

Horse Care Policies

Horsemanship

Horses will be treated with dignity and respect at all times by The Horse First Farm staff, boarders, and guests. Treatment of horses involving force, fear, and intimidation will not be tolerated. Any harsh treatment, misuse of tools, or corrections done in anger will invoke a series of warnings, each of which will accompany the offer of more knowledge. A boarder or guest who has received three warnings and has not put forth the effort to develop will be asked to leave.

Environment

The Track system is designed to closely emulate a wild horse's living condition. It promotes travel over varying terrains and footing, allows limiting grass intake to a healthy amount, and promotes social dynamics within the herd. Each track will house a group of horses matched per their dietary and social tendencies and the type of terrain that they are able to handle. The terrain may include light to moderate hills, sandy to rocky footing, and natural shelter. Aside from natural shelter and lean-tos, horses may be brought into a slip stall for short periods of time in severely inclement weather. This will be at the discretion of THFF staff. Tracks will be groomed on a regularly scheduled basis to aid in parasite control. Private shelter board and stall board will be available at an additional fee. Stall board will consist of a 12ft. by 11ft. stall that the horse will be brought into each night. Stall board includes mats and bedding, daily stall cleaning, hay and feed twice a day and daily turnout on a track. Private shelter board includes a private paddock with lean-to shelter, daily cleaning, twice daily feedings, and turnout into a track if applicable. All horses will live in an appropriate herd on a track during turn out unless there is a medical or extreme behavioral reason why they cannot. Blanketing is available for an additional fee. Two blankets in good repair must be provided for each horse. They must be waterproof turnouts.

Diet

The Horse First Farm will provide a minimum of 2 feedings of grass hay per day. This hay will be purchased from a consistent local source and will be tested for its nutritional value. Hay will be distributed throughout the track to promote movement of the herd throughout the day. Free choice loose salt will be maintained on each track. Once a day, track boarded horses will be brought into a private slip stall for a personalized meal. Boarders have the option of adding supplements to their horse's diet by premixing them in a labeled container for each day of the week. Special feeding programs may be negotiated for horses with additional needs.

Deworming protocol

New members to THFF will need to provide a negative fecal test done within 2 weeks of their arrival. Horse's unable to provide this will be quarantined within sight of other horses until one is conducted.

Every boarded horse will be required to undergo a fecal exam twice a year. THF herd management will collect these samples and document the results. The owner will be billed for the cost of these tests. A positive fecal test will be one that indicates a count of 100 or more. In the event of a positive fecal test, the horse must undergo treatment of the owner's choice and retested in two weeks. This process will be repeated until a negative result is obtained.

Vaccination requirements

Owners wishing to board at The Horse First must fill out a horse health plan. Recommended vaccinations are Eastern and Western Encephalitis, Tetanus, Rhino, Flu, West Nile, and Strangles. Horses coming onto the farm to live, must show records of vaccination within 1 year prior to arrival, or provide a titer test showing adequate levels of immunity for the aforementioned diseases done within 1 year prior to arrival. Every horse coming onto the premises for any reason must provide a copy of a current coggins test to THFF before unloading from trailer. Horses coming from out of state must provide a health certificate. Boarders will be required to vaccinate or provide titre test and produce a coggins test annually. Documentation must be provided to THFF by March 1.

Complimentary Care

Complimentary care including hoof care and bodywork is encouraged. If the horse care staff notices a need for any such care during the daily health check, it will be recommended to the owner. Complimentary care, including hoof care, will only be provided with the owner present. If you cannot be present, The Horse First Farm can provide horse handling, or you can authorize someone else to handle your horse by filling out an authorization form.

Introductions

Horses arriving at the farm will be quarantined within visual distance of other horses for 7 days. Once it has been determined which herd they would be best suited to, the horse will be put into a pen adjoining the track they will be living on. They will be able to smell, touch, and interact with the horses on the track through a safe barrier. The horse will be in this pen for 3 days or longer depending on the situation, and then will be allowed onto the track with the herd.