

GUIDELINES for HORSE KEEPING

The New Jersey horse industry is one of the most necessary branches of agriculture in the State; providing revenue and the most pristine of open spaces. The care and keeping of horses not only preserves open spaces, but also provides a wholesome recreational sport for growing numbers of young people as well as a leisure activity for many adults. This highly diverse industry supports a wide variety of activities in all regions. It combines the rural activities of breeding, training, maintaining and riding horses with the more urbane activities of operating racetracks, horse shows and public sales. The "horse" has been designated as the state animal of New Jersey because of the impact that this industry has on the economy of the state.

Nationally the industry's contribution to the U.S. GDP is greater than the motion picture services, railroad transportation, furniture and fixtures manufacturing, and the tobacco product manufacturing industry. It is only slightly smaller than the apparel and other textile products manufacturing industry. Racing, showing and recreation each contribute more than 25% to the total value of goods and services produced by the industry.

The New Jersey Horse Council wants to cooperate in every way possible with all communities in an effort to establish reasonable and practical guidelines for horse keeping with owners who have horses and ponies for their personal use. In recent years the Council's Zoning Committee has had extensive experience working with communities throughout the state to discuss and resolve problems which affect horse owners.

It is important for New Jersey to keep the number of horse owners increasing. We submit for your information the best collective professional judgment, experience, and opinion of a select committee of the New Jersey Horse Council and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. We consider the current state of the art and recognize that both resident home agriculturists and their neighbors should have reasonable use of their properties unrestricted by others. We stress that these guidelines are geared to private horse owners who keep horses for non-commercial use only. These guidelines are not for the conduct of commercial agriculture, which is more intensive and continuous.

The Guidelines presented here, while referring specifically to horses and ponies, also apply to donkeys, mules and all other equidae. We believe that they are practical and reasonable and are hopeful that they will serve as the basis for constructive discussions and reasonable solutions.

The keeping of horses and/or ponies is recognized as an appropriate use of land and should be permitted in certain districts subject to the following standards:

1. Animals should be housed in an appropriate structure and enclosed in a pen or corral. The housing structure should not be closer than 40 feet to adjacent property lines and 100 feet from a neighboring residence. The pen or corral does not have to be grass it may have other appropriate footing.

2. An outside lot, when used to provide exercise or grazing, should be fenced in a manner, which is safe to both animals and humans and located in such a manner that horses do not cause damage to a neighbor's property. Fences constructed for the exterior fence line should be constructed of wooden materials, woven wire, and pipe or PVC materials and be 48 inches high with posts not more than 10 feet apart. The fenced lot should be so located and managed that it does not become muddy due to weather conditions, from surface drainage, or activity of confined horses. Drainage should be such that standing water does not accumulate.

3. Land size required to maintain a horse is not as significant as is the care of the animal and its use. The criteria should be cleanliness in disposing of manure and exercise space for the welfare of the animal. Land size for the maintenance of horses is contingent to a great extent on the intended use of the animals, i.e., show horses are confined to stalls and exercised in a ring in

contrast to a brood mare housed in open paddocks. In the case of horses which are 48" or less there can be a greater number per acre. Municipalities may find that in areas where there is ample room to trail ride and/or neighbors who also maintain horses, less land may be required to maintain each horse.

STABLE MANAGEMENT

The State of New Jersey has fire and building codes applicable to outside buildings and structures. New Jersey Statutes empower the Board of Health to:

1. Regulate, control or prohibit the keeping of animals or the accumulation of manure (26:3-31; 26:11-10).
2. Prevent any accumulation of animal or vegetable matter in which fly larvae exist or any accumulation of filth or source of foulness hazardous to health or comfort of people (26: 3B-5,7).

3. Prohibit any nuisance, offensive matter, foul or noxious odors (26:3-46). While the horseowner may have an opportunity to shape zoning regulations, he/she has no say in health regulations already in place in state and local statutes. These regulations may prove more of a problem, with close neighbors, than zoning regulations.

