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THOUGHT OF THE MONTH: **Happy Thanksgiving!**

Can Horses Show Empathy?

By The VHN Writing Team



As horse owners, we constantly strive to better understand our animals on all the levels possible. We want to understand how they think, how they feel, and how they view the world around them. Most often, to understand others better, we look at ourselves in comparison.

This plays a part in the concept known as “the human condition”. The human condition basically points to all the experiences we have as humans, such as birth, life, death, mortality, thoughts, emotions, and so on. All of these things have an impact on how we live our lives, and they fundamentally guide us as we go.

All of these things also impact how we interact and understand each other. So naturally, they would have an impact on how we interact and try to understand our horses. Understanding another creature brings in the topic of empathy. What is empathy? Empathy is the ability to understand another individual and share their emotions.

While sympathy is feeling pity for another’s situation, empathy allows us to fully understand on a deeper level. We can place ourselves in another’s shoes.

This brings up the question: Are horses capable of empathy?

It’s beginning to look like they do.

Because animals cannot speak and tell us how they feel, measuring any type of emotion and emotional understanding is difficult. It has to be seen through direct observation and comparison. Empathy takes an amount of self-awareness and an awareness of other horses.

Horses can show hints of empathy by different actions. Say by mimicking or mirroring the actions of another. Take a horse that is out in the wild. He is going to be on alert, watching to keep himself safe. He may even notice a predator and act accordingly. If another horse notices his alert actions, that horse will mimic the first’s stance so that he stands a better chance of survival.

In domesticated horses, empathy can be shown in more tender ways. You may have seen videos of a horse taking some of his own feed and giving it to another horse that doesn’t have any. While this has not been made into a wide study, just a single horse doing this action can show promise of empathy. The horse is taking his own materials for survival, and giving it to another horse upon seeing that he is hungry/ doesn’t have any food himself.

Mother mares can be the beginnings of empathy, as the bond between mother and baby is a strong one. Emotions such as this love, and the bonding that can form between barn mates’ points to horses potentially having the capability to feel empathy. Even if for now, it simply points to sympathy and even kindness, it shows that horses are more capable of emotion than once thought.

If you have two horses of your own, or your horse has a favorite buddy, you can do your own investigation into this topic. Horses out on the trail frequently pick another horse to rely on. They may prefer being next to each other, or watch each other throughout the ride. They most likely are taking social cues from each other, and will mimic the actions of the other.

Even two horses side by side in a barn can show empathy. If a horse is sick, his barn mate may appear to watch over him. Mutual grooming can even show aspects of empathy. There is even a chance that your horse will show empathy towards you, his owner, if you watch close enough.



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It's in the Evolution: Safety in Numbers

By The VHN Writing Team



We may never understand to the fullest level and with complete certainty why our horses do what they do.

Such as...

Why did your horse spook at that bush today when he was more than happy to try and eat it yesterday?

Why is his food suddenly more tasty once it's touched the ground but when you put that same food back in a bucket, it's untouchable?

Why does he love apples every time you offer one but not apple flavored treats made with real apple bits?

Why will he be the best, most talented horse when only you're watching, but in front of any type of company, he's suddenly the most untrained animal on the face of the planet?

Why, why, why, dear god, why?!

The possibilities truly boggle the mind, and the reality is, we may never know the answer to these questions. (And honestly, we think they like it that way. Our confusion is entertaining for them.)

But thankfully, not every single question has to remain a complete mystery thanks to science and the hints that history, biology, and evolution can give us.

For instance, our horse's understand fear on a primal level. After all, they are prey animals, engrained with a deep sense of self preservation that relies on the terms of fight or flight. Some, more flighty than others to be sure.

Do our horses face the same creatures that wild horses face on the regular, or the same creatures their ancestors ran from thousands of years prior? No, they do not.

Yet, horses have the distinct ability to know a prey animal when they smell one, see one, and hear one. Your horse many have never seen a bear, cougar, moose, or coyote, but will they react with the same nervousness and need to flee that a horse that has seen one displays? You bet.

The reason they have this innate feeling of protecting themselves is because of evolution and what is apart of their natural biological signals. These same signals also point out a very interesting fact about our equines: When it comes to fear, things aren't so scary with a buddy. And they don't even need to know that buddy to begin with.


It's true, if our horses are faced with something new and downright terrifying, like a new object, trail, or trip, bringing in another horse can help calm their fears on a marked level.

Researchers have tested this theory, with everything from a plastic bag, a dog barking, an umbrella opening, or stressful travel. In different situations, having a companion horse showed on both a physical level and a social level to alleviate stressful situations.

A horse with a buddy was shown to be less scared than a horse that was solo. Specifically, a horse with a companion by his side returned to a normal and steady heart rate faster than a horse that was left alone.


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This entire reaction can be explained along the same lines as a horse knowing that an animal is a predator without having actually seen it: evolution.

The classic saying of "safety in numbers" is at play.

And yes, the unspoken dialogue between the two stressed horses probably sounds a bit comical, and along the lines of, "Well if you don't run away, I won't run away, so let's not run away together and we might be okay."

But the best thing about this research is that it shows some explanations of why our horses do the things they do without any obvious reason has to do with the logic behind being an evolved prey animal with instincts that tell them what to do in a situation they've never encountered before.

And if you think about it, that makes our horses pretty smart. Even if they do leave us scratching our heads at the end of the day.

• Happy Trails Monthly Recipe •

Created by Chef Sharon Hauht

“Baked Mushroom Chicken”

Prep Time: 20 min Cook Time: 20 min Servings: 4

Ingredients:

4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (1 pound)

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons butter, divided

1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms

1/2 cup chicken broth

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper

1/3 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1/4 cup sliced green onions

Directions:

Flatten each chicken breast half to 1/4-in. thickness. Place flour in a resealable plastic bag; add chicken, a few pieces at a time. Seal and shake to coat.

In a large skillet, brown chicken in 2 tablespoons butter on both sides. Transfer to a greased 11-in. x 7-in. baking dish. In the same skillet, saute mushrooms in the remaining butter until tender. Add the broth, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil; cook for 5 minutes or until liquid is reduced to 1/2 cup. Spoon over chicken.

Bake, uncovered, at 375° for 15 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink. Sprinkle with cheeses and green onions. Bake 5 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Yield: 4 servings.



