

Marion County Extension Service  
2232 NE Jacksonville Road  
Ocala, Florida, 34470  
(352) 671-8400



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## MARION COUNTY LIVESTOCK NEWS

JULY 2006

### 2006 Florida Equine Institute & Allied Trade Show

Thursday, September 21  
8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Southeastern Livestock Pavilion  
2232 NE Jacksonville Road  
Ocala, Florida 34470

UF Professors ~ Equine Industry Professionals  
Allied Trade Show ~ Live Animal Demos

#### Discussion Topics:

- “Saving your Grass – Pasture Mgt Strategies”
  - “Hay Selection – Evaluation of Quality & Value”
  - “Equine parasites – Resistance & Control”
  - “Equine Supplements – Fact or Fiction”
  - “Bits & Biting – Selection, Use & Fitting”
- Registration is required –  
\$25.00 (before September 11)  
\$50.00 (on-site or after September 11)

Call Marion County Extension  
352-671-8400

# E q u i n e F o r u m

## Emergency Management For Horse Farms

July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
8:30 am - Noon

#### Location

Marion County Agriculture Center  
2232 NE Jacksonville Rd., Ocala 34470

From 301-US 441, Exit onto 200A (alt 301) heading East. Pass Magnolia Avenue on your right and pass the Livestock Pavilion on your left. The next building to the left is the Extension Office. It is a beige, one-story, brick building.

#### Topic Outline

- Emergency Management Planning – Overview
- Hurricane Planning for Horse Farms
- Learn How Vets & SART work together during an Emergency
- Basic Medical Needs for Injured/Stressed Horses
- Incident Command System
- Basics of Large Animal Emergency Rescue

#### Speakers

Dana Zimmer (DVM), UF/IFAS Equine Veterinarian  
Mark Shuffitt, Marion County Extension

# What Makes For Good Horse Hay

Horse owners and hay producers don't always agree on how to identify safe, good quality horse hay. Here is a list of seven key characteristics buyers should consider when evaluating horse hay. Krishona Martinson and Paul Peterson, University of Minnesota extension agronomists, spoke about these characteristics at recent Minnesota Horse Expo seminars.

**1) Mold/Moisture** — Buy hay baled between 15-17% moisture and it should be free of mold. "With small square bales, you can sometimes get away with baling at 18-20% moisture without spoilage," notes Peterson. More-dense big square bales should be put up below 16% moisture for safe storage. Hay baled above 25% moisture poses the threat of severe heat damage or spoilage, mold growth, and/or hay fires. Hay put up at 20-25% moisture and properly treated with organic acid preservatives can be fed safely to horses. Horses, however, may require a short adaptation period to readily consume this hay.

**2) Maturity** — Don't equate seed heads with "good" hay. Seed heads just indicate that the plants are mature, with thick stems, more fiber, less protein and decreasing levels of digestible energy. Horses that aren't working hard or lactating may be able to get by with "stemmier" hay containing more seed heads, Martinson and Peterson say. But hay with more leaves and softer, smaller stems is better quality.

Consider grass hays that have been harvested when seed heads have just begun to form. They have good fiber digestibility and more available energy than more mature hay. Legume hay harvested at about the 10% flower stage is usually a leafy hay with extra protein that horses will convert into ammonia. Mature legumes make hay that does not exceed a horse's protein level in most cases, but also tends to be very coarse, according to Martinson and Peterson. Softer hay will be consumed more readily, they explain. "If it feels rough to you, it will feel rough to the horse," Peterson says.

**3) Cut or Crop** — Don't base nutritional value on when hay is cut, the agronomists say. Maturity, followed by hay curing and storage, determine what nutrients a hay holds. Because plants that grow under cooler temperatures build more digestible fiber, firstcrop hay may have more digestible fiber than later cuttings — but it is not a guarantee. First cutting can

often produce more coarse hay than later cuttings. But good and bad horse hay can be produced in any cutting.

**4) Grass Hay Vs Alfalfa** — Know how much digestible fiber and energy your horses will need — then find hay that will provide it. Alfalfa and clover generally have higher protein content than grasses. So alfalfa hay is a good protein source for young developing horses. But it may have more protein than what other horses need. Fiber from grasses is more digestible than from alfalfa and other legumes at the same maturity stage, say Martinson and Peterson.

**5) Smell** — Not all sweet-smelling hay is good, caution the experts. Sometimes hay smells sweet because sugars within it caramelize, which indicates mold presence. Horse owners should look closely at the hay to make sure they aren't dealing with mold issues.

**6) Color** — A green color is only a fair indicator of hay quality, Peterson says. "Bleached color indicates exposure to sunlight or rain, and can mean vitamin A has oxidized. But other essential nutrients are usually present in bleached hay." When only bleached hay is available, horse owners should have it tested.

**7) Storage Considerations/Spoilage** — Once you've bought it, keep stored hay away from water and wild animals, which can contaminate it. Studies have shown that up to 50% of a hay bale can be ruined when stored where moisture can be wicked up into it from the round. Round bales should be dense and well-formed with twine or net wrap, and less than 18% moisture to minimize storage loss potential.

Martinson and Peterson recommend that horse owners take representative samples of every hay lot to a forage testing lab for an equine nutritional analysis. Information about sampling and forage testing can be found at <http://www.foragetesting.org>.

