

COMMODITY

HORSES

Description

In BC horses are maintained for an assortment of purposes using a variety of housing and holding methods. Horses may be reared on breeding farms, attend training farms, and be housed in facilities that vary from large equestrian facilities to backyard shelters. The use of horses is divided among race, sport, recreation and for work purposes such as ranching, guiding and packing. Horses are housed and ridden locally or transported for riding elsewhere. It is common to maintain a horse or two at home for part of the year and board for part of the year.

Feed for horses is often purchased elsewhere for consumption at the farm, however there are many horse owners that hay the land and store the hay for future use. Some horses are boarded in facilities that provide feed and exercise, while at the same time many maintain their horse(s) at home.

Horses graze on pasture, grassland, wooded areas, etc. when feed is available. In most parts of BC year round grazing is not feasible due to weather conditions and quality of the feed. As a result, supplementing with hay and grain is common, particularly during the winter months when there is little nutritional value in the grazed plants.

Feed, bedding, farming equipment and manure removal as well as moving livestock are all commonly done by truck and/or trailer. Frequency and intensity of traffic depend on the size and type of the operation. The riding of horses on the road and road shoulders is regulated under the *Motor Vehicle Act*.

In some instances, horses are allowed access to a watercourse to drink, but fresh water is often provided through a waterer supplied by the domestic system. Access to a stream for water is allowed only in those cases where the livestock receives its total feed from grazing, and, that the agricultural waste does not impair the usefulness of the watercourse.

Many horse operations include riding rings, trails, turnout areas and other confinement structures such as lunging and sacrifice areas. In BC it is not uncommon to find woodwaste used in these areas. Care must be taken to avoid leachate from woodwaste accumulations entering the environment.

Horse manure, whether left behind by grazing animals, removed from confinement areas, stored for future removal from the farm or stored for future use as a fertilizer on cropland must be managed in a way that does not result in pollution. On those operations where frequent manure removal for use off the farm occurs, there is minimal chance of a problem occurring. Where manure and bedding are stored for later use, there is a greater chance of a problem arising from odour, flies, pollution, etc.

Farm Practices of Particular Interest

Practices for specific farm activities can be found in the farm practice section of this reference guide. Farm practices that are of particular interest to the keeping of horses include:

Farm Buildings

Maintaining horses require buildings to; house horses, protect equipment and to store feed, fertilizers and pesticides.

See Farm Practice: [Structures](#)

Grazing

Horses can be pastured throughout the growing season. They may have access to pasture and range land 24 hours a day. In BC there are laws that govern where livestock are allowed to roam.

See Farm Practice: [Animal Care and Handling](#)

Horse Handling and Husbandry

Information on the care and handling of farm animals is provided in the Farm Practices listed below.

See Farm Practice: [Animal Care and Handling](#)
[Transportation](#)

Livestock at Large

In BC there are laws that govern where livestock are allowed to roam.

See Farm Practice: [Livestock at Large](#)

Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operation. The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that the farm operation must meet the *Health Act*, *Pesticide Control Act*, *Waste Management Act* and the regulations under those acts. Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C.

Acts that pertain to specific farm activities are listed in the farm practices section of this reference guide. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices. Acts that are not referenced elsewhere that are of special interest to horse owners include the following:

Provincial

[Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act](#) – Ensures that animals are treated fairly

Local Government

Applicable *Animal Control* and *Noise Bylaws* where in place.

Publications

Publications that provide information on the keeping of horses include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide

BC Agricultural Fencing Handbook

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Horses

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Transportation