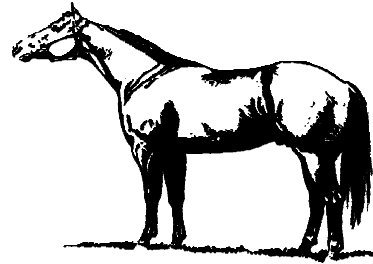


Animal Science Horse Information Series

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Summer Stallion Management

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Breeding stops for most stallions around July 1 because of the common January 1 birthday for registered horses. At this time, “Mr. Stallion” is to instantly become “Mr. Horse.” Often, this may not be a quick or smooth transition if not properly managed.

For the past 4-5 months, he has been expected to go to the breeding shed 3-4 times a week and perform. Now, he is expected to be relaxed, calm and a quiet gentleman.

This transition takes some careful planning and dedicated management.

The first thing that the stallion owner or manager should do is change the stallion’s daily routine. Do not use the same halter and lead shank that he wore during the breeding season. Daily procedures, such as grooming, should be changed to aid in reconditioning the

stallion to a non-breeding attitude. The stallion should get more exercise now and be outside in a paddock where he can graze longer. The stallion should become more relaxed within a few weeks.

If a breeding attitude continues, place the stallion on a forced exercise program. Forced exercise has been shown to decrease sperm output, testicle size and lower some hormones.

It is best to feed him at the same time each day; however, what and how much is fed may need to be changed. To determine the appropriate feeding program for a stallion, body condition score (BCS) him. Those stallions that come through the breeding season with an acceptable BCS of 5 to 6.5 can be fed a 10 percent protein grain mix with a lower energy value than that fed in the breeding season. Decrease the amount of grain fed by 25 percent, since the stallion is not performing as strenuously. This is necessary if the same grain mix is fed, as during the breeding season. It is important that the stallion does not increase in BCS.

Stallions that have a BCS over a 6.5 should be fed a lower energy ration. It is critical in the summer that stallions do not increase in BCS. The stallion owner/manager has about 160-200 days to get the stallion in the desired condition for the next breeding season.

With overly fat stallions, it may be helpful to decrease the amount of grain fed by as much as 50 percent. In cases where good pasture is available, it may be advisable to eliminate most, if not, all of the grain until the stallion has a lower BCS. The grain mix should be a 10 percent protein feed. Feeding additional protein in summer is not advisable. A slightly lower-quality hay can be fed and more exercise should aid in reducing the stallion's BCS.

Some stallions will end the breeding season with a BCS of less than a 5. If these stallions are rather thin, such as 3.5, it is recommended to feed them a higher energy grain mix with added fat, increase the amount of grain fed during the breeding season or both. It would be advisable to get their BCS up to 5-5.5 by September 1. At that time, the stallion can be fed to increase its BCS to the desired level for the upcoming breeding season.

As noted, additional exercise and being on pasture more are good therapies and change of routine for the stallion. A paddock of sufficient size should provide the stallion adequate exercise and pasture to graze. A run-in shed will provide shade in the hot summer. Clean, fresh water and trace mineralized salt should be available in summer.

Stallions at this time should see other horses, even other stallions. The idea is to provide a natural environment of good nutrition, exercise and socialization that differs from the routine of the breeding season.

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