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Caring for your Horse in the Winter

Water intake During the summer, lush pastures contain 60-80% moisture which contribute to your horse's water intake. Most 1,000-pound adult horses need at least 10-12 gallons of water daily. Dried winter feeds such as grain and hay contain less than 15% moisture; therefore, your horse requires more water in the winter. If your horse isn't drinking enough water it may be more prone to impaction colic.

You can encourage your horse to drink more in the winter by keeping your horse's water between 45° to 65°. Keeping the water above freezing has shown to increase water intake by approximately 40% each day.

Keeping the water clean is another key component to encourage your horse to drink more.

Always check tank heaters for worn wires or damage, and check the water for electrical shocks or sensations.

Also, make sure your horse has enough salt in their diet. An adult horse should consume one to two ounces of salt daily.

Providing shelter Shelters can increase your horse's temperature tolerance. They should have access to shelter to get away from wind, sleet, and storms. Free access to a stable or open-sided sheds work well. Trees can also get the job done if buildings are not available. In mild winter weather, horses housed outdoors tend to use their shelter very little. However, when given the option most use shelters when it is snowing and wind speeds are greater than 11 miles per hour.

Blanketing Your horse will continue to develop a natural winter coat until December 21 (the winter solstice). When the days begin to lengthen on December 22 they begin to lose hair starting to form their summer coat. A horse's coat insulates the horse by trapping and warming air.

Wet or muddy hair can reduce its ability to insulate and increases heat loss. Keeping your horse dry is key to keeping them warm. Research analyzed the benefits of blanketing a horse to reduce the effects of cold weather. Most horse owners blanket their horse because of personal beliefs. Blanketing a horse is necessary to reduce the effects of cold or inclement weather when...

• There is no shelter is available during turnout periods and the temperatures or wind chill drop below 5° F, there is a chance the horse will become wet (rain, ice, freezing rain- not usually a problem with snow)

• The horse has been clipped • The horse has a body condition score of three or less

• The horse is very young or very old • The horse isn't acclimated to the cold

Exercise Exercise should not stop during the winter months. Many horses are stalled during winter weather and exercise is limited, this can lead to the lower legs swelling (stocking up). Provide you horse with turnout or exercise as often as possible.

Be careful when riding in deep, heavy, or wet snow.

After exercise, cooling down is important. It can be one of the biggest challenges, but leaving a hot, wet horse standing in a cold barn can lead to illness. Clipping a regularly exercised horse can reduce the time necessary to cool down. Trace clips work well for this.

By Kinsey Everhart, Anson County

Cooperative Extension, Livestock and Row Crop Agent

Protect Your Dogs and Cats from Winter Woes

In many areas, winter is a season of bitter cold and numbing wetness. Help your pets remain happy and healthy during the colder months by following these simple guidelines.

• Don't leave pets outdoors when the temperature drops. Most dogs, and all cats, are safer indoors, except when taken out for exercise. Regardless of the season, shorthaired, very young, or old dogs and all cats should never be left outside without supervision. Short-coated dogs may feel more comfortable wearing a sweater during walks.

• No matter what the temperature, windchill can threaten a pet's life. A dog or cat is happiest and healthiest when kept indoors. If your dog is an outdoor dog, however, he/she must be protected by a dry, draft-free doghouse that is large enough to allow the dog to sit and lie down comfortably, but small enough to hold in his/her body heat. The floor should be raised a few inches off the ground and covered with cedar shavings or straw. The house should be turned to face away from the wind, and the doorway should be covered with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic.

• Pets who spend a lot of time outdoors need more food in the winter because keeping warm depletes energy. Routinely check your pet's water dish to make certain the water is fresh and unfrozen. Use plastic food and water bowls rather than metal; when the temperature is low, your pet's tongue can stick and freeze to metal.

• Warm engines in parked cars attract cats and small wildlife, who may crawl up under the hood. To avoid injuring any hidden animals, bang on your car's hood to scare them away before starting your engine.

• The salt and other chemicals used to melt snow and ice can irritate the pads of your pet's feet. Wipe the feet with a damp towel before your pet licks them and irritates his/her mouth.

• Antifreeze is a deadly poison, but it has a sweet taste that may attract animals and children. Wipe up spills and store antifreeze (and all household chemicals) out of reach. Better yet, use antifreeze-coolant made with propylene glycol; if swallowed in small amounts, it will not hurt pets, wildlife, or your family.

• Probably the best prescription for winter's woes is to keep your dog or cat inside with you and your family. The happiest dogs are those who are taken out frequently for walks and exercise but kept inside the rest of the time. Dogs and cats are social animals who crave human companionship. Your animal companions deserve to live indoors with you and your family.

Anson High School Boy's Basketball Weekly Results

• **January 14 – West Stanly (Conference Game) at home - AHS 78, WS 68.** Record 11-4 (Conference 3-1). Jayden Little 29 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists, 6 steals; Jamaal Griffin 17 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 2 steals; Tavianne Robinson 7 points, 11 rebounds, 5 blocks; Kendrick Maye 13 points, 2 assists, 2 steals; Jazear Griffin 5 points, 6 rebounds.

This was a critical conference win for the state playoff aspirations. Jayden Little led the way with 29 points, while solid contributions came from Jamaal Griffin (17 points), Kendrick Maye (13 points), and Tavianne Robinson (11 rebounds, 4 blocks) and Jazear Griffin (6 rebounds). Our team effort continues to grow as we develop.

• **January 16 – Monroe (Conference Game) at Monroe - AHS 49, Monroe 52.** Record 11-5 (Conference 3-2). Jayden Little 26 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists, 4 steals; Tavianne Robinson 7 points, 10 rebounds, 8 blocks.

This was a tightly contested game from start to finish. With 3 seconds left, Anson had an opportunity to win but couldn't convert. Despite the loss, Anson displayed grit and unity throughout the game.

• **January 17 – Forest Hills (Conference Game) at Forest Hills - AHS 63, Forest Hills 58.** Record 12-5 (Conference 4-2). Jayden Little 26 points, 7 rebounds, 3 assists, 4 steals; Tavianne Robinson 10 points, 11 rebounds, 9 blocks; Nyzir Harrington 6 points, 5 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal; Jazear Griffin 6 points, 6 rebounds; DeQuan McKeever 4 points, 5 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal.

After trailing 14-8 at the end of the first quarter, Anson went on a 26-19 second-quarter run and never looked back. Key contributions came from Nyzir Harrington and Jazear Griffin on the boards, while Tavianne Robinson nearly achieved a triple-double. Jayden Little continued to show why he's the reigning Conference Player of the Year. At 4-2 in the conference, Anson determined to keep improving and aim for a strong finish.

Upcoming Game Friday, January 24: Piedmont (Conference Game) at home. JV 5:00 p.m. Varsity 7:30 p.m.

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