

SHORT TRIPS – CARE OF HORSES AND FEED REQUIREMENTS

Sores

Horses are sent out with NO saddle sores and you will be asked to sign an acceptance form indicating you have inspected each horse. Anyone returning a horse with a saddle sore will be charged \$300.

To avoid *soring*:

Saddle Animals:

One man per horse, no more. If more than one man is using the same horse, then chances are the horse is being over-used. This can result in the horse becoming sore, tired, and lame.

Use two thick pads per horse and watch that they do not slip back throughout the day. We have extras at no charge. Most importantly, make sure your saddle does not rub on top of the horse's withers. Place the front of your saddle above the highest point of the withers, no further back. Do not tighten your cinch too tightly, this will cause cinch *soring*. Allow at least two fingers to slip in between horse and cinch. Tighten your horse a little, then always walk them around a bit and re-check your cinch before you get on. This is especially important on cold mornings – always walk them out before you mount.

Most cinch sores are caused by over-tightening. Most people overtighten because they are not able to properly get on a horse and it causes the saddle to roll. Keep your weight close to your horse, and do not use a tight cinch to keep the saddle from sliding. The further you are away from your horse, the more leverage you exert – causing the saddle to roll (like a long pipe on a pipe-wrench).

Balance your load evenly on each side of the saddle and saddlebags. Offset a rifle scabbard with weight on the other side. Make sure your stirrups are the same length. An unbalanced load will cause wither sores.

Use your leg muscles. Do not just sit back on your rear. Do not lean back or put weight on the cantle while sticking your feet out in front – especially rocking back and forth going downhill. This will cause kidney sores. The heavier you are, the more likely you will sore a horse. Never ride with a backpack.

Pack Animals:

NO MORE THAN 150 POUNDS PER PACK HORSE – 75 each side. Use two pads and keep the heavy items as low in the panniers as possible. Never put heavy items on top or in top packs. Run your hand under the panniers next to the horse to be sure nothing is jabbing him. Sheath sharp objects (knives, axes, etc.) so that if a horse falls on his pack it does not stab him. Remove stirrups when using saddle panniers.

EACH NIGHT – check for hot spots or sores. Run your hands over the horse's skin and watch for flinching, heat, soreness, swelling, or rubbed hair. If a sore begins to develop – STOP USING THE HORSE IMMEDIATELY. These take weeks to heal and will worsen with use.

Areas of concern are withers, kidneys, and cinch area.

Trailer

We do not guarantee our horses to load in a two-horse trailer.

When unloading horses – always untie the horses in the back prior to opening the trailer door so that they do not back out of the trailer while still tied.

When loading, do not use constant pressure when leading, just turn and face the same direction as the horse and ask him to follow you onto the trailer. Use tug and release pressure, not constant pressure. You will lose a tug-of-war with the horse.

Never leave your horses on the trailer overnight. Never travel for than 8 hours without feed and rest.

Bridling

If you are not experienced with horses, you may have trouble bridling. Use gentle movements around horses' heads. Never stand face to face while bridling. On the horse's left side, stand shoulder to shoulder with the horse, facing the same directions as the horse. Place your right hand over his ears holding the top of the bridle, horse's nose in the center of the bridle with the bit dangling below the chin. With right hand, gently pull the bit upward into the horse's mouth while cupping the horse's chin (between curb strap and bit) with your left hand. Gently use your left-hand fingers from underneath to guide the bit between his teeth while gently pulling the bridle upward and into his mouth with your right hand.

People who are unfamiliar with horses or horse handling will quickly cause horses to refuse a bridle. If you have trouble with bridling, do not fight with your horse – simply use the halter and halter rope. Most horses will do just fine without the bit. ASK US – we will gladly show you *at the ranch* how to properly bridle the horse.

Brand Inspection

Horses traveling out of Gallatin County, Montana will be accompanied by the original lifetime brand inspection – these must be with the horses while traveling and returned with the horse. A health certificate will also accompany horses traveling out of Montana.

Grazing/Picketing/Hobbling/Tying

If *picketing*, use a soft picket line, at least 35 feet, tied into the halter rope. Do not use leg pickets. Picket circles must remain clear of all obstacles, including other picket lines and must be moved every day or so to ensure ample forage. Picket lines should be at ground level or use picket pins. Check horses regularly. All horses will tangle occasionally in their lines. Monitor picketed horses and use enough rope to avoid rope burns.

If *hobbling*, remember horses can still travel well enough to leave camp.

When *tying* your horses, use a quick release/slip knot and tie him short enough that he is not able to step over his halter rope, but long enough to be comfortable with some range of movement.

Always keep a pocketknife handy in case your horse gets into a bind and needs to be quickly cut loose.

The most worry-free method of feeding a horse is in a *fence*. A solar box and electric wire can easily be packed in and set up. Be sure to move the corral as feed becomes short. Let the horse first see the wire and the boundaries in the daylight.

FEED: EACH HORSE REQUIRES DAILY:

30-35 Lbs. of Good Clean Hay

- a. Public lands require certified hay
- b. Larger horses require 40lbs per day
- c. Separate horses with individual piles of feed to avoid fighting

OR

8 hours of grazing on good grass (ample forage, not covered in deep snow)

- a. If picketing, allow 35 feet of rope tied into their halter rope – do not use leg hobbles with picket lines.
- b. Picketed horses require supervision to avoid the inevitable tangles. Watch for rope burns, these are crippling for some time.
- c. Solar boxes and electric wire make great portable pastures

OR

Pelletized Feed (according to manufacturer's instructions)

USE CAUTION WITH PELLETS OR COMPRESSED FEED! WE DO NOT RECOMMEND PELLETS. If using pellets,

- a. Be certain your horse is watered properly - if you are feeding pellets your horse should have free choice of water at all times. Be sure they are watered well before and after feeding. PELLETS CAN CAUSE COLIC, IMPACTION, AND DEATH. If a horse colics or dies while in your possession, you have a \$1200 liability – no exceptions.
- b. If possible, use the smaller _" pellets instead of the larger _" pellets.
- c. When gauging weight of the animal for measurement purposes, assume an average horse weighs 1000 lbs, bigger horses weigh 1200 lbs., draft horses weigh 1400 lbs.

PLUS, EACH HORSE ALSO REQUIRES DAILY:

2 gallons of grain each day – coffee can in morning and coffee can at night

- a. Use a good grain – either whole oats or corn/oats/barley mix.
- b. Feed no more than 2 gallons per day. Horses will “founder” on more grain and this will result in permanent lameness or death
- c. Keep your grain in a secure location that horses cannot access.
- d. Public lands require certified weed-free grain

PLUS

Access to water at least 3 times daily, more often if you are using them.

- a. When it becomes cold, horses will often refuse water, you will have to give them access to it more often.
- b. If feeding pellets, be sure your horse is properly hydrated at all times.
- c. COLD WEATHER + PELLETS = COLIC/DEATH

General Information:

USE COMMON SENSE. A lot of horse wrecks are caused by “experts” who aren’t.

We will gladly answer any questions you have about our horses and how they should be handled. We also offer packing, riding, and horse handling classes. Just ask!