



FACT SHEET

Department of Animal Science, University of
Connecticut

Effective Horse Management - Horse Management Series

SPRING is in the Air: Ideas of How to Prepare

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Everyone gets excited for spring! After a long season with little color, it's great to see the greening of the grass and the blooming of the flowers. Our horses shedding definitely reminds us that spring is here!

As a horse owner, when you think of the word **SPRING**, it can help bring to mind some tasks that you may want to focus on.

S is for **STORAGE**. Take the time now to put away any winter tools and equipment that you won't need during the warm months. Remember to inspect items for wear or damage first. Snowblowers may need a tune up (that may have to wait now, most places will not tune those up after late March. Mark your calendar to call in September for a tune up!). Put away your winter boots, traction devices, sanding/plowing equipment, snow shovels, ice scrapers, etc. Note any replacements that may be needed or if you will need additional sand or pet-friendly salt for traction. Check your horse's winter blanket(s) for any wear and tear. Send it off for cleaning or clean it yourself. Have any mending done and make a list of what needs replacing.

P is for **PASTURE MANAGEMENT**. Spring is a great time to take a soil sample and see if conditions are right for healthy grass. You can check to see what weeds are present as well. A helpful link can be found in the Sources and Resources section below.

R is for **REDUCE**. This may be a good time to look through your barn and see what items you need, and what ones you don't. You can have a tag sale or donate items to friends, your town if it is having a tag sale, therapeutic riding programs or other riding programs. Look through your horse books and magazines and weed out what you don't plan to read or have read and have no desire to keep. Try to reduce clutter around your barn to help keep things neat and tidy. Also, remove any cobwebs while you're at it, because they can spread fire.

I is for INVEST. Now is the time to invest in that clinic you wanted to attend, those new books you want to read, or that online course you want to take. Check out UConn's Canter Curriculum!

N is for NOTE. Note any projects you would like to tackle in the future. You can spend next winter researching how to best go about these and then plan to implement them in the following spring. Also note any areas where water is collecting and try to deal with that right away to prevent fly breeding and flooding issues. Similarly, note any fencing damage and take care of it immediately to avoid injury to your horse or others. Repair any gaps in gates or doors before it becomes an issue.

G is for GROUND MANNERS. It's never too late to make sure your horse has them! If your horse is getting a little rusty, try to work on getting your horse to remember its manners. If your horse is young and you are not prepared to teach it or older and doesn't seem to be responding, enlist the aid of a trainer before you get injured. Safety first!

By working on these items, you will keep your horse and yourself safe and hopefully save money as well on any bills that may arise from serious issues. Stay safe! Thanks, and have fun with your horses!

Sources and Resources

1. UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory. Department of Plant Science, UConn. Soil Sampling Questionnaires and Instructions. <https://soiltest.uconn.edu/sampling.php> Accessed 6/13/2024.
2. William. J. Bamka and Bruce M. Barbour. Rutgers University. New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. https://esc.rutgers.edu/fact_sheet/poisonous-weeds-in-horse-pastures/ Accessed 6/13/24.
3. Dr. Jenifer Nadeau, Dept of Animal Science. Canter Curriculum Modules. [UConn Extension - Department of Extension \(touchnet.com\)](http://UConnExtension-DepartmentofExtension.touchnet.com) Accessed 6/13/2024.

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