

JUNE EXTENSION HAPPENINGS

- **June 5 – 7 - 8:30 p.m., 4-H Horse Judging Meeting**, Anne Arundel County Extension Office (410-222-6755 or 301-970-8250, ext. 6755)
- **June 17 – 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., Maryland 4-H State Judging and Hippology Contests**, Howard County Fairgrounds (www.4horse.umd.edu)
- **June 26-27 – Maryland 4-H State Horse Jamboree and Communications Contest**, Frederick County 4-H Camp Center (www.4horse.umd.edu)
- **June 26-30 – 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Farm Fun Day Camp** – lots of cool hands-on activities and field trips to neat agricultural destinations in Washington County, Washington County Agricultural Education Center (301-791-1404)
- **June 8 – Horse Health and Disease Prevention Seminar**, topics include horse health programs, controlling the spread of infectious diseases, equine vaccinations, and disease prevention. This seminar is presented from Laurel Park racecourse to four locations throughout the state using internet technology – attend at the location nearest you! Pre-registration is required (\$30 for adults, \$20 for youth under 18). Contact Kristen Spahn at 301-405-1392 to register or visit <http://www.equinestudies.umd.edu/Extension/health2006.html> for more information

Ask the Experts

Q The show season has begun, and my friend and I are having a disagreement over whether it's a good or bad practice to let show participants leave their horses' manure on the grounds. Can you help solve our dispute?

A Show participants should be discouraged from leaving their horses' manure on the grounds for several reasons that involve parasite control, disease spread, pasture management, and sanitation. We trust that most horse owners deworm their horses regularly, but there is a possibility of a horse spreading parasite larvae onto the show grounds by leaving its droppings behind.

Since many trailers are parked in existing horse pastures for shows, show horses may be passing along their parasites to resident horses once they are returned to the pastures. In the same sense, there is a possibility, albeit low, that manure from show horses could spread disease to resident farm horses when they are returned to those pastures. Show organizers who park show participants in their pastures should adopt rules or display signs asking participants not to leave their horses' droppings behind.

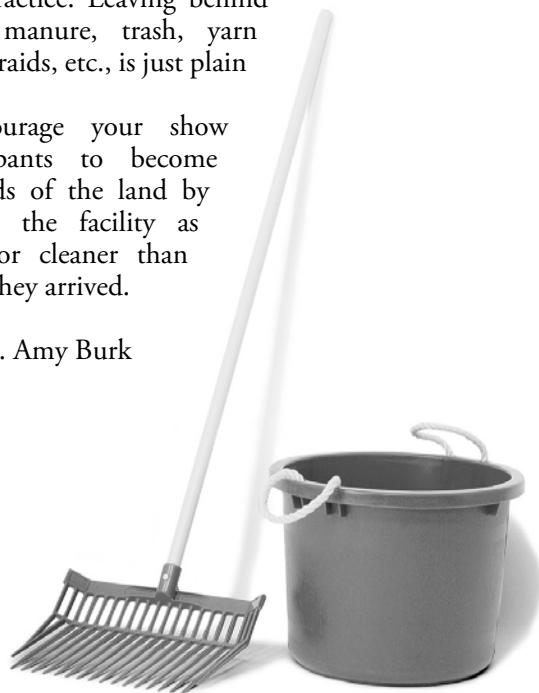
From a pasture management perspective, spreading manure shouldn't hurt the pasture unless large quantities are left behind. If not evenly spread, manure can smother the pasture plants underneath it, causing bare spots to develop. Those bare spots often lead to weed takeover in the near future.

Also, leaving shavings and other bedding materials only increases the chance of choking out the pasture plants, since it takes a long time for the material to degrade. Bare spots in existing horse pastures or in fields used for making hay become problems for the facility owner when trying to maintain good vegetative cover.

Lastly, show participants should always pick up after themselves as a good sanitation practice. Leaving behind horse manure, trash, yarn from braids, etc., is just plain rude.

Encourage your show participants to become stewards of the land by leaving the facility as clean or cleaner than when they arrived.

– Dr. Amy Burk



Disclaimer: This column is sponsored by the University of Maryland. The views expressed herein are those of the author and are not necessarily those of The Equiery's publisher or staff.