

BENEFITS OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



With over 90,000 horses, Maryland has the most horses per square mile than any other state in the U.S. If not managed properly, this high density of horses can have a significant impact on water quality and natural resources. Eroding soil from over-grazed pastures and rainwater runoff from unmanaged manure piles

carry excess nutrients and sediment into the Bay and its tributaries. Listed below are pasture and barnyard management tips and other Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to keep nutrients and soil out of waterways.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT

Nutrient Management

- Protects water quality
- Can save money
- Enhances grass vigor

Pasture Planting

- Roots hold soil in place preventing erosion
- Provides quality nutritional source
- Reduces toxic weeds

Rotational Grazing

- Extends grazing season
- Reduces feed and supplement costs
- Helps maintain healthy, longer-lasting pasture

Horse Health Benefits

- Provides an improved, high quality, and lower cost feed source
- Reduces digestive issues like colic and gastric ulcers
- Reduces stress and behavioral issues
- Reduces dust that would cause respiratory concerns

STREAM PROTECTION

Stream Fencing

- Keeps nutrients out of waterways
- Filters runoff

Stream Crossings

- Reduce risk of injury
- Stabilize stream banks

Horse Health Benefits

- Maintains safe footing year-round
- Provides a clean, safe drinking supply year-round
- Reduces the risk of diseases like Potomac Horse Fever, West Nile Virus, and Salmonella

BARNYARD MANAGEMENT

Heavy Use Pad

- Prevent mud/ice
- Easier manure removal

Roof Runoff Control

- Reduces wet areas/soil losses
- Protects building foundations
- Promotes water collection and reuse

Horse Health Benefits

- Reduces hoof health issues
- Reduces bacterial and fungal leg infections
- Reduces fly breeding areas

For more information on horse manure management and other soil conservation and water quality practices, contact your local Soil Conservation District. Addresses and phone numbers can be found through mda.maryland.gov/HOW.

The Horse Outreach Workgroup (HOW) provides information to horse owners on pasture and manure management. HOW consists of representatives from local Soil Conservation Districts, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maryland Extension, and the Maryland Horse Industry Board.

Reviewed by: Amy Posey. September 2024.



Maryland
Department of Agriculture

Office of Resource Conservation

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

410-841-5865 | mda.maryland.gov