

this prevents them from brushing flies off their bodies. The Canadian Agri-Food Research Council and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association are opposed to tail-docking.



Horse with docked tail

What are these tips based on?

The advice in this leaflet is based on research done by graduate student Julie Christie at the Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island. During the summer of 2002, 117 PEI horse owners with 312 horses took part in a survey of horse management and health. The horses included miniatures, ponies, light horses and draft horses, but not race horses. During the survey, a veterinarian examined each horse and the owner filled out a questionnaire.

What did the survey show?

The survey showed that there are a wide variety of non-racing horses in PEI. Many of the horses in the survey were pets or were used for general riding. They were kept in a variety of ways and management was generally good. There were no major health problems, but the survey did pick up some areas for improvement. These included

removal of manure from the pasture to decrease the parasite load, and more regular dental and farrier care. The study also found that many horses were overfed.

The most common physical problems were a high fecal egg count from intestinal parasites, hoof cracks and breaks, and uneven wear of the molar teeth. The most common behaviour problems were wood chewing, weaving and behaviours related to flies landing on the horse.

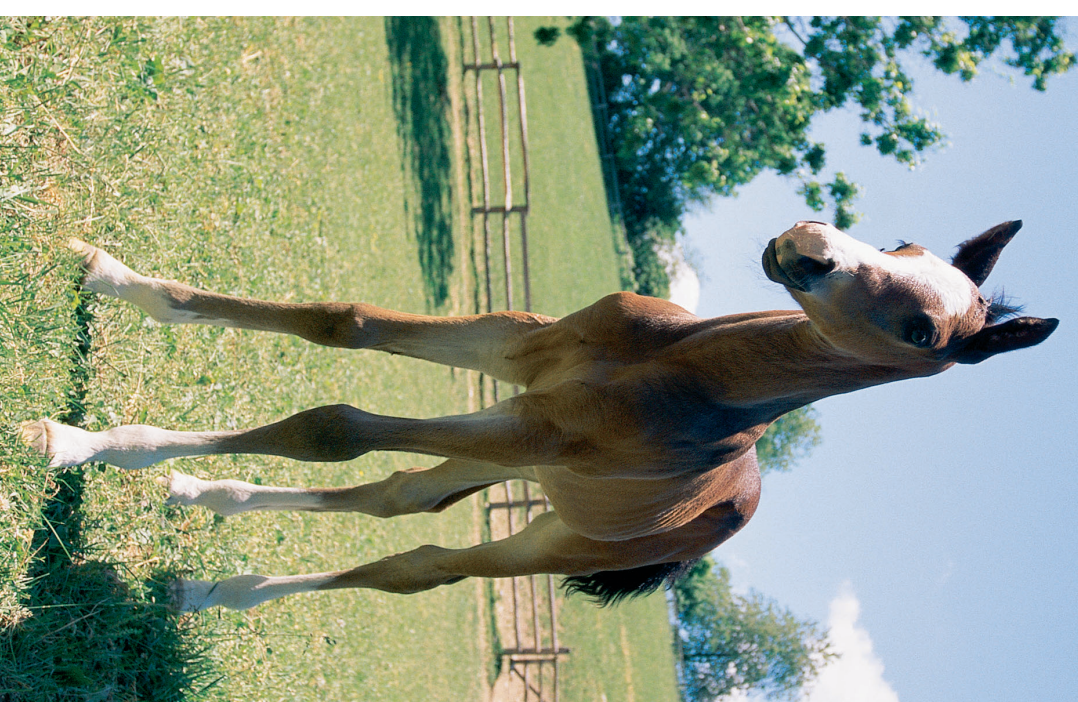
The survey was the first of its kind in Canada and used a random sample of animals. There was a high rate of participation by owners so the results were representative of PEI owners and their horses, and are relevant to horses across Canada. The survey was sponsored by the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre, Atlantic Veterinary College.



Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre
ATLANTIC VETERINARY COLLEGE • UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre exists to provide tangible benefits to animals, through research, service and education. For further information, please visit our website at:
www.upei.ca/awc

Gearing for Your Horse



General

Horses should be examined at least once per year by a veterinarian. There may be a health or a lameness problem that is not obvious to you, and the teeth may need rasping if they have sharp points. Veterinarians can answer your questions on vaccinating, de-worming and management.

Feeding

Usually, grass and good quality hay are enough for your horse. Horses do not normally need grains such as oats, corn or sweet feed. Too much grain makes horses overweight and puts them at risk of getting laminitis, a very serious disease of the foot. However, if a horse is underweight or lactating or at the end of a pregnancy, your veterinarian may recommend grains.



Overweight horse

Most horses do not need dietary supplements unless the grass or hay is deficient. For example, if the soil is very low in selenium and trace minerals, a salt lick that contains these nutrients should be available in the stall or pasture.

Deworming

Worms (parasites) in the gut are the most common cause of colic. To help prevent this:

- remove manure from the pasture twice per week from the spring to the fall;
- consult your veterinarian about how often to de-worm and what type of de-wormer to give; and
- use a girth tape to judge your horse's weight so that you give the right amount of de-wormer. This is important because inaccurate dosing can make worms become resistant to de-wormers.

Vaccination

Tetanus vaccination is essential for all horses. Consult your veterinarian about which other vaccines are necessary for your horse. The vaccination programme will depend on things like the age of your horse.

Behaviour

Horses today are not very different from horses in the wild. They have the same drive to be outside, to socialize with other horses and to spend about 60% of their time grazing. Therefore, try to reduce the time that your horse spends in the stall. When s/he is in the stall, make sure that s/he has plenty of hay.

If possible, try to keep your horse with friends. Groups of 4 to 10 horses can be ideal, but even the company of one other horse is better than keeping your horse alone. Animals such as sheep, goats and donkeys can also be suitable companions. Donkeys can give horses an infection

Horse with sheep for company



called lungworm, so talk to your veterinarian if you plan to keep a donkey with your horse.

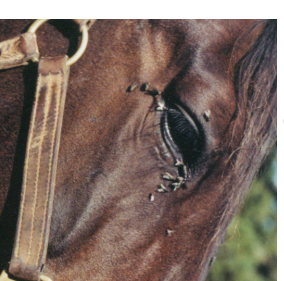
Giving your horse company can help reduce frustration and can prevent or reduce undesirable behaviours like wood-chewing, weaving and crib-biting. If your horse cribs, try to give her/him more time in a pasture or give her/him more hay. Cover the place where s/he cribs with a material like rubber so that s/he doesn't wear her/his teeth down or swallow splinters. Crib collars are not recommended.

Hooves



Hooves should be trimmed every 4 to 8 weeks to prevent problems like the ones in the picture. Many hoof-related problems can be prevented by regular hoof-trimming. We recommend that you keep records of when your horse's feet are trimmed and that you book your farrier well in advance.

Fly management



Flies spread diseases and are irritating to horses. Reduce the amount of contact that your horse has with flies by providing lots of shelter or by keeping your horse indoors. This is especially important during the hottest part of summer days when flies are at their worst. Fly masks will prevent flies from landing on your horse's face, and you can apply special fly spray to the rest of the body. Horses should not have their tails docked because