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About Happy Trails Kitchen



Sharon Hauht is the owner of Happy Trails Kitchen that specializes in baking and artfully decorated custom celebration cakes, cupcakes, cookies and sugar art for your special occasion. Sharon is an award winning cake decorator who has more than 40 years experience. Sharon competed with her team, Gouly Goblins, on Season 10 of Food Network's Halloween Wars and was featured on the Road to Halloween Wars, which aired on September 13, 2020.

Happy Trails Kitchen (HTK) is registered by the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) as a cottage food operation, which means HTK's food labels have been approved by SNHD, applicable recipes have been lab-tested for shelf stability (pH and water activity), and Sharon Hauht has been approved to bake and decorate cakes out of her home. She can print edible images (logos and Photographs) on your confections. She has her food handler's card for food safety.

You can see pictures of some of her recent projects on her website: www.happytrailskitchen.com. You can contact Sharon through her website or by emailing her at happytrailskitchen@gmail.com or call (702) 277-8000. HTK is also on Facebook and Instagram under HappyTrailsKitchen.



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The Toll of Drought on the Horse Community

By The VHN Writing Team



The word drought is never a pretty term. It's defined as a "prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water." A water shortage is something that can be felt far and wide and can have serious and long-lasting impacts on the world. This impact is no stranger to the horse community either, as every horse person will know, water is an important resource in more ways than one.

For example, you can't have hay without water. And a prolonged lack of water can have a huge domino effect on hay production and pricing.

This year has been an extremely hot and dry one, with talk of the western states water supply drying up. In fact, the west is approaching a water crisis and the remedy is being hotly debated as we watch fall and cooler temperatures settle in. Those cooler temperatures are predicted to not get nearly as cold as usual.

When we look at the water supply, lack of moisture, rainfall, and snow accumulation all play a part. When there is no humidity, water levels will evaporate faster. Bodies of water that remain low will also reach warmer temperatures.

Without much humidity, monsoon seasons come and go without dropping the much needed rain that most of our country needs. And with temperatures predicted to stay warmer this winter, snow accumulation is looking less promising, which means less water accumulation when the snow melts during the season change.

This lack of replenished water can lead to even more undesirable events, like more wildfires, air quality issues, food loss, and spread of disease like West Nile Virus from mosquitoes that thrive in stagnant pools of water.

These issues can be felt on smaller, more individual community levels, like the horse community. Most of us will have already seen that hay is getting more difficult to come by and prices are being increased to make up for the lack of supply.

For people with cattle, horses, and other animals that rely on hay for feed, many are being auctioned off at a greater rate as the owners cannot afford to feed them. And not all hay is created equal, especially for different animal types and during a season that isn't favorable for hay production.

The quality of hay is being impacted and the types of hay available can be impacted as well, from price to being able to find it in the first place.

Unfortunately, under better circumstances, this stretch of decreased hay and increased pricing could have been a temporary thing that time could have fixed with new crops come the season change. But it's not that simple with this drought.

The difficulties we are seeing now will cause problems when it's time to grow new hay too. This means the community could continue to struggle with its feed supply. And like everything else, where issues arise in one area of the community, more issues will arise as a result in other areas.

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Horses and other animal owners that rely on hay should be ready to pay more in the future and plan to buy as early on as possible. Now is the time to start budgeting for more expensive feed, as this problem won't likely go away any time soon.

What can the horse community do, especially in the western states?

Read up on the drought, learn what's happening and more importantly what's being done about it. We all have a right to water, in every western state, and now is the time to come together and find better solutions before our problems get worse. If enough of us in the horse community and beyond start to care and do something about the water crisis, then real solutions will come that much faster.



Are Probiotics Beneficial for Horses?

By The VHN Writing Team



If you take a trip to your local grocery store, chances are you will find plenty of products containing probiotics. Everything from yogurt, to smoothies, and other kinds of food and supplements are all enriched with probiotics to make you healthier. Just watching some tv will probably lead to a commercial about the digestive benefits of probiotics and all of the reasons why you should add it to your life. Maybe you're a probiotic fan yourself.

But what about probiotics when it comes to our horses? Does it really make a difference?

Apparently, yes it does.

To understand if probiotics help our equines, we first have to understand what probiotics are and what they do.

Probiotics are actually live microbes, like bacteria, that help promote a healthy gut. Inside of your digestive system there lives a well-balanced system of bacteria, both good and bad. Sometimes, the amount of bad bacteria or microbes becomes too large, overpowering the good kind and leading to problems, like indigestion, diarrhea, constipation, and more.

By adding in probiotics through food and supplementation, you are replacing the lost, good microbes in your gut and keeping the bad microbes in check so your system stays healthy and issue free.

For horses, this is the same process, except it's mainly important for a horse's hindgut. The hindgut is made up of the horse's cecum, the intestines (large and small), and the rectum. This system is where most of the digestion happens for equines.

Horses can have issues like bloating, gas, loose bowel movements, hard bowel movements, gut discomfort and more when their system or hindgut is unbalanced. This can be the result of many things, including steroids and antibiotic use. (Humans can also have the same causes.)

If you feel that your horse's gut isn't in top shape, or your veterinarian finds that your horse's hindgut has unbalanced bacteria, adding probiotics to his diet could help to improve a lot of problems.

Probiotics fight bad bacteria by lowering the pH or acidic levels of the gut to their normal levels, making it a healthy environment for the microbes to survive. They fight against the bad bacteria, stimulate healing, immunity cells, and decrease inflammation. They also help to protect against bacteria that release toxins into your horse's gut.