Horse owners should contact the building officer to be notified of all necessary information regarding community building, sanitation, and fire codes so that horseowners will have a full understanding of their responsibilities in the management of stables.

Recommended minimum stall size: 100 sq.ft. (10'x10') for a box stall and 32 sq.ft. (4'x8') for a straight or tie stall.

Manure generally produces odors when it is allowed to accumulate. Stagnant pools and puddles, as well as high weeds and grass provide breeding grounds for flies and Mosquitoes. It is important to keep pastures and other areas well clipped and drained. By eliminating these conditions, odor, fly and rodent problems can be minimized.

The manure disposal area must be in a low profile position, cause no nuisance and be at least 50 feet from a property line and no closer than 100 feet from any other existing residential purpose permanent structure, attached garage, swimming pool, tennis court or patio located on adjoining premises.

Manure should be removed daily from all interior housing and/or exterior lots. Once manure is removed it should be handled in one of the following manners:

1. Used immediately by incorporation daily into the soil of a garden or by spreading on neighboring fields. If manure is to be spread on neighboring fields, application is not to exceed 10 tons per acre or the latest recommendations from the state's land grant college.
2. Incorporated into bonafide composting procedure so that odors and flies do not become a problem. A manure pile does not qualify as a composting procedure.
3. Stored in an undercover (rainfree), well drained, screened and fly free storage area, located 50 feet or more from the property line, until the manure can be handled in any of the above alternatives.
4. Daily placement in empty feed bags, shavings bags or other biodegradable bag tightly closed, for periodic removal from the premises with normal garbage collection or stored for later incorporation into the soil. Stored manure should not accumulate for more than three weeks.

Elimination of places for flies to breed will make life easier for you, the horse and neighbor. Repellents are of limited value. The only real solution is the elimination of flies. This requires a constant, aggressive program starting in the spring. Every fly eliminated then will mean hundreds less a few weeks later. An impressive and effective tool is the flytrap (a jar with bait). Fly strips periodically replaced can reduce the frequency of fogging with chemicals. Rodents often inhabit stable areas and can be discouraged with covered containers for feed and commercially available products with complete instructions for their use. Dust, another air pollutant, may irritate neighbors and invoke complaints. This problem may be avoided by use of good judgement.

Each situation may require a different solution. Noise, especially during sleeping hours, can be offensive to neighbors. You may be excited and wide awake when you load at an early hour to show, hunt or trail ride, but your neighbor is on a different schedule and may have other plans.

A complaint to the Board of Health will result in an inspection by a health officer. The officer can issue a citation and recommend action to remove the violation. A citation will result in a court hearing and possible fine. Health officers can be unrealistic. He may recommend expensive clean-up efforts no more effective than the less expensive means. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

In a commercial agricultural zoning classification (5 acres+), it is difficult to set restrictions on livestock numbers, nature of the surrounding area, management techniques and the manure disposal system are all important criteria which must be evaluated before making such a decision. In a commercial livestock operation manure disposal and odor, fly and rodent control are the primary factors of importance when evaluating stable management.

There are more than 49,000 horses in this state making New Jersey the most densely populated state with horses in the nation. It is an industry, which is worth over \$3.2 billion dollars and generates more than \$600 million annually to the state economy.

The good neighbor horse owner is considerate. To maintain good relations with neighbors do not litter your property or the property of others. Fence your horse in strong, attractive fencing to prevent it from escaping onto the property of others and to exclude children or pets from your corral. Do not ride on the property of others without permission and be considerate of the landowner when riding with permission. A horse owner who abides by these precepts should live harmoniously with his neighbors and the local officials.

For assistance in establishing a good horse-keeping program, contact the following sources:

Local County Agent of Rutgers Cooperative Extension Rutgers University
New Jersey Dept. of Agriculture - Division of Horse Industry
The New Jersey Horse Council 25 Beth Drive Moorestown, N.J. 08057-3021
Telephone: (856)231-0771 Fax: (856)234-1081 E-mail: njhorse@aol.com
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