

Horse Winterization Checklist

Horse, like all livestock, need to be prepared to withstand the environment extremes of Oklahoma's winter weather. Below is a short list of considerations you should review in preparation of your horse for winter.

1. Analysis of your horses body condition in early fall. If your horse's body condition is rated moderate to fleshy, he is in good condition going into winter. If ribs are showing, he will benefit from extra energy in his nutrition regime to help him put on flesh and fat to ward off the cold of winter.
2. Check your horse's teeth. Many horses suffer from sharp teeth edges or uneven teeth that cause them difficulty in chewing feed effectively. Dental work when needed will improve horse body condition and save on wasted feed.
3. Provide internal parasite control to your horse in winter. Generally, it is recommended to do this after the first hard freeze. Be sure your deworming agent contains a boticide to control bots.
4. Provide fresh water at all times. In ice forming conditions, chop ice on water tanks at least twice a day.
5. A mature horse in a strong physical condition and in his winter coat can easily withstand cold temperature. Dangerous conditions from cold evolve when cold is combined with strong wind or cold with wet conditions. Ideally, provide your horse a wind break or a two sided roofed shelter on days where wind chill or wet conditions exist.
6. Winter is a good time, if riding time is restricted to pull shoes off your horse to allow hooves to recover from the traumas of shoeing. Continue, however, to have feet trimmed on a regular basis.