical advice and assistance on topics such as proper manure storage and utilization, paddock management, and available cost share opportunities. Cost share, or financial assistance, may be available for manure storage structures and other conservation practices. Technical assistance provided by the SWCDs during these site visits is free. Implementation of needed conservation practices will help ensure that the operation is conservation-friendly.

This brochure was created by the staff of the Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District under the authority of the Board of Supervisors and with assistance from the USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Ohio Department of Natural Resources—Division of Soil and Water Conservation.

Funding for this brochure was made possible by continued financial support from the Geauga County Commissioners and Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Some of the information for this brochure came from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, State of Ohio Conservation Practice Standard on Livestock Use Area Protection, Section IV.

To contact your local soil and water conservation district please refer to the following sources:

- **The county government section of your local phone book**
- **Online at www.dnr.state.oh.us/soilandwater/swcds.htm**
- **ODNR-Division of Soil and Water Conservation (614) 265-6610**

Last Revision: 08/09/05

All services are provided without regard to race, religion, gender, age, physical or mental handicap, national origin or politics.

Pollution Prevention:

Managing Horses and Protecting Water Quality

Conservation Awareness for Ohio Horse and Stable Owners

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Soil and Water Conservation

-in collaboration with-

Soil & Water Conservation Districts,
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service,
Ohio Livestock Coalition, and
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation

Horses and Agriculture: Closely Connected

The horse industry in Ohio is the fastest growing agriculture-related industry in the state and is a growing source of pollution complaints. As a result, equine operations need to address many of the same issues as livestock operations. Whether an owner or operator has one horse or many, whether for pleasure or profit, all horse owners and boarders are faced with the issue of proper manure management.

It is important for horse owners to have a management plan that addresses the proper storage and utilization of manure. An average 1,000-pound horse produces approximately 10 cubic yards (8 tons) of manure per year. This, combined with 23 cubic yards (3 tons) of bedding material, produces a total of 33 cubic yards (11 tons) of waste per horse, per year. This material requires proper storage and disposal so that negative impacts to streams, rivers, and other water bodies are avoided.

Your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can assist with the task of proper manure management through technical assistance, educational services, and possible cost-share opportunities. They can also provide residents with the tools they need to be proactive in preventing pollution and the ability to own or run a conservation-friendly horse operation.

Horses Can Cause Water Pollution

The proper storage and handling of manure is essential for good water quality. Runoff from horse manure, like runoff from other livestock manure, can be a form of nonpoint source pollution (NPS). NPS pollution comes from many places throughout a watershed. It occurs when rainwater and snowmelt pick up contaminants along their way to a stream or river. NPS pollution can originate from both urban and agricultural sources, **including horse farms**.

Excess Nutrients

The primary nutrients in manure are nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. When manure is improperly managed, runoff carries these nutrients into streams and lakes. Excess amounts of these nutrients may lead to eutrophication, which is the over-enrichment of lakes and streams by nutrients. Problems resulting from eutrophication may include:

- *Increased plant and algae growth*
- *Decreased levels of oxygen*
- *Increased chance of fish kills*
- *Reduction of recreational activities*
- *Foul taste and odor in drinking water*
- *Potential human health risks*

Sediment Runoff

Sediment runoff from paddock areas can also contribute to nonpoint source pollution. Some sediment runoff is natural, but excess sediment runoff from poorly managed paddocks can cause many problems in streams and lakes including:

- *Cloudy water*
- *Reduction in the amount of sunlight that reaches aquatic plants*
- *Covering of fish spawning areas and food supplies*
- *Clogging of fish gills*

Local Laws Affecting Horse Owners

Horse owners are subject to many of the same state and local regulations that govern other agricultural producers. Some of the laws that affect horse owners include:

- ***Agricultural Pollution Abatement Rules and Standards:*** Administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC) and implemented locally by Ohio's SWCDs. The law addresses pollution of Waters of the State from sediment and/or manure resulting from agricultural production, including land used for the keeping of animals (including horses). Complaint situations are investigated by SWCDs. Waters of the State are defined as all streams, lakes, ponds, drainage ditches, wetlands, watercourses, waterways, wells, springs, irrigation systems, drainage systems, and all other accumulations of surface or ground water.

  Improperly stored manure or mismanaged paddocks resulting in sediment and/or manure runoff to Waters of the State may be a violation of state law.

- ***Stream Litter Law:*** The ODNR-Division of Wildlife (DOW) implements Ohio's Stream Litter Law. Anyone found discharging pollutants into Ohio's waters can be found in violation of the law which carries penalties of a third degree misdemeanor for a first offense. Violators can be fined $500 or sentenced to 60 days in jail, or both, for a first offense.

  If wildlife (fish) are killed, the responsible party can be charged with all environmental damages, including the value of the wildlife killed and all costs associated with investigation.

- ***Nuisance Law:*** This law is based on the right of landowners to be free from unreasonable interference with enjoyment of their property and is sometimes filed against livestock producers due to odor, flies, dust, noise, or rodents.

The ***Ohio Department of Agriculture*** and the ***Ohio Environmental Protection Agency*** also have the authority to enforce state and federal laws pertaining to agricultural pollution.