

"Too Hot To Handle"

One thing that we as Horse owners and Horse lovers do, that is not always in the best interest of the Horse is to think they are just like us. If we are not thirsty or hungry or hot or cold, since my Horse is here with me they probably feel the same way. Easy and simple enough mistake to make out of love not out of cruelty. Yet still a very big mistake for the health and quality of life of your Horse. This occurs on so many levels of a Horses life, it is very difficult sometimes to actually set aside your own comfort and your own ideas of what is good. So you can objectively know how to make good solid decisions for the care and safety of your Horses.

This time of year the number one health issue and danger for Horses is summer heat! First I want to address you and summer heat. Remember I wrote that "WE" Horse owners forget to put the needs of the Horse separate from our own. The perfect outside air temperature for humans is about 68 to 72 degrees. Most people find that they are very comfortable in that temperature range. Yet if you are actively moving around, you may start to sweat. Or if sitting doing nothing at all, you may even feel a slight chill for moment. Now that being stated, we are a lot smaller and do not even weigh close to what our Horses weigh. They are taller longer and heavier. They are covered in hair, since they are larger and move more than most people. They are generating some body heat.

Human's average is 68 to 72 degrees. A Horses perfect comfort level is 45 to 50 degrees. Ever notice when summer is just about all gone you will go out to do mourning chores in the fall. The Horses are all hyper and feeling good. It is the first cool days after a hot summer that your Horses are really comfortable in! Think of it this way, we as humans are comfortable at 68 to 72. At 100! We feel very hot, and not like doing much physical at all. Also 30 degrees over our comfort level really becomes a safety hazard. News media always talk about high summer temperatures and heat related deaths due to it.

Now let's talk about your Horse. 45 to 50 degrees is comfortable and perfect for these big hairy animals. So it is July and August, 100 degrees outside. That is 50 degrees over comfort, think of it like this. 50 degrees over comfort for you and me is over 120 degrees! 120 degrees outside people are going to die. Plus nobody would want to do anything at all! Well c'mon here fellow Horse owners! Why are Horses any different when their comfort level starts at 45 to 50? When it is over 90 to 100 out there in the barns and pastures?

When Horses get hot they do not want to drink water. They might still eat the same yet not take in enough water to keep things going properly. Also many Horses just stand still and still are dripping from loosing precious body fluids from the summer heat. Think about this every time you step out of your nice cool air conditioned home or vehicle. Your Horse does not have the privilege and pleasure of air conditioning to help with these hot days. As Horse owners, it is our responsibility to be smart enough and loving enough to think about their comfort in the heat not our own!

Possibly you may have to not ride as far. Or even miss a rodeo or Horse show. Post pone a trail ride or cut it short. Work training sessions at night instead of mid day. The easiest way to judge this is this, have a good accurate thermometer where your Horses are living. Do not put it in the barn or in the shade. Stick it right out in the direct sun light, right where your Horses are standing and grazing. Think about the 45 to 50 degree range and go from there 72 degrees out, only 20 degrees above perfect. No real problem unless

worked hard. Now it is 90 to 100 degrees, which is double!!! Double the Horses comfort!! Double our comfort is 136 to 144 degrees. That is what a Horse feels like when it is actually 90 to 100 degrees outside. "DOUBLE" THE IDEAL TEMPRATURE! Take care of your Horses and try to consider this during these hot summer days.

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