



Saddle Up

By Betty Swanson
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Summer Heat Presents Care Challenges

The heat is on. I'm sure that I speak for many horsepeople in this area when I say that the summer months are the cruelest time of year for us, as well as our horses.

The first point I want to make is that shade is a necessity, not a luxury, for horses in Arizona in the summer. For those people who don't provide it, I would like to ask them how well they would do sitting in the full sun for hours on days when the temperature is over 105 degrees. To me, not providing shade for horses during Arizona summers is animal cruelty, pure and simple.

Now, I'll probably hear from folks who maintain that horses don't use shade when it's provided. In my opinion, this is a lazy man's myth.

The majority of horses - given the choice - will choose shade over standing in the direct sun on a hot day and be glad to have it, unless there is some pressing reason for them not to do so. At times, they may stray from the spot, but they will return to it. If they don't use it, look for something to be wrong with the shady spot. That could include more bugs, less food, "scary stuff" to the horse, etc. If you own a horse and don't have shade for it, get some up! Don't let anyone tell you that horses don't need it in this climate.

I'll go a step further. Two of my

horses are real equine senior citizens. Heat-related problems are much more of a threat to senior horses, just as they are to senior people because their internal cooling systems don't work as efficiently. I put up a mister system like they use in outdoor restaurant areas and patios in my senior area of the barn. It brings the temperature down 10-15 degrees in the area it immediately cools, and helps cool down the entire stable area because the barn doesn't hold the heat. The horses seem to love it. The only down side I have found is that it dries out the horses' coats, necessitating feeding a coat conditioning additive and slathering on more mane and tail conditioner.

A couple of years ago, my older mare had some heat stress problems and I found out through blood work that she was anemic. I also learned that anemia contributes to heat intolerance in horses. I now have her on Red Cell, a blood builder, and the last two summers, she has done much better.

If your horse is sweating a lot due to use, being trailered during very hot weather, or general heat intolerance, you might want to explore using electrolytes. Electrolytes are salts with positive and negative charges that the body uses to regulate how and where fluids are distributed throughout the cells in the body. Electrolytes include

sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, magnesium, bicarbonate phosphate and sulfate.

There are many different brands and flavors you can buy already blended and ready to use. Some are intended especially for one use or another, so study them before you buy and use them according to direction. You can put them out free choice, put them into your horse's water at a low ratio, or sprinkle them on food. Some experts say that if you are going for a long trail ride on a very hot day you should take some in your saddlebag and administer them mid-ride during a break.

Besides being more stressful on your horses, another cruel summer fact for owners is that, because of the extreme conditions, there is much more work to do just in the basic line of care and general upkeep of livestock. A mistake in keeping water troughs filled or tanks clean can become a fatal one for your animals very quickly in the 115 degree weather. Fly control becomes a never-ending battle and there are also things like bug allergies, dry feet, dry skin, summer sores, heat related problems and other conditions to contend with that one doesn't have to contend with during our beautiful winter months.

And the worse part is that for those of us stuck in the Valley all summer, the enjoyment derived from riding one's horse is curtailed. Let's face it, most of us bow to circumstance and greatly cut back our hours spent on the back of a horse during June, July, August and September. The combination of more hot work and less pleasure can take its toll on anyone's equestrian morale.

Stay mindful of keeping your horse as comfortable as possible as to avoid problems and just keep thinking of how beautiful it is here all winter.

VFW #9399 Presented Plaque For Supporting Arizona Anglers

Plaque presented on Sunday, May 18 for their donation during the 2008 fishing derby season

The VFW Post #9399, Men's and Women's auxiliary were presented a plaque on Sunday, May 18, 2008 recognizing their donation and support of the Arizona Anglers 2008 fishing derby season.

Representing the Arizona Anglers were President Robert Casares, Vice President Robert Geist and Trustee John Hawkins

and accepting the plaque on the VFW's behalf was LaMonte Jacobson.

The Arizona Anglers is a family fishing club that was founded in 1974. They are also one of the oldest fishing clubs in Arizona. For more information about Arizona Anglers visit their Web site at azod.org/aaff/.



AJ Resident Finds Rare Souvenir



On Saturday, May 10, 2008 "Teton Ken" found a leg iron across from the Superstition Mountain Museum on the stage coach trail. He said he was working his pack burrows when he decided to stop at the museum for a rest and drink of water before continuing his travels along the trail. He said he just found the leg iron laying on the ground in an open area. Photo and story by Meghan McCoy.

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"Charlie" is a very handsome Poodle. He is white and apricot and is only approximately 11 months old. He's a sweet dog and gets along well with other dogs. He is neutered and looking for an adoptive home.

For more information please call SAFE (Save Animals From Euthanasia) at 480-466-6025 SAFE animals can be seen each month from 11-4 on the 2nd & 4th Saturdays at PetsMart on Signal Butte and at Gold Canyon Bashas' the 1st and 3rd Saturdays. SAFE volunteers are also at Apache Junction Animal Control from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Donations to SAFE can be sent to PO Box 6829, Apache Junction, AZ 85278 or on the SAFE website at azsafeanimal.org with PayPal.

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- 0.6% ground water
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- 2.2% glaciers & ice caps
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