Contact:

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Paul Peterson at [peter072@umn.edu](mailto:peter072@umn.edu).

**SOURCE:** eHay Weekly  
Hay & Forage Grower  
<http://hayandforage.com/>  
Release - May 9, 2006

# Pasture Weed Management

## Mechanical Control

Mowing is one of the most often used methods of weed control in pastures. Mowing improves the appearance of a pasture and if properly timed will prevent weeds from producing seed; however, its effectiveness in controlling weeds depends on several factors. The major consideration is the type of weed present. Mowing is generally more effective on broadleaf weeds than grasses and more effective on annual than perennial weeds. Knowledge of the weed and its life cycle will generally indicate how effective mowing will be. Carefully consider the amount of energy required and anticipated effectiveness before mowing, because other methods may be more energy efficient. Another factor to consider prior to mowing is whether the plant can regenerate vegetatively. Often when an area is mowed, it will spread weeds because they can form new plants from the cut vegetative plant parts. An example of this is prickly pear.

## Sanitation

In addition to controlling weeds in a pasture, efforts should be taken to prevent weeds from reinfesting the pasture. Knowledge of how weeds are dispersed is important.

Weeds may be dispersed by wind, carried by water, distributed in planting seed, in feed or hay, carried by animals including man, or moved by machinery. Animals grazing in a weed infested pasture and then allowed to move directly to a clean pasture may move weed seed both internally and externally.

One of the most common problems is failure to control weeds in ditch banks, fence rows, and farm roads. See EDIS factsheets [SS-AGR-110 Weed Management for Grazed Fence Rows and Non-Cropped Areas](#) and [SS-AGR-111 Weed Management for Fence Rows and Non-Cropped Areas](#). These weeds produce seed and/or vegetative growth which re-infests the pastures. Fence rows are also a common area where poisonous plants are left uncontrolled. Plants such as crotalaria, black nightshade, and lantana are commonly found poisonous plants in Florida. Animals won't usually choose to graze most poisonous plants, however, if grass is limited in pastures due to poor growing conditions or overstocking a pasture, they may try them. It should also be remembered that some poisonous plants may become more palatable following herbicide application and then be more readily grazed. Therefore, if poisonous plants are present in fence rows and pastures are in short supply, care should be taken and cattle watched closely. When treating fence rows it is often advisable to apply a foliar applied herbicide to kill the existing vegetation along with a soil applied residual herbicide to prevent weeds from regrowing in the fence row. **(Cont. on pg. 4)**

# “Beef Cattle Management Tips”

## JULY

- Control weeds in summer pasture.
- Apply nitrogen to warm season pastures, if needed
- Check and fill mineral feeder.
- Inspect pastures for armyworms and mole crickets, and treat if necessary.
- Wean calves and cull cow herd.
- Observe cows for evidence of foot rot and treat.
- Consider preconditioning calves before sale including vaccination for shipping fever and IBR at least 3 weeks before sale.
- Check dust bags.
- Update market information and plans.
- Revaccinate calves at weaning for blackleg.

## August

- Treat for liver flukes as close to August 15th as possible, if they are in your area.
- Cut hay.
- Apply lime for fall and winter crops.
- Harvest Bahiagrass seed.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Update market information and marketing plans.
- Check for army worms, spittlebugs, and mole crickets, and treat if necessary.
- Check dust bags.
- Wean calves and cull cow herd.
- Watch for evidence of abortions.
- Observe animals regularly for signs of disease.
- If cattle grubs were found on cattle last winter or heel flies were observed in the pasture, treat for cattle grubs this month.
- Pregnancy test and cull open heifers from replacement herd.

John Mark Shuffitt  
Livestock Agent III  
Marion County Extension

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# **Pasture Weed Management**

## **Chemical Control**

The herbicide and application rates are extremely important in chemical weed control. Rates too low will not give adequate weed control and rates too high may injure the forage and result in only partial control of perennial weeds. In addition, time of application is important with herbicides. Preemergence applications are made before the weeds germinate and emerge; therefore, it is obvious that knowledge of the life cycle of the weed becomes important. For example, a herbicide applied in October for crabgrass (a summer annual which germinates in early spring) would be wasted. One of the most important factors in choosing a herbicide is proper weed identification. For help identifying weeds, see UF/IFAS Series SP-37 Weeds in Florida [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC\\_BOOK\\_Florida\\_Weeds](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_BOOK_Florida_Weeds)

## **Postemergence Applications**

Postemergence applications are made after the weeds have emerged. Most effective applications are made when the weeds have recently

germinated and are small. For perennial weeds (regrowing from storage organs) it is often advisable to allow them to grow for a short period of time before spraying. This allows a sufficient leaf surface for coverage and insures that the perennial is manufacturing food (through photosynthesis) and translocating it along with the herbicide back to the roots (which is the part of the plant you must kill).

Herbicides may be applied broadcast over the entire pasture or may be applied as spot treatments to localized infestations of weeds. The lower cost and energy saved by spot treatment makes this a desirable method in many situations.

In all cases it is extremely important to carefully read the label of the herbicide before purchase to determine whether that herbicide will be effective in your situation. Herbicides registered for use in pastures and rangelands are generally safe to use and offer minimal hazard to animals when used according to label directions. Follow label directions for grazing and haying restrictions.