

Horse Management Tips and Advice

The whole idea behind horse management is keeping both you and your horse safe and happy. If something should happen to you, then your preparations according to HM guidelines will allow anybody to come in and take care of your horse. It also allows the stable manager to be more efficient in aiding you. The following are just observations and problems that Dana and I made at the last rally. This does not mean that you should not read a) your manual b) your HM rulebook and c) the discipline's rulebook. This is simply for reinforcing what you should have already read and have been practicing in your day to day riding and horse management. Follow the HM rules at home and the rally will be second nature! You should be taking care of your tack on at least a weekly basis as HM can spot a Thursday nite rally cleanup a mile away. Turnbacks are something that should be practiced after EVERY ride for the comfort and health of your pony.

I'm sure we will add to these in the future.

Feed Stall

1. Muck bucket should be in the corner with your pitchfork and broom tied together.
2. All hay must be labeled with your name, competitor number, and horse's name. This can be on the wall above your hay bale or on the hay string itself.
3. After getting hay for a feeding, RETIE your hay bale so feed room stays neat.
4. All feed must be package per feeding in a paper sack with your name, competitor number, horse's name, what the feed is, the amount in weight or quantity in the bag, and which feeding it is for...i.e. Fri PM or Sat AM. Use duct tape to tape it shut. Bring a couple of extra feed sacks labeled extra.
5. All feed should be in the feed bin unless it is taken out for a feeding. Stack your feed so that the first feeding is on top (Fri PM) and the last at the bottom (Sun PM) . The feed bin, usually a garbage can, MUST be secured at all times by a chain or twine. DO NOT leave the bin open.
6. Feed chart needs to have your name, competitor number, horse's name, and each feeding....AM and PM listed. If you list your feed in weight, we have a scale in the rally kit. If you list in volume/quantity (i.e. quarts), you must bring the scoop that you measure out your feed with. We had ants get into feed this last rally, and they had no way of measuring the feed the kid had to go out and buy. You may NOT use a measure that is "scoops". Every scoop is different, so use cups, quarts, etc. to describe your volume. Your scoop can be marked with a permanent marker with your measurement. I know mine is 3 quarts worth, so I have a level marked on the scoop "1 quart, 2 quarts";.
7. Hay also must be WEIGHED. Flakes differ in size. If you are like us, our pony grazes all day, so we keep hay in front of her to keep her happy in the stall. (It's a grass hay, not alfalfa.) If you do the same, put "free choice" hay on the feed chart. This way, there is no weighing, but you must keep hay in your pony's stall. This also allows the night watch person to throw hay into your pony's stall at night if there isn't any and your pony is antsy.

8. Bring a salt block for the rally. Plain salt or the brown mineral one. You can bring a holder for it to be tied to the stall, or put it in the feed bucket. It needs to stay in the stall all the time.

Horse's Stall

1. You need 5 buckets.... 2 water (always full), one feed bucket, one top off bucket, and one wash bucket. Label all of them with duct tape. If they are the flat back 5 gallon ones, you can hang them with jute twine (not nylon), bucket hooks, or a chain. All clips must point inwards. If you have a round bucket, you must use 2 clips at either side to secure it. All buckets must be hung at chest height.
2. Before putting your horse in the stall, look for nails, staples, sharp places, or loose boards on the inside and around the door. (I saw a horse last year slice his eyelid off on a staple outside his stall where they put the stall assignment.) Hammer them in or use pliers to remove them. Check to make sure your door latches properly.
3. The top off bucket or "fire" bucket is for the nite watch to fill your pony's buckets at nite. Make sure that it is full at the door of your horse's stall when you leave, and that both water buckets are full before you go. In the morning, the top off bucket should be immediately emptied, and put away in your tack or feed stall.
4. If you use a ground feeder pan (labeled) for your horse, remove it after a feeding and store in the feed room. Put it on top of your hay and the HMJ will know why you only have 2 buckets in your stall instead of three.
5. Your horse's halter should be labeled with your name, comp #, and stall number. It should be a breakaway halter, leather halter, or one that has a small leather breakaway part on it, that is on your horse at all times unless he is bridled.
6. When setting up your horse stall, go ahead and tied a loop of JUTE twine to one of the stall bars...NOT the door ones. (They are not sturdy enough and your horse could pull a door off if he reared or sat down.) Use this when tying up your horse. You may NOT tie directly to the stall.
7. Lead lines must be labeled. When the lead line and halter are not in use, they must be hung on the door or through the twine loop. Do NOT leave your halter or lead line lying on the ground ever.
8. Any time you go into the stall, you must put the lead line on your horse and loop it over his neck.
9. Do NOT close the stall door when you are in the stall with your horse.
10. Do NOT ever leave your horse tied up and unattended.
11. When you take your horse out of the stall, stall doors must be closed.
12. Check the shavings level each morning and purchase more shavings if necessary.
13. If you bring a hose, make sure it is labeled and rolled neatly away after use. Be aware that another team could use your hose, leave it in the aisle way, and then you get penalized. Better yet to unhook it and put it in your feed room.