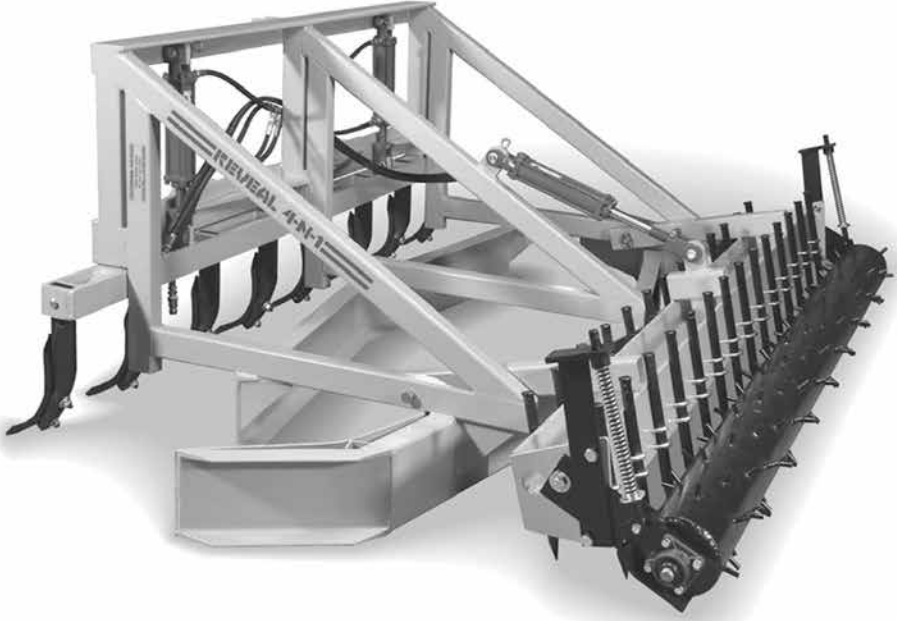
There are a few different kinds of strains of probiotic bacteria available to balance gut microflora. Lactobacillus, Bifidobacterium, and Enterococcus. These specific strains are best suited for surviving the natural acidity of the digestive system, specifically the stomach where food is broken down, so that the probiotics can actually reach the area of the hindgut where they can flourish.

There are a few things that can improve when you give your horse probiotics as part of his diet:

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1. Digestive issues can heal, like intestinal inflammation, and the production of a mucous coating inside the intestine can help create a barrier to defend against new problems.

2. When fed before, during, or after antibiotic or dewormers, they can rebalance gut flora to keep the hindgut balanced regularly. So instead of just being a patch, it's a solution that continues to help over time.

3. Your horse's immune system can also improve, as a healthy gut for horses means a better immune response to bad bacteria that enter your horse's system.

4. Probiotics can also keep an anxious horse from developing diarrhea and an unbalanced gut. Horses that are naturally nervous, travel a lot, or compete often, can all benefit from the support of probiotics.

5. Certain dietary trends can lead to microbiome disruptions, which can cause agitations like ulcers. Probiotics can counteract these dietary trends and prevent agitations inside the intestine before they can become a problem.

6. Horses that seem to have difficulty gaining weight can improve with probiotics because healthy gut flora means better nutrient absorption over time. When your horse's gut is very unbalanced, it cannot breakdown his food and retrieve the nutrients he needs to stay healthy. When his hindgut is rebalanced, those nutrients will be better absorbed like they're supposed to, so a healthier weight can be achieved.

Probiotics are also fairly easy to get, whether online, in a store, or through your vet, and aren't very pricey to keep on hand.

All of the benefits that we seek from probiotics in our lives can have the same benefits in our horse's lives as well. If your horse needs a gut pick me up, consider giving probiotics a try the next time your looking for an equine boost.



Choosing the Best Fencing for Your Horse

By The VHN Writing Team



Sometimes making decisions for our equines feels like a toss of a coin or even better, a shake of a magic 8 ball.

“Do I invest in a new saddle?” Magic 8 ball says: “Outlook good.”

“Should I get another horse?” Magic 8 ball says: “Without a doubt.”

“Is my horse going to like this new treat flavor?” Magic 8 ball says: “Don’t count on it.”

“Will my husband survive another horse investment?” Magic 8 ball says: “Concentrate and ask again.”

So fate might not be so forthcoming with the answers of the universe, but luckily there are some things you can feel better about when making decisions for your horse’s safety and wellbeing. And you won’t need a magic 8 ball to sort through the possibilities. When it comes to deciding on the best fencing for your equine, there are some elements to consider that can make the decision a clearer one.

First off, there are a couple fencing types that horse owners will always say no to for safety reasons: barbed wire and large spaced mesh fencing.

Barbed wire is a huge recipe for disaster, for obvious reasons, and any mesh fencing with large gaps is asking for your horse to get caught up with a pulled shoe or worse.

If you are considering doing a DIY fence for your horse’s stall, run, or pasture, make sure that you are knowledgeable about how to do it. There are many factors that come into play when buying the materials and installing the fencing on your own. Things like budget, material quality, terrain, aesthetic, and the maintenance upkeep will all matter when you have to find things yourself. If you’re not 100% confident when doing it on your own, consider hiring someone that can explain your options and what you can expect.

Wooden fencing: This type of fencing can be good. They’re fairly sturdy and visible, can look aesthetically pleasing too. But they require care to keep long term especially depending on your climate, are more costly to install, and can be a magnet for horse teeth and chewing. Other pests can wreak havoc on wood as well and replacing a giant beam of wood nestled deep in the ground is tricky and time consuming.

PVC fencing: This type of fencing has that super clean and ideal pasture border look. It will always look nice around a green pasture. It is an expensive material however and will break under pressure.

Horses are hard on, well, just about everything they can get ahold of, so depending on what it’s used for, it may need to be replaced often. If you want to use PVC, you might consider using an electric fence to teach your horses to stay off of the PVC so it lasts.

Wire fencing (with another material for beams): Wire and mesh type fencing is more cost effective, but it can be difficult to see by itself, so using another type of beam between each section and on top will make it more visible. Wire will also bend when kicked and leaned on. There is V-mesh wire, which is the most expensive wire fencing, but is also considered one of the safest because of the pattern.

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Electric fencing: Mentioned with other types of fencing above, electric fencing is fairly inexpensive and can be used together with other methods to achieve aesthetically pleasing fencing that’s still doing its job. Most horses are smart and will understand that this fencing really does mean “no touchy.”

Pipe fencing: Metal pipe fencing has the benefit of being very sturdy and will hold up to some tough wear from your horses. It also less forgiving should a horse hit it or run into it, so keep that in mind. It’s also very heavy, which means installation can be expensive. Modifications are also more difficult because of how thick and sturdy it is. This will last a long time if taken care of properly.

When deciding on fencing type and installation, consider these things:

1. Wire strands and barbed wire will slice up a horse very easily, leading to bad injuries or worse.
2. Rotting posts and boards need to be avoided as they will give way.
3. Keep horses away from materials that are more for looks and aesthetic or can be moved over time by being leaned on.
4. Consider what the fence is being used for, like a run off a stall, an arena, a pasture, etc.
5. Also consider what kind of equine is going inside of the fencing, like a draft horse, a mini donkey, a horse that likes to chew, etc.
6. Metal posts without any caps can take off slices and chunks from your horse’s body. Any supports that you use that may be sharp need to be accounted for or not used at all.
7. Don’t make the mistake of using too short of a fence. You’d be surprised how many horse owners have stories of their equines making a jump for it and clearing the fence to run down the road.
8. Failed electric fencing will only work for a limited time, as in, at one point or another your horses will figure out that that piece of wire won’t shock them anymore and then it’s free reign.
9. If you can’t see it very well, then your horse can’t either.
10. When in doubt, seek a professional. Your fence will last longer, stay looking nice, and do its job.

