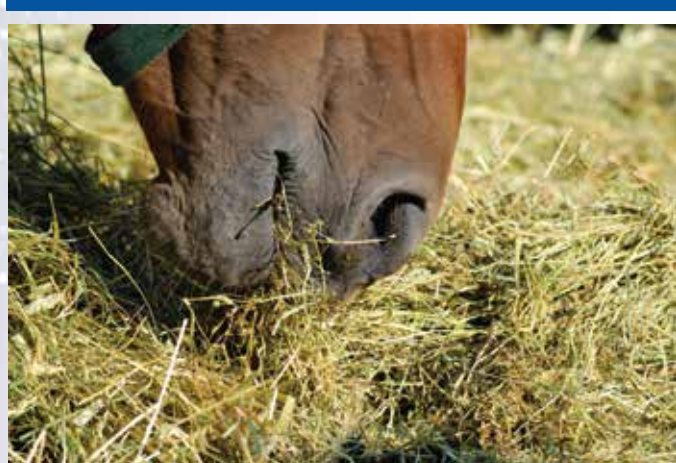


What you need to know about keeping your horse properly thermoregulated in cold weather

ENERGY NEEDS



- * A horse's metabolic rate will increase as the temperature drops
- * Digesting forage is how the horse fuels his furnace
- * As a general rule, when temperatures decrease, the horse's digestible energy requirements will increase, so ensure you feed more hay when the temperature is dropping
- * When the temperature is 5–20°C, horses do not have to expend any additional energy to maintain their normal body temperature – called the “thermoneutral zone”
- * Of course there is more than one factor to balancing a horse's energy needs; age, workload, breed, size, pregnancy, body condition score, wind/rain and temperature all play a role

WATER REQUIREMENTS



- * It's a myth that horses don't need as much access to water in the winter
- * When diets change from moisture-rich grass to DRY hay, it is vital horses have 24/7 access to drinking water to keep everything moving through the digestive system
- * Installing heated watering systems is the preferred method of preventing water from freezing
- * Heating water can also solve the issue of reduced drinking when the water becomes too cold to consume comfortably
- * Snow is not a replacement for water
- * Caution: Reduced drinking can increase the chance of colic

SHELTER



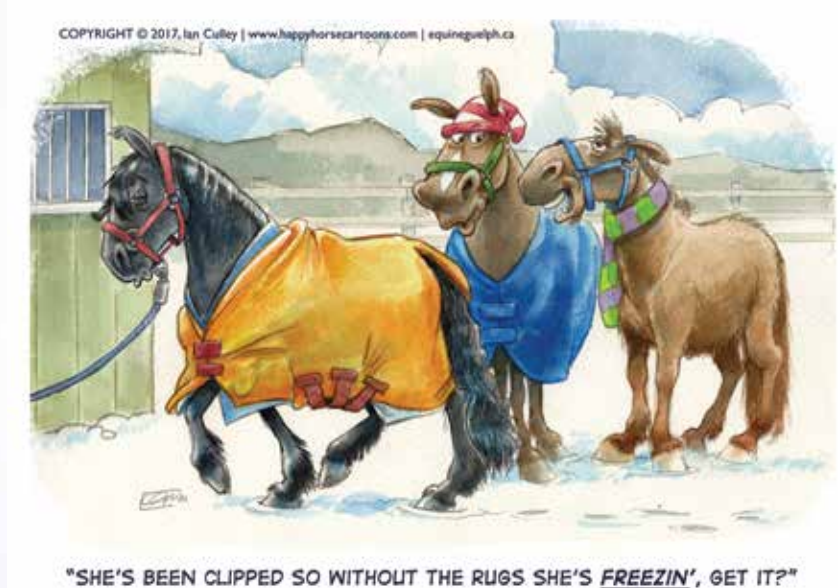
Horses are most likely to seek shelter during cold, wet (rainy/snowy) or windy conditions. Horses must have access to shelter (constructed or natural) that protects them from the harmful effects of extreme weather conditions.

Tip: A 3-sided shelter is a great solution for horses to protect themselves from foul weather

NATURE'S COAT – HOW HORSE HAIR WORKS

Horses have their own coats! Most horses in good body condition and health will comfortably handle typical winter conditions if they have grown a thick winter coat. The longer hairs of this coat fluff up in reaction to plummeting temperatures and trap air close to the body providing some insulation from the cold.

As soon as we clip that hair to reduce cooling out time after exercise, blanketing will be required. Other horses that may require blanketing include the: young, old, non-native, those with metabolic conditions or other issues that have affected hair growth.



WINTER COOL DOWN



When riding or driving in the winter, be aware of the intensity of the work, as horses can overheat quickly with a full winter coat. Ensure the skin under the winter hair coat is fully dry before turning your horse out into the winter cold and wind, or they can get very chilled.

Learn more ... [Winter Cool Down](#)

MYTH BUSTERS

If my horse is still damp under the winter coat after riding, the wind will dry him off.

NOPE! The wind will chill him to the bone. Think of yourself going out in the winter with wet hair. It is a recipe to catch a nasty cold or worse! Keep the horse in a heated or warmer area until they are dry. Use a breathable wool or polar fleece cooler to wick moisture away allowing the horse to cool down gradually without catching a chill.

I bought a blanket for my clipped horse – I am ready for winter.

MYTH! If you clip your horse, his wardrobe will likely warrant more than one blanket. You will need to be prepared to blanket according to the weather and may need a light, medium and heavy blanket as the temperatures change. When you remove your horse's natural defense against the elements, you need to closely monitor your horse and keep a close eye on the weather conditions.

If you do not clip your horse, it is important to be aware of how hot they are getting during a ride. Budget extra time for cooling them out and having them completely dry before you turn them back out.



REMEMBER – WHEN YOU'RE COLD, YOUR HORSE IS NOT NEARLY AS COLD AS YOU!