MARYLAND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK • EASTERN SHORE

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JUNE EXTENSION HAPPENINGS

CALL THE EXTENSION OFFICE TO REGISTER

Maryland 4-H State Horse Judging Contest
June 18th, 8 am, Howard County Fairgrounds

4-H Horse Hoopla

June 21-23, a fun-filled three days and two nights for you and your horse at Fair Hill Natural Resources Area in Cecil County. Contact Debra Dvorak for more information: 410-996-5280

Progressive Farmer Safety Day Camp

June 29, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., for rural and suburban students ages 8-13. Includes demonstration/discussions of several safety topics. If you are over 13 and would like to be a volunteer or adult leader, please call the Cecil County Extension Office. All volunteers must be registered! Location: Fair Hill Natural Resources Area (Cecil County Fairgrounds). Contact Scott Rowe for more information: 410-996-5280

Q **My hay dealer has mentioned having reed canarygrass hay available. Is reed canarygrass hay safe to feed to my horse?**

A Reed canarygrass is a grass species that is used to make hay in the mid-Atlantic states because it grows well during our wet growing seasons. Older varieties of reed canarygrass contained high alkaloid levels, which made the hay bitter to horses and they often refused to eat it. Newer varieties have zero or negligible levels of alkaloids and are therefore more palatable. The University of Maryland just wrapped up a study examining the voluntary intake and nutrient digestibility of a low-alkaloid variety of reed canarygrass hay compared to timothy grass hay fed to geldings. The reed canarygrass was a second cutting and the timothy was a third cutting, but both were cut in the pre-bloom stage. Our preliminary results indicated that our geldings ate more of the timothy hay than the reed canarygrass hay when each hay was offered free choice, and that the timothy had a higher digestibility. Despite not quite living up to the timothy hay fed in our study, reed canarygrass hay is still a safe and suitable hay to feed to horses—especially if the horse does not require a highly digestible hay, like in the case of overweight horses. If you're going to try feeding reed canarygrass to your horses, make sure you purchase the low-alkaloid variety and that it was cut just before or at the early head stage.

Supplemental Information on Rumensin®: A short time ago, the "experts" answered a question pertaining to Rumensin®, a compound approved many years ago for use as a feed additive in the beef cattle industry and just recently for use in the dairy industry. Since then, important information has been obtained from the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) that should reduce horse owners' concerns regarding the possible contamination of horse feed with medications used in livestock feeds. The MDA administers a feed mill inspection program designed to ensure the sale and distribution of safe and efficacious animal feeds, including those intended for horses. There are at least four separate regulatory mechanisms in place to minimize the risk of cross contamination of medicated and non-medicated livestock feeds. First, all feed manufacturers are required to follow the FDA's Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), which include important cleanout procedures of equipment between manufacturing medicated and non-medicated feeds. Second, qualified staff from the MDA inspect feed mills regularly to make sure they are following GMPs and that any violations of those are corrected immediately. The MDA also conducts random sampling and testing of feed in the marketplace for toxin and drug contamination and to make sure that all feeds are correctly labeled. Lastly, each feed sold in Maryland is registered annually, and during that time, the label is inspected to ensure the feed is appropriate for the species and that the label adheres to the level of standards set forth by the American Association of Feed Control Officials. Horse owners can be confident that the MDA and feed mills are working together to make sure that only safe non-contaminated feeds are manufactured for our horses.

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