Grooming When the Weather Turns Chilly

By The VHN Writing Team



Hooray! The hot temperatures are finally making their way out and cooler weather is settling in for the holiday season. It's time to break out the pants and jackets and nearly time for the gloves, beanies, and hot cocoa.

For all of the great things about chilly weather that we can look forward to over the coming weeks, there is one thing that gets more difficult as the temperatures start to dip down: grooming. Specifically, grooming a super dirty horse with no water and longer horse coats.

Goody goody.

Even though the job got a bit more difficult, there are some tricks to make winter time grooming with our fuzz buckets easier.

1. Trim it up. It's every individual horse owner's decision whether they wish to body clip in any way. But for those of us that want to leave our balls of fluff just that, we can still do some trimming to lessen the load.

You can trim up the hair on your horse's legs so that he not only looks a bit tidier, but he also attracts and holds on to less mud and grime. Don't trim so short that he loses his insulation, but just enough that the raggedness is gone. This way, if he does get dirty, there's less hair to work through.

2. Concentrate on important areas before a ride. Nothing zaps your winter riding mood quite like a filthy horse does. You've got about 20 minutes and a fuzzy pig to tidy before you can get going. If you don't want to get every inch all spick and span, make sure you get the areas that are actually important to your horse's health. Pointedly, his back where the saddle rests, the bridle areas, the girth area, his pasterns and elbows, and under his jaw. Essentially, you want to get all of the areas that are going to rub when he works.

Dirt and other yucky stuff can rub between your horse's coat and skin and the tack he is wearing. With enough time, this can create sores, cuts, and even infection. So if you want to get in that saddle quick, make sure these areas are clean and you can get to riding. But make sure you clean him up nice after he's all done being a good boy.

3. Dig in with that elbow grease. Grab that curry and get all up in there, because a nice massage not only gets into the hair and loosens up the muck, it also benefits the skin and redistributes the natural oils your horse secretes. Pick the best tools for your horse's coat type and the dirt won't stand a chance.

4. If you really want to get your dust bunny clean this winter, consider investing in a grooming vacuum. Anyone that's used one of these baby's knows we aren't lying when we say you'll be shouting "Hallelujah!" as you suck up that dirt with each satisfying pass.

You can loosen up the dirt with a curry comb or other tool and then suck it up with the vacuum. Even the hairiest of horses can get clean with this machine.

But be warned, they are noisy and most horses need some time to get used to the sight, the sound, and the feel of this weird sucker thingy on their body. Horses usually love the relaxing experience after they get used to it.

5. Turn to the commercial spot cleaners. If your horse has stains that need to be dealt with, think about using a spray that's made for it. They're specifically developed for getting rid of these stains without needing a bunch of water. This way you'll only need a spray of the cleaner, a rag, and maybe a brush.

6. You can use hot water to spot clean your horse too. If you have the means to get heated water, whether from a sink or an actual portable water heater, you can give your horse a "bath" without giving him a bath. Heat up your water, and while it's getting warm, curry up all the mud and sweat. Pre-spray the icky areas with cleaner or a spray shampoo, then use the hot water to dampen a towel.

You don't want to get your horse really wet. Just damp enough to remove the dirt. Rub the towel into the dirty spots and work in small steps. Make sure to ring the towel out and rewet so you don't replace the dirt after all your hard work. This is also great for eye boogers and dirty noses too. If he gets a little too wet, you can place a light blanket over him or work on him in the sun with hopefully no breeze.

7. Consider blanketing your horse as much as possible. Yes, blankets are expensive and time consuming to put on and take off routinely, especially when you want a few handy for different temperatures as we reach wintertime. But when you cover your horse as often as possible, whether it's a sheet or a full and fluffy winter blanket, it means less dirt to wash off later.

So if you have the money, maybe get a light one and a medium to heavy blanket so you have the best of both worlds for your area.

8. Also consider body clipping only the areas that you know will get grimy when your horse gets ridden. It can be a compromise between not wanting a fully body clip session but not wanting to groom a fuzz ball day in and day out because of a little dirt and sweat. If you clip along where the girth goes and other areas that sweat and get matted, you won't have to work as hard to get him clean again once the sweat dries out.

If you do clip a bunch of areas, make sure it won't lead to him getting cold, particularly at night when the temperatures like to bottom out.

9. Use a tail bag for a pristine winter tale. There's something very frustrating about a horse tail with mud, poo, shavings, and sweat caked in it. It's just so hard to get out, especially when you're trying to limit water use. Voila, try a tail bag. A lot of horses have a knack for getting them off, but there are tricks that you can look up on how to keep it on and there are different types as well, like a full bag or even a braid in tail protector.

10. If your vacuum has a reverse feature, you can blow dry some of your horse's sweaty spots until he's no longer so sticky or dripping, or if he is willing, you can try a hair dryer as well. If your horse has no experience with a vacuum or hair dryer, don't just decide to use it one day, as he probably won't care for the noise they make. Train him to deal with the sound and the feel until he's comfortable. Wet horse hair is particularly hard to clean, but drying out the hair before you try to get all the gunk out can make it easier.

And last but not least, and we say this with as much humor and good will as possible, sometimes you just have to embrace the fuzzy of cold weather grooming!



A Regular Mo-neigh: Artistic Equines that Enjoy Creativity

By The VHN Writing Team



The world would not be what it is today without art. It's like the funny saying, *The Earth without Art is just 'Eh'*. It's an important part of our history and a variety of cultures, all over the world.

Art is able to affect us in a number of ways as human beings, like on an emotional and psychological level. Art has even been proven to be healthy for us.

Creating a piece of art has shown to boost an individual's self-confidence, manage mental health struggles, improve our senses, and increase our overall well-being. It also builds a sense of community and belonging as so many of us enjoy it.

Just looking at art and enjoying all of the principles of it can relieve stress and regulate our mood. And art is meant for everybody, as anyone can create it.

