

NFF STABLES

Horse Owner's News

MARCH



Aren't We Lucky?

Knock on wood, but we've been pretty lucky this winter...not much snow, only a few days of bitter cold, lots of sunny days with some warm ones thrown in, and no loss of power after last Friday's wind storm! Our indoor had a small casualty - the wind blew the main sliding door off the track, so that will have to be repaired. But we didn't lose power here at the farm!

But it's not just winter that we've been lucky with - we are so lucky to have happy, healthy horses - and great horse owners! Not mention a great staff (Leo, Jen, Robert, and yeah, me and Sandy, too!).

Maybe the reason we're so lucky here at NFF is because we have so many horse shoes (and several great farriers who come as soon as they can to put shoes back on when this mud sucks them off!). Have you ever wondered why horse shoes are lucky? A Saint Patrick's Day staple, horse shoes have long been associ-

ated with good luck. To ward off goblins and evil spirits from their homes, the ancient Celtic people hung iron horseshoes over their front doors. Goblins were scared of metal, so the horseshoes kept them out of houses! Although the lucky emblem's status has survived over the centuries, there's still some debate over the proper way to position a horseshoe in order to repel bad fortune: Some believe that a horseshoe with the two ends pointing up collects good luck and keeps it from falling out, while other traditions state that the two ends should point downward so that luck pours onto those who walk through the door.

No matter which way you hang up a horse shoe, our luck is sure to hold, and with any luck Spring will be here before you know it, along with green grass - and maybe some lucky four leaf clovers! May the luck of the Irish be with you this St. Patrick's Day - and every day!

News around the Barn

Congratulations: Dollar's owner, Marilena, is expecting a baby! In the meantime, she is half-leasing Dollar, so if you see someone else riding him, make sure you say hi!

Farewell: We said good-bye to the one and only Curly Bashkir we've ever had here - Latte! Megan has donated him to a therapeutic riding facility in Hagerstown. We'll miss Latte, but hopefully we'll still get to see Megan!

Congratulations: Saturday lesson assistant Caitlyn is now leasing NFF's Duplo! She and Duplo make a good match, so you'll be seeing her here at the barn a lot more than just Saturdays and for her Wednesday evening lesson!

Welcome: You might see a horse trailer and a rider in the indoor arena a few times a week - our friend Laura Pitts is trailering her horses over to use our arena. We were also treated to her and another girl trying out sidesaddles one Saturday! Speaking of sidesaddles, you should see Anna's owner, Lisa, rider Anna sidesaddle (we just saw pictures posted of her hunting sidesaddle!)

Congratulations: Robert (Zeke's owner and Saturday barn staff) has been accepted to not one, but three colleges! Stay tuned for his decision!

'Tis The Season!

Are you asking yourself, "Did Amy make a mistake in the newsletter and left an article about Christmas in there?" I'm sure I make lots of typos (I run a quick spell-check but don't always proof-read too well!), but this headline is for real: 'Tis The Season....for MUD!

It's not just here - mud is everywhere. And aside from loosing horse shoes, mud can do a real number on our horses' feet.

One of the biggest problems with mud is as horses are standing around in it, their soles begin to soften. And that can lead to bruising (from stepping on rocks, etc.). Just like you, if your horse gets a bruise, there's not much you can do. Painting the sole of the hoof with Venice turpentine can help keep the sole from softening.

Mud also can mean lost shoes. I've always thought that the mud can suck the shoe right off the foot (I've lost many a shoe in the mud!), but I read that what the mud really does is make them slip and they catch the heel of their front shoe with their back hoof as they try to recover. Keep an eye out on your shoes when you pick your horse's feet - if the clinch is loose or any nails loose, it's time to put a call into the blacksmith.

Abscesses are probably the biggest horse hoof problem, and a lot of times they're caused from wet and muddy conditions. Bacteria thrives in mud, and can invade your horse's hoof and work its way towards the sensitive parts of the hoof. It then gets trapped inside the hoof. Some horses are drama queens about abscesses and look like they've broken their leg, but you can usually tell it's an abscess by the way they put their hoof down on the ground when they walk. Their leg can also get heat and swell up.

And last, but certainly not least, mud season = thrush season. When mud gets packed into a horse's foot, bacteria from the mud begins to establish itself there. While it eats away at the hoof's tissue, the bacteria also creates an infection with visible discharge. Thrush in horses shows itself as a dark, gooey substance with a rancid odor. It resides in the grooves within a horse's frog and in cracks of the hoof. To treat thrush in horses, apply your preferred commercial medication to the infected area. And you can also apply it to prevent thrush as well!

The muddy ground doesn't have to ruin our fun; it just means both you and your horse need to be a bit more careful! And after mud season is over, 'tis the season for hard ground, flies, stamping of the foot, more bruising from stamping, loose and lost shoes...the fun never ends!

Odds and Ends

- Javier will be here the end of March for the health program/deworming (so don't forget that charge will be on your next invoice!)
- Jen asked me to remind all of you to sweep up your hoof pickings if it is obvious that the aisle has been swept.
- Jen also wants me to remind you to pick up any manure your horse leaves behind in the indoor
- Soon we will swap out your heated buckets for regular ones. We usually just store the heated buckets so we have them ready to go next season, but if you want to take yours home, no problem!
- Spring is a good time to get your horse's teeth floated...all our NFF horses use Harmony's Equine Dentistry, but you can use whoever you'd like. Just make sure you do it at least once a year!

Calendar

No more Interschool Shows until next Fall! Thank you to everyone for your patience when we host these shows! And special thanks to the horse owners who lend us their horses to use!

April 22

Open Horse Show here at NFF! We'll have classes for all levels of riders. All of you who own horses should show in this show! Don't worry, I'll be sending out more info about this show as the date draws near!

May 20

Potomac Hunt Races
If you've never gone, you should!
It's a fun day of tail gaiting and watching the races!

June 11-16

NFF Spirit Week!
Back by popular demand, everyone - horse owners, instructors and students, have to dress accordingly each day...Matching Monday, Tie-Dye Tuesday...you get the picture! And for Team Spirit Thursday, we'll be placing an order for NFF merchandise - due by June 1. T-shirts, tank shirts - all with our NFF logo!

Camps

July 16-20 5-Day Camp
July 30-August 4 6-Day Camp

and...

Adult Camp!

July 11-13, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
All you adult horse owners, mark your calendar NOW! Routines to music, Wine Wednesday, Rodeo Thursday, and "parents" show Friday night!!!