Tack Stall

1. Always arrive at the barns by 6:00 to feed your horse, muck your stall, and prepare for the day. Even if your ride isn't until 10:00, you could certainly help your teammates.
2. Check the required equipment list and bring and label everything! There is no reason to lose points because you didn't have something that was on the required equipment list.
3. Saddle racks, bridle racks, coat racks, helmets racks, etc. all must have the competitor numbers posted.
4. If your horse is the biggest OR the smallest, bring an extra halter, girth, and bridle to fit him. We have extra equipment in the kit, but if your horse isn't similar in size to your teammates, then bring your own.
5. A neat, well-organized tack room is easier on everybody's nerves...yours, your teammates, and the Horse Management Judges. Pet peeves of HMJ is food strewn all over the floor. We hate ants.
6. Keep aisle swept in front of all the stalls and if your horse poops, clean it up. It ain't the stable manager's job to clean up after you or your horse.
7. Make sure the fire extinguisher and flash lite are hung by the door.
8. Make sure if you wear tall boots, that you have toe and calf boot trees. These can be as simple as rolled newspaper for the calves, and toe shaped newspaper covered with tape for the toes.
9. You must wear your pinney from the time you get there, until you leave. Hang your pinney on the clothesline when leaving the barns for the nite.
10. All riding attire and tack must be brought in Friday nite and left there. You may not clean your tack on Fri nite...it should have been cleaned prior to the rally and ideally, every week anyway!
11. Don't forget to wear your pony club pin and name tag. Pin your pin to the name tag.
12. No running in the barn area, no sitting down while grazing your horse, and no fighting with teammates even if it is your brother or sister!
13. Tack stall doors must be closed when the team is away.
14. Notice boards must be visible and have each rider's formal and riding times listed.
15. Tack cleaning hook and sponge basket needs to be hung out of harm's way.

Formals

1. Always arrive BEFORE your scheduled time and check in with your station's scribe.
2. Have pinney, name tag, and pin on.
3. Introduce yourself and your pony. Tell the inspector what your rating is and who your club is.
"Hi, my name is Allison Johnson. I am a D2 from Cohutta Highlanders Pony Club. My pony's name is Sweetie. I am ready for my formal inspection, please." Also, warn your inspector if your horse is spooky, girthy, head shy, etc.
4. Prepare for the next rating up's formal inspection. If you are a D2, clean up to a D3's inspection level. You can look in the horse management handbook for what they are checking for.

5. If your horse has dandruff, tell the judge you are aware of it and how you are treating it....baby oil, listerine, etc.
6. Ask your stable manager to come with you to your inspection and bring a “last minute” bucket of grooming supplies. Rub the dust off your boots, brush off your boot bottoms, make sure your pony didn’t just walk through mud or manure on the way to inspection.
7. Make sure there isn’t a speck of shavings in the tail. That starts with D1s! HMJs will run their fingers through the tail to check for shavings and tangles.
8. As your inspector goes around your pony, always face her on the side she is on. Make sure as you are moving your horse into position, you move the horse away from you, not into you.
9. Some inspectors will look under the stirrup pads for arena grit. Do yourself a favor, and put your bit (after a good scrubbing), stirrups, and stirrup pads through the dishwasher before rally.
10. Your saddle pad does not have to be brand new and unstained, but it should be washed. A bleach smell (as long as it is white!) makes the judge aware that you tried to get the stains out.
11. All stitching must be intact. Check your stirrup leathers and billets...they are the first to go.
12. The safety bars where the stirrups attach must be in the down position.
13. They thoroughly checked udders and sheathes at this last rally. All udders, even if you are a D1, should be clean. Check your rating level requirements for sheath inspections.
14. Don’t let your pony graze while waiting for inspection. Use your face sponge to get the orange clay dust out of his nostrils.
15. Know whether your attire is correctly formal or informal and WHY.
16. Make sure your helmet wiggles your eyebrows when wiggling the brim. Have your mom or one of us check to make sure your helmet passes inspection. Have someone try to lift it off your head. Tighten the harness if it doesn’t meet those tests. It should have SEI/ASTM approved on the label. Your name should be in it.

Turn Back

1. The Horse Management judge is going to check your horse, your boots and show attire, and your tack one hour after your ride.
2. **For the horse:** Make sure that they are cool and dry to the touch, their body temp is back to normal, the respiration rate is back to normal. Offer them small sips of water while cooling out, and then as much as they want after completely cooled out. The HMJ will look for dried sweat anywhere on your horse, most particularly around the ears, between the front and back legs, between the buttocks, and on the belly. Either sponge your horse off, or if allowed, rinse and scrape him thoroughly. Hooves should be picked out. Horse should be brushed (wait till they are dry). Go ahead and pick out their stall and make sure their water buckets are full.
3. **For the rider:** Make sure your show attire is hanging back up and your boots are brushed off. If wearing tall boots, make sure they are cleaned with trees back in them.

4. **For your tack:** Saddle pads must have as much hair brushed off of them as possible and then hung inside out to dry. Girths must have hair off and no sweat on them. Bits must have no grass or saliva gunk. Bridles and martingales must be cleaned and hung on bridle rack. Saddle needs to be cleaned off and stirrups, pads and underneath, must be brushed off. If your horse wore splint boots and bell boots, these need to be rinsed and hung to dry.