To put it simply, art is scientifically good for us. And there are so many forms of art for all of us to enjoy. We can paint, sculpt, woodwork, draw, jewelry making, crochet, arrange flowers, decorate cakes, color the sidewalk with chalk and many more. Most of us will remember using coloring books and crayons as a kid as we explored our imagination and creative intuition.

Anything that relates with the basics of art theory and execution is in fact art. Placing colors, shapes, forms, and perspective to any number of materials counts as art. No matter how outrageous or out of the box it might be, art can be limitless in its scope.

There are even robots today that are capable of remaking some of the most famous works of art right down to the last dot of color. (Whether this is true art or just a flex of engineering is anyone's opinion.)

But if humans are capable of not only executing but also enjoying art because of mental capacities and physical ability, does that mean other creatures can enjoy it as well?

What about equines? Can a horse not only learn to pick up a brush, but select a paint color and get his "Mo-neigh" on?

Thanks to things like Youtube and the ever growing resources for people to spread information about amazing things on the internet, we are seeing all over the world that animals do enjoy creating art just as much as we do. And that includes our equines.

A quick trip around google will produce some interesting headlines of horses in various states that enjoy painting with their owners.

A rescue horse in an eastern state that enjoys sunny days in the yard painting with bold colors, or a mini donkey that has a favorite paint brush and listens to music while creating his masterpieces. A retired racehorse that nobody wanted or a horse that no longer can be ridden discover the joy of painting and learning new tricks. Equines that create unique paintings and then sell them to raise donation money for great causes.

This growth of painting equines is truly remarkable. And each of their artworks are unique.

Some owners report that their horses favor a certain brush, a specific color, or even pick out when they want to paint altogether.

There are even classes that show tips on how to teach your own horse to paint and the best materials to start with.

If you're interested, there are tutorial videos online that are helpful for beginner owners and horses, and you never know, your horse mind find he likes it.

There are some people who will say that horses painting on canvases is just simply an animal that's trained to do a trick and gets a treat afterward to reward the behavior.

And it's true, many of these painting horses were introduced to the concept as a way of training and rewarding. But many of these owners will also tell you that even though the horse was clicker trained to start painting, if the horse doesn't want to paint, they will let you know pretty clearly that it's not gonna happen.

If one of these artsy horses doesn't feel up to creating, more often than not, they just won't paint, treat or not. And some of these horses will want to paint so much, they'll do multiple pieces in one session because it's fun and satisfying.

The great part about seeing that horses not only have the ability to put brush to canvas but enjoy doing it is that we are seeing a new path of intelligence in our beloved equines. We are seeing a connection to a form of expression that we ourselves enjoy in many ways and many forms.

And that means we can understand our equines on a whole new level with a whole new creative language.

If equines can enjoy creating an artistic piece, like a painting, surely that says something about their capabilities, even beyond what we know now. Afterall, we can all agree, horses will only do something if there's a reason for it. It might not make a whole lot of sense, but there's always a method to the madness.

Perhaps that madness is in the benefits above, however humanistic they may seem to us at the moment. Horses could gain the same benefits that we gain by being creative.

It may satisfy boredom for them, engage a new way of thinking, boost their mood and confidence, focus their concentration and muscle groups, and give an outlet for expression that just isn't satisfied with the typical tasks we ask of them.

Art might involve the body, but so much of it is about the mind and the imagination, that we have to be open to the idea that horses can display our same creative initiative, even in a simpler form.

And the fact that so many horses are taking up this pastime only points to their true satisfaction in the activity and their own level of intelligence. It's an activity that all equines can enjoy, just like all humans can find joy in art too.

An artsy horse is still a horse, but it's a horse that we are just beginning to understand, one brush stroke at a time.



Thanksgiving Once Again...

By The VHN Writing Team

It's Thanksgiving time once again, which means it's important to do just that. Give thanks. As horse owners we have much to be thankful for, and if our horses could tell us, we're pretty sure they'd be thankful as well. So here's a message from your equine buddy to you.

Dear Owner and Best Friend,

It's Thanksgiving time again and as I was eating my yummy breakfast this morning provided by the one and only you, I thought how great of an idea it would be to tell you what I'm thankful for this holiday.

Since I'm not able to write it myself, I had Valley Horse News help me get it to you in this brand new edition.

So what am I thankful for this Thanksgiving?

I'm thankful for my food of course, though I'd like to make a notion for second breakfast to be installed. I'm thankful for my hay and pellets, especially when I get an extra handful. I'm thankful for my treats and my fresh water that goes with it without asking.

I'm also thankful for the person who gives me this breakfast, more often than not, before they've had breakfast themselves.

I'm thankful for my bed that's made just for me. The way it's cleaned all the time and fluffed up for me, in the heat and in the cold.

I'm thankful for the person that wakes up at the crack of dawn and comes out before the sun goes down to get it done.

I'm thankful for my pampering that keeps me beautiful, and the brushing and scratching that gets those spots I just can't reach. I'm even thankful for when I get my ears clipped, face washed, and get covered in fly spray. As much as I hate it and as much as I love making a fuss when you do it, I know it's what's best.

I'm thankful for my tack that fits me like a glove, and all the trips and adventures we get to go on. Even though I thought you were absolutely bonkers for making me go through that puddle last week, and I thought my stall never looked so good after that two-hour trail ride, it's still a blast. Especially when it's just me and you.

I'm thankful for my turn out time, and how I can run as fast as I want. Even though I'm not that graceful sometimes. I'm even thankful for our fun little game of when you think your gonna catch me easy, but then I make a run for it. That is a game right?

And, though I'll never admit to it, I'm thankful for the vet and his visits to keep me healthy. Except, can we please exchange shots for just kisses and treats? I think we would both like that a whole lot more.

I'm thankful for my farrier that keeps my feet looking might fine, and how he has the best taste in shoes.

I'm super thankful for all of the time and money that goes in to keeping me happy. I mean, hey, it's gotta take a lot of work and a lot of funds to keep me lookin' so fine. And you have to admit, all of that is paying off quite nicely if I do say so myself.

But most of all, I'm thankful for you. The one that takes care of me when I'm happy, sleepy, grouchy, scared, and sick. The one that knows my favorite itchy spots, the treats I deserve to have every day, the order I like my food, my favorite places to see, the best toys and gear for me, when I need my shots and feet done, and knows just how to love me like no other.

So, while I won't get to tell you on Thanksgiving and I can't exactly tell you in person, I can tell you here: I'm one lucky horse to have an owner like you. Happy Thanksgiving!

Lots of love and slobbery kisses,
Your Equine Best Buddy

Now, back to that idea about second breakfast...



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WWW.LEANhorses.org

Horseman

By Joyce Griesmann Carter

The day I bought the troubled colt
I knew I'd paid too much for him,
But something deep inside my heart
Said, 'Take the chance, the cost is slim.'
I saddled trouble with soft hands
No whip or spur would touch his sides;
I saw his fear begin to fade -
We saddled up for twenty rides.
I loosened rein that twenty - first
When desert winds came up and blew,
Speaking gently to our souls
A secret language we both knew.
He'd learned to tell my human heart
My voice and hands mattered so much
And calmed his fire, and let him speak
The horsey stuff he felt through touch.
There was a lot he taught to me
I couldn't fear what we both sought
So I learned to trust he'd give the wind
And race our hearts to all that's free.
Because I loved him, all he was,
And all that I could ever be
We'd come together as a team -
It made a horseman out of me.



*Happy Thanksgiving!
From Valley Horse News*



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The Silver Lining

By Anna Dunstone

Within the throes of hardship
Buried in the pain
Horses are a glint of gold,
A shelter from the rain
When life picks up a stick
And beats me o'er the head
There's horses still that wait for me
To cry to them instead
For oft upon my heart
Despair seeps in the cracks
But horses mend it simply by
A breath sent down my back
The calmness and the crazy
Both teach me much about
Life; likewise, the horses
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A Guide to Horse Blanketing this Fall and Winter

By The VHN Writing Team

Each winter season, horse owners will go around and around one particular question: Should I blanket my horse?

Often times, the answer that people receive is “it depends.” While this answer is quite vague and can be frustrating when you were hoping for a simple yes or no, it is possible to figure out whether or not your horse needs to be blanketed during the winter.

The answer to the question of blanketing is so open because a few factors come in to play for if your horse will be able to handle the cold.

When deciding if you are going to blanket your horse, try answering these questions:

How thick is your horse’s coat?

As the days get shorter and light starts to fade earlier, your horse’s system will be triggered to grow a winter coat. This winter coat is comprised of much thicker and longer hair than a summer coat. These hairs stand on end so that it creates a trapped layer of heat or insulation around his skin. A summer coat lays flat against the skin, allowing it to breath and produce sweat to cool.

If your horse has been able to naturally grow a thick, long winter coat, using a blanket may not be necessary to keep him warm. However, if your horse has been body clipped, or he is kept beneath powered lights, his coat might not grow in enough or at all. If this is the case, blanketing would be a good idea.

Is your horse able to “go inside?”

Similar to humans, horses will be drawn to escape the cold, if they can, by retreating inside to warmth and insulation. This also allows for a break from the cold wind.

If your horse has a covered, and enclosed stall that he stays in or that is attached to a run, it may not be a necessity to blanket. If your horse does not have a space to go to, to get away from the cold, blanketing to provide long-term warmth should be considered.

How old is your horse?

Older horse’s bodily systems, such as their immune system and digestive system, naturally slow down as they age. This slowing down also affects how well your horse’s body can “thermoregulate” or how well he can balance and concentrate his body heat.

If you have an older horse, blanketing could be beneficial. Checking for the correct blanket thickness/ heaviness can keep him comfortable in the cold and also prevent overheating.

How is your horse’s body condition?

It’s not a myth that fat is actually good insulation for your body. Similar to seals that dive in icy water, their bodies have layers of “blubber” that provide insulation from the cold. Fat on a horse’s body works similarly.

If your horse is a little on the chubby side, he might have just enough insulation to keep the cold at bay. But, if you have a horse that is on the thinner side or has trouble keeping weight on, a blanket will be necessary. During the winter, a thin horse will burn calories just trying to keep warm, worsening the problem.

Remember: If you live in a warmer or hot climate, your horse will be acclimated to this warmth. Which means, chilly but still mild temperatures will feel warm to him.

In contrast, if your horse lives in very cold weather already, he will be able to stand much colder temperatures than say a horse that lives in 100 degree weather routinely.

So, 45 degrees to a horse that lives in typically 60 – 70 degree weather will be a lot less of a shock than to a horse that is used to 90+ degrees for most of the year.

As for what type of blanket is best for which temperature, here is a quick guide:

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For unclipped horses (degrees Fahrenheit) -
 30- 40 degrees: Lightweight blanket
 20- 30 degrees: Medium weight blanket
 20 degrees and under: Heavyweight blanket

For clipped horses (degrees Fahrenheit) –
 40- 50 degrees: Lightweight blanket
 30- 40 degrees: Medium weight blanket
 30 degrees and under: Heavyweight blanket

Blanket Weight -
 Sheet: No stuffing/ Fill
 Light Blanket: 100g
 Light/Medium Blanket: 150 - 250g
 Medium/ Heavy Blanket: 200 - 300g
 Heavy Blanket: 300 - 400g
 Optional: blanket liner in combination with above

Sheet - provides protection from wind and rain
 Blankets - Provided insulation and can be weather/ rain proof depending on make

These temperatures are a loose guide. Horses will naturally tolerate temperatures based on their everyday environment and weather. The above factors and overall health will play a part in which is best for your individual horse. *With temperatures, locations, blanket fill and weight, there is overlap and will leave room for you to decide which is the best choice for your horse.*

Every possible type of blanket could be of use depending on the weather and where you are located. Seeking the professional opinion from your vet is never a bad idea when you are still unsure. Make sure to keep an eye on your horse while he is blanketed. If your horse becomes damp or fully sweaty after wearing a blanket, it may be a good idea to go for something lighter. Similarly, if he feels too cool to the touch, or is shivering, of course consider something extra. A damp or wet horse in cold temperatures can be a health risk.

Monitor your horse’s blanket tolerance, particularly if he has more hair than usual, has been sick recently, or has gained/ lost weight.

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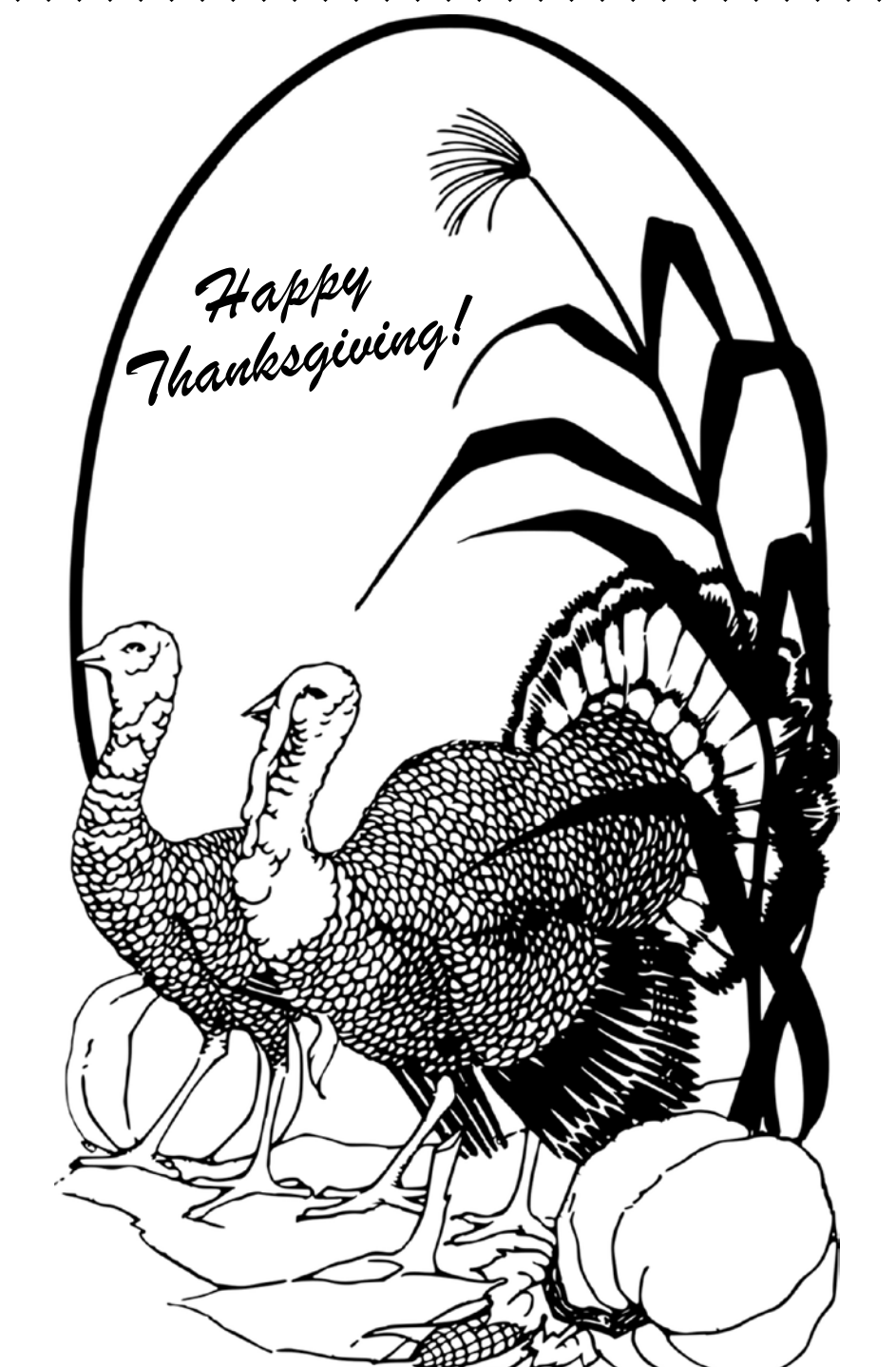
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	1	2	3	4 DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 5 pm, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park	5 DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 9 am, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park SOUTHERN UT ROCK & GEM SHOW 10 am, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park	6 DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 9 am, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park SOUTHERN UT ROCK & GEM SHOW 10 am, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park
7	8 APACHE LAND APPALOOSA CLUB Meeting 7:00pm, Horse-shoe Restaurant, Benson AZ; Contact Fred @ 520-384-5332	9 NSHAV GENERAL MEETING 7pm Olive Garden - 1361 S. Decatur Blvd. 702-645-2988 POSS GENERAL MEETING 7pm @ SHOWPOSS.VPWEB.COM for time and place Pahrump 775-727-9576	10 HCON MONTHLY MEETING 7pm Doc's Saddlery 6185 Elkhorn RD LV, NV 702-361-5456 BCH of UTAH WASATCH FRONT CHAPTER 7:00pm American Legion 345 Depot st Clearfield, UT Info. 801-773-9419	11 DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 5 pm, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park	12 DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 3 pm, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park	13 Southern Nevada Hunter Jumpers Association Horseman's Park snhja.com DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 9 am, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park
14 Southern Nevada Hunter Jumpers Association Horseman's Park snhja.com	15	16 SSPHC MONTHLY MEETING 7pm IHop Cheyenne & Rainbow 702-373-2673 paintmee@aol.com	17 LVAHA GENERAL MEETING, 7:15pm; Marie Calenders - 8175 W. Sahara Info: keppes@cscinfo@aol.com	18 DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 5 pm, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park	19 DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 9 am, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park	20 DIXIE SIX HIGH SCHOOL RODEO SERIES 9 am, Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 LVGA Henderson Saddle Association www.lasvegasmkhanaassociation.com SWBRA BARREL RACE FINALS 11am Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park
28	29 S. NV REGIONAL TRAILS 4701 N Torrey Pines Dr., LV Contact Ed @ 702-645-1791 editoredd@juno.com	30	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>*The scheduling of events for all organizations and locations is currently under constant change due to COVID-19. For the most up to date schedules, attendance, and virtual show dates/ info please regularly visit the corresponding websites.* <i>Thank You</i></p> </div>			

DECEMBER 2021 CALENDER OF EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>VALLEY HORSE NEWS DEADLINE 15th of EVERY MONTH valleyhorsenews@gmail.com</p> </div>				2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 APACHE LAND APPALOOSA CLUB Meeting 7:00pm, Horse-shoe Restaurant, Benson AZ; Contact Fred @ 520-384-5332	14 NSHA GENERAL MEETING 7pm Olive Garden - 1361 S. Decatur Blvd. 702-645-2988 POSS GENERAL MEETING 7pm @ SHOWPOSS.VPWEB.COM for time and place Pahrump 775-727-9576 WCBRA BARREL RACE FINALS 6pm Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park	15 HCON MONTHLY MEETING 7pm Doc's Saddlery 6185 Elkhorn RD LV, NV 702-361-5456 BCH of UTAH WASATCH FRONT CHAPTER 7:00pm American Legion 345 Depot st Clearfield, UT Info. 801-773-9419 HUNTSMAN WORLD SR. GAMES 8 am Hurricane, UT Washington County Regional Park	16	17	18
19	20	21 SSPHC MONTHLY MEETING 7pm IHop Cheyenne & Rainbow 702-373-2673 paintmee@aol.com	22 LVAHA GENERAL MEETING, 7:15pm; Marie Calenders - 8175 W. Sahara Info: keppes@cscinfo@aol.com	23	24	25
26	27 S. NV REGIONAL TRAILS 4701 N Torrey Pines Dr., LV Contact Ed @ 702-645-1791 editoredd@juno.com	28	29	30	31	

Farm Animal Adoptions

All you have to do:

Is provide a photo of the animal/ animals. Give a short description explaining why they are such a great candidate for a new home. And lastly, provide the best contact information for those that are interested. Your photo, description, and contact will go here for everyone to see and hopefully will make it to the perfect new home.



Open to all: Horses, Donkeys, Mules, Miniature Horses, Cattle, Piggies, Goats, Sheep, Chickens, Ducks, Geese, Farm Fowl, Rabbits, Alpaca, and Llamas!

Any farm animal in need has a place in this section for as long as they need it!



Welcome all rescues, sanctuaries, and non-profits!

Now is the chance to give farm animals in need of adopting and fostering an extra spotlight - **on the house**.

Valley Horse News will now have an adoptions section solely for farm animals at shelters and organizations that need to find a loving, forever home. On this page, every month, you will find photos and information about wonderful animals that could be the perfect addition to your home or farm. You will also find the organization that they come from and how you can get in contact.

This section will remain in the paper *indefinitely*.

As long as there is an animal that needs it, it will be open for listings. With COVID on the decline many animals are in need of new homes, so here will be the space to feature them.

Are you an organization or know of an organization that helps farm animals? Contact now for more information and to be featured on this page every month. Remember, this page is for **adoptions only**.

Animals for sale by owner must be advertised in other sections.

Please spread the word far and wide about this section so we can facilitate as many adoptions as possible. These precious animals need and deserve all the help we can get. It is a personal goal to make this section explode every single month! A home for every animal that comes on this page is not only a worthwhile but completely possible goal.

Just imagine what could be done by this time next year. So let's make it happen!

Have questions? Email us at valleyhorsenews@gmail.com or call 702-808-7669

We will provide all of the information you need and answer any inquiries you may have.



Terri Gamboa Team

#1 in Acreage Properties

in Las Vegas



Cindy Parker
702-528-1048

Sommer McDaniel
702-370-2404

~ NE, PAHRUMP ~

Terri Gamboa
702-528-5473



1330 Morning Sun. Huge elevated .89 acre lot. Gorgeous location nestled at the base of sunrise mtn. Strip, valley & mtn views. Perfect setting for custom home. Zoned for horses. \$190K



1341 East Nevada Highway 372. 1.03 Acres Commercially Zoned in Pahrump. Great Location Right by NV State Rd 160 & Stores. 1 Hour From Las Vegas \$295K



2161 West Charleston Park Ave. Over 4 Acres of Land in Pahrump. 1 Hour From Vegas. Mountain Views. Corner Lot. Zoned for Multi-Use \$95,000



290 South Valerio St. 5 acres in Pahrump, 1 hour from Las Vegas! Quiet location with 360 mountain views. \$49,000

Excellent Land Lenders - 80% Financing!!



Call Terri Gamboa (702) 528-5473



Email: TerriGamboa@aol.com



Website: www.TerriGamboa.com



Terri Gamboa Team

#1 Horse Property Specialists

in Las Vegas



Cindy Parker
702-528-1048

Sommer McDaniel
702-370-2404

- NW, SE -

Terri Gamboa
702-528-5473



7080 S Pecos Rd. 3.9 Acre Secluded Prop., 2 bed/ 2 bath house to live in while build then as guest house. 10 car garage converted horse barn, electric gate, 100 tall pine trees \$1,975,000



8545 W Hammer Ln. Custom single story ranch style home. Over 5,000 sqft, 6 Bed/3 Den/4 Bath/Basement. 1 acre. Huge 50' X 30" garage/Workshop - 11 garaged cars \$1,074,000



3443 N Bronco St. Immaculate almost 2 acre Equestrian Estate. 4,027sq ft, gorgeous kitchen, 4 spacious beds, sauna, U-shape floor plan. 164' X 96' Arena, Paddocks, 27' X 15' new Hay Barn \$975,000



6448 Tina Ln. Charming horse property on almost 3/4 acre. Well maintained, 3bed & detached garage/Shop. 4 stall mare motel, covered hay storage, round pen. \$699,000

**Call the #1 Horse Property TEAM to list your property here!
Call us to find your DREAM Horse Property!!**



"Ride in Floyd Lamb Park, approx. 2,000 acres, best ride in town!"

Call Terri Gamboa
(702) 528-5473



Website: www.TerriGamboa.com

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**#1 in Luxury Homes on Acreage
in Las Vegas**



Cindy Parker
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Sommer McDaniel
702-370-2404

~ NW & NW by Floyd Lamb ~

Terri Gamboa
702-528-5473



7380 Elkhorn Rd. Completely remodeled custom home with beautiful finishes on .41 acres with pool, 4bed, RV hookups, horse permitted. \$828,000



6385 Iron Mountain Rd. 2 Acre Equestrian Estate. 3,550 Sq Ft, Pool, 21 Stalls, Large Arena, Round Pen, Hay Shed, Across 1,500 Acre Floyd Lamb Park. \$1,390,000



6109 Starlight Dr. Equestrian Ranch on Nearly 1/2 an Acre. 3Bed/ 2Bath- 1Bed Converted. 3 Stalls, Hay Storage, Tack Rm. Covered RV Park. 2 Garage + 2 detached \$619,990



4335 N Fort Apache. 1/2 Acre Lot in Private 4 Lot Cul-De-Sac, Priced as Package to Include Gorgeous Architecture Plans for Custom Luxury Home \$279K

Floyd Lamb Park - 1,500 Acres - NEW TRAILS - Best Ride in Town!

*****GREEN ROLLING HILLS, PONDS, BIG TREES, TRAILS!*****



"Ride in Floyd Lamb Park,
approx. 2,000 acres, best ride in town!"

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