

For further clarification on accepted animal husbandry practices for horses, please contact the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Animal Health Section at (802) 828-2421

If you suspect animal cruelty or neglect please visit:

[www.ReportAnimalCruelty.com](http://www.ReportAnimalCruelty.com)

Or call  
**(877) 9-HUMANE**



## **The Vermont Humane Federation's Animal Cruelty Response Coalition**

**A state-wide network of professionals coordinating Vermont's efforts to prevent and respond to animal cruelty through communication, education, and training.**

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- The VT Veterinary Medical Association
- The VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
- The VT League of Cities & Towns
- The VT Farm Bureau
- The Green Mountain Dairy Farmers Cooperative
- The VT Sheriffs Association
- The VT Police Chiefs Association
- The VT Constables Association
- The VT Animal Control Officers Association
- The VT Agency of Human Services

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## **Caring for Horses**



### **Vermont's Recommendations and Requirements**

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# Horses: The Basics

## Terminology

Female - Mare  
Young female - Filly  
Male - Stallion  
Young male - Colt  
Castrated male - Gelding



## Food & Water

- It's critical that fresh, clean water be available at all times. Horses are prone to serious gastrointestinal issues and other health concerns from dehydration.

- Good or high quality forage is the cornerstone of a horse's diet, and is typically sufficient for the average



- A 1000 lb horse will eat between 1/2 and 3/4 bale of hay per day; for a pony or small breed, 1/3 bale.
- There are exceptions for medical issues, older horses, or horses in work. Consult with your veterinarian for the right advice on nutrition and any special dietary needs your horse may have.
- All feed should be rotated and kept dry to avoid mold.
- Salt blocks are recommended—either white salt or preferably trace mineralized salt (red blocks).

## Worming

- A horse's worm burden is specific to each animal. They should be de-wormed based on their fecal egg counts. Consult with your veterinarian to develop a worming regimen.

## Hoof & Teeth Care

- Horses must receive proper hoof care. Hooves require trimming approximately every 6 to 12 weeks. A horse does not always require shoes. Shoeing depends on the condition of the horse's feet, the type of work the horse does, the surface it travels on, and how often it travels. As a general rule, a horse who wears his hoof wall quicker than he grows it needs shoes.
- Teeth should be checked annually and floated (filed down) as necessary.



## Shelter

- Vermont law requires that horses are provided with shelter (either natural or a 3-sided roofed building) that protects them from heavy rain, snow, and high wind. The shelter should also provide sufficient shade in the summer.
- Stalls can be box stalls (minimum 10' x 10' per horse) or straight or tie stalls (only permits the horse to stay in straight alignment, that is, it can stand and lie, but cannot turn around.) If confined to a straight stall, daily turnout should be provided.



# Common Concerns

## Appearance of Animal

Thin (ribs and vertebrae prominent); halter and other harness or saddle sores (halter should not be kept on constantly); excessive hoof length, a hoof which is spongy on the bottom and has a foul odor; bite wounds from other horses; skin problems.



## Housing Conditions

Lack of fresh water or available food; no shelter; overcrowding; no place to lie down; excessive manure build-up; standing on muddy ground with no dry areas. **Note:** *In-sufficient manger space for the number of horses can result in a competitive situation which causes the weakest animals to be excluded from the food source.*

## Behavior

Head down and unresponsive; inactive; indifferent to surroundings and visitors, excessively fearful; displays excessive aggression towards other horses; Odd standing behavior (not putting weight on one leg), lying on the ground excessively, standing with weight on hind quarters, etc. can all be signs of lameness, founder, or laminitis, and indicate a need for veterinary care.