



Help your horse ride out the winter



The 2008-2009 winter in Michigan and Wisconsin was unusually cold with above average snowfall, and it's been predicted that this coming winter could be just as severe. With bitter cold temperatures in the forecast, there are several things to consider to keep your horses safe and comfortable.

Provide Windbreaks

Mother Nature provides horses with a coat of hair that increases in density as our mild fall weather turns into chilly winter, which keeps them warm. However, sheds, barns, shelters or windbreaks are necessary to protect them from winter wind, rain and snow. A shelter can be as simple as a large tree, if you're fortunate enough to have

trees in your pasture. The tree should have cover, such as an evergreen, pine or cedar. Trim the branches up so horses can get under the tree cover. An inexpensive windbreak that offers more protection is a "run-in shed". This is the simplest shelter to build, having three sides and either a single-slope roof (shed roof) or an offset gable roof. The open side allows a horse to enter and leave the shed at will. It is often one-room, sized for a single horse, but it can be made as long as desired and divided

"A shelter can be as simple as a large tree."

into multiple compartments to separate horses. For added protection from the elements, an enclosed equine barn is a good option. Many manufacturers sell barn kits that can be constructed quickly by a contractor. Ideally, your horses should be free to go in or out of shelter as they wish. They have a natural ability to sense upcoming storms, and a good sense of when to take shelter.

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The tricks & treats of pumpkin carving

Halloween is fast approaching... and with it comes the time-honored tradition of pumpkin carving. Before you grab a kitchen knife and start cutting, here are a few things to consider.



Select the right design—It's important to have the design in mind before you even select your pumpkin. There are a number of sources for free Halloween stencils, including online if you Google "Pumpkin Carving".

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Construction Begins on New Corporate Office



GreenStone Farm Credit Services recently held an official groundbreaking ceremony for its new corporate headquarters in East Lansing, Michigan.

Located along the U.S. 127 corridor just north of Lake Lansing Road at 3515 West Road, the new 78,000 square foot building will replace GreenStone's current corporate office located on Abbey Road just south of the construction site. In addition to the association's current 30,000 square foot corporate headquarters, it is also utilizing more than 6,500 square feet in a separate office building in the immediate area.

The \$18.8 million project will not only allow the association to consolidate its corporate staff into one location, it will also provide the opportunity for the organization to hire upwards of 65 new

employees by 2013 according to its long-term strategic plan.

This new corporate office project is a result of GreenStone's consistently strong growth over the last decade, during which the association has evolved from a \$1.5 billion financial institution following the merger of four Farm Credit organization's in Michigan in 2000, as well as a subsequent merger with FCS of Northeast Wisconsin in 2003, to more than \$5.0 billion in assets today.

According to GreenStone President/CEO Dave Armstrong, the association is pleased that it will

continue to call East Lansing its corporate home.

"This project is one that we have strategically discussed for a number of years now," said Armstrong. "Not only will this new building address both our short-term and long-term space needs, but it also clearly demonstrates our commitment to continuing to be the leading agricultural and rural community lender in our two-state territory.

"While the board of directors and our management team understand the current economic climate and the uncertainty that hovers over the financial industry today, we feel extremely confident that a number of factors—not the least of which is our strong and healthy financial position—dictate that this is the right time for us to move ahead with our building needs."

The general contractor for the new building project is The Wieland-Davco Corporation, based in Lansing, Michigan. With initial construction well underway, GreenStone expects the project to be completed sometime in the fall of 2010.

Help Your Horse Continued...

Provide Extra Feed

Horses can stand quite a bit of cold as long as they are well fed. During a prolonged freeze or storm, they use more caloric energy to produce the body heat they need. Therefore, the amount of food they typically receive during the warmer months may not be enough for colder weather. Keep extra alfalfa and grass hay available and consider adding oats and rice bran for added nutrition. Your local veterinarian can advise you on the right mix of winter nutrition for your horses.

Watch Your Water

Make fresh water available at all times. A horse's average water consumption is approximately 10 to 15 gallons per day. Working horses or lactating mares may consume as much as

30 gallons or more within a 24-hour period. Large water tanks should be fitted with heaters if possible. Even though a horse will lick and eat snow, they cannot get enough to actually satisfy their water requirements. If your water tank or trough is in an area not large enough to accommodate a heater, make sure you break the ice frequently so they have access to the water. An axe works well for this.

Bottom Line

By paying careful attention to shelter, water, and feed, horses should fare well during the winter. When you do the morning or evening chores, take a few moments to just stand and observe your horses to make sure they are healthy and comfortable.

Source: www.tractorsupply.com, <http://www.kountrylife.com>

Planting trees— 10 steps to a healthy start

Tree planting is normally considered a fall or spring task, but regardless of when it hits your “to-do list,” here are a few steps to remember in order to ensure a healthy tree establishment.

1. Consider the soil type when selecting tree species, as not all trees perform satisfactorily in all soils.
2. If planting more than one tree in an area, remember proper spacing is essential—a distance of six to 12 feet between trees is typical, but will be dependent on the selected tree variety.
3. Dig holes three times wider than the diameter of the tree root ball. Use a tarp to put the dirt on as you dig the hole for ease when backfilling the hole.
4. To determine hole depth, measure the height of the root ball, from the root flare (the area where the trunk splits into several roots) to the bottom of the ball. The hole should be no deeper than the height of the ball; professionals recommend the hole being an inch or two shallower to allow for settling.
5. Always move the tree by its base and don't remove the burlap until the tree has been placed in the hole. Be sure to also remove any strings or wires at this time.
6. Loosen the tightly packed soil around the root ball to expose the many small roots.
7. When backfilling the hole, be sure to not bury the root flare or compress the soil to a point that would prohibit water from reaching the roots.
8. Once the tree is planted, water it thoroughly. It is recommended that

new trees be watered on a regular basis to ensure a healthy root system establishment.

9. If necessary, stake the tree using a wide stretchable material to allow flexibility and minimal injury to the tree trunk. Stakes should be removed after a year.

10. Place mulch over the tree base area to help retain moisture. Be sure to leave a two-inch mulch-free boarder around the root flare to avoid decay of the living bark.

Source: www.treesaregood.com



Pumpkin Carving Continued...

Pick the perfect pumpkin—Select a pumpkin that is not too ripe. It should be the right color orange and not have any soft spots or bruises. Look for a sturdy stem and never, ever lift the pumpkin by the stem. Thump the pumpkin and listen for a solid “thunk”. A hollow sound is bad news.

Prepare your pumpkin—Remove the pulp and seeds, gently scrape down the inside to remove any moist flesh from the sides. Wipe down the pumpkin, tape the stencil to the pumpkin, then gently poke holes through the stencil and into the pumpkin. Make sure that you have transferred the entire pattern and then remove the stencil.

Start cutting—Although many a pumpkin has fallen under the standard kitchen knife, it's both the wrong tool and a very dangerous tool for pumpkin carving. For best results get yourself an X-Acto knife with a #5 knife blade and a #15 keyhole saw. See your home store for both items.

Source: www.pumpkin carving.org



Recipe Corner

Master this holiday favorite and you'll wow them all at your next family gathering... **Homemade Pumpkin Pie**

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large (29 ounce) can pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie mix)
- 4 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 cup half & half or whole milk
- 1 - 12 ounce can evaporated milk

DIRECTIONS

1. Make or purchase (2) 9" unbaked pie shells ahead of time.
2. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
3. In a large mixer or with a hand mixer, combine pumpkin and eggs and whip until mixed.
4. Add both sugars, salt, cinnamon, ginger and cloves and beat again. Scrape side of bowl.
5. Slowly add both whole milk and evaporated milk and blend well until smooth.
6. Pour into pie shells, place on baking sheet, and bake in 375 degree oven for 70-80 minutes or until knife comes out clean.

The Country[®] M I N U T E

Inside this issue:

- Winter Horse Care
- Pumpkin Carving Tips
- Tree Planting Know-How

GreenStone Member notes...



Customers who receive The Country Minute will not receive GreenStone's agricultural member publication, Partners. Therefore, the following is a snippet of news and feature stories found in the most recent issue of Partners. More information and complete articles can be viewed at www.GreenStoneFCS.com by clicking on the "Partners" image found on the left side of the web page.

Mission Agriculture

Craig Pollington is not just a cattle farmer in Marion, Michigan; he is also a mission worker who has traveled the world planting seeds of faith and hope in struggling areas of the world. His passion for missions has brought him to the African country of Uganda, a place more noted for violence and warfare than dairy cattle and crops, but people like Craig are trying to reverse the trend of disparity by helping the people of that land learn to feed themselves.

Walkin' on Our Casual Side... For Youth!

If you stopped by your local GreenStone office on a Friday this summer, you may have noticed a more casual attire. But don't

be fooled, we haven't backed down on our commitment to provide you with quality and professional service, nor have we made every Friday a cleaning day. But what we have done, is allowed our employees the opportunity to step-up and show their support of our youth and the industries we serve! As a result, over \$5,600 was contributed through the employee fundraiser in support of the Michigan Livestock Expo and the Wisconsin FFA Foundation.

Top of the Class

GreenStone recently awarded \$2,000 scholarships to six students. Five of the recipients are attending Michigan State University; the sixth recipient is attending University of Wisconsin-Platteville.