

HORSE BITS

Some Christmas gift ideas (for the horse lover)

As I become more familiar with the horse industry, I am frequently astounded by the number of supplies I didn't even know existed. So how could I possibly come up with a Christmas wish for you horse lovers?

Here's a list of equine supplies, at various prices. I hope at least one of these suggestions can help someone out. So, start dropping some hints...it's almost Christmas!

- The horse cap* \$6.99
Soak in water (or water-based fly spray) to keep your horse comfortable in hot weather.
- Horse head hitching post* \$14.95
Crafted of heavy duty cast iron to last generations.
- Horse statue U.S. mailbox* \$69.95
- Welcome mat* \$9.95
"If we're not home, we're riding."
- Classic weathervane* \$29.95
Tells you which way the wind is blowing while proclaiming your love of horses.
- Soapie ponies* \$2.95
Scent free glycerin soap with a horse toy inside.
- Measuring cane* \$18.95
Combination walking stick and measuring standard that folds into the hardwood cane. (EK)

Equine winter skin problems

An equine skin disease seen during wet winter months is "rain scald" or "rain rot". The disease usually results from a bacteria which is spread from horse to horse by direct contact, contaminated tack and grooming equipment, or external parasites. It occurs during periods of frequent rain or snow, when the horse's hair coat remains wet for a long time. During dry weather, the bacteria remains dormant, but can be spread to other horses.

For horses to develop rain rot they must acquire the bacteria from a carrier, have breaks in the skin such as those caused by biting insects or minor wounds, and be exposed to moisture that allows bacteria to reproduce and spread. Longer winter hair coats protect bacteria and maintain the moisture needed for the bacteria to reproduce.

The first indication that a horse is affected with rain scald will be numerous clumps of matted hair measuring 1/4 to 1/2 inch in diameter scattered over a horse's back and croup. Crusty scabs form under the hair clumps. In the early stages of the disease, rough, raised bumps often can be felt before they can be seen.

The most important aspect of treatment is removing all factors that predispose the horse to infection, such as excessively wet hair, biting insects and skin trauma. Winter skin needs to be kept clean and dry.

Infected horses must be groomed to remove the crusts that contain the bacteria. Grooming might be painful and often requires that the horse be sedated. Scabbed areas are painful and, when forcibly removed, uncover a moist, reddish ulcer in the skin.

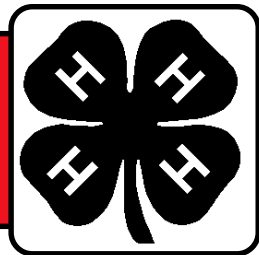
Soaking crusty lesions with medicated shampoo in order to soften them before attempting removal might be necessary.

Once the crusts and infected hair have been removed, the horse should be rinsed with providone-iodine to kill remaining bacteria. Application of betadine will assist the drying out process.

Shampoos and rinses should be done daily for at least 7 days, followed by treatment once or twice weekly until all clinical signs are gone. In severe cases, administering antibiotics for 5 to 7 days might be necessary.

Tack used on infected horses should not be used on other horses. All tack, grooming equipment and electric clippers should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to prevent spread of the disease. Good hygiene is always the best safeguard against the disease. (EK)

4-H & Youth



Free chicks

In January, we will begin the Lancaster County Embryology unit with the schools and we will have baby chicks available to the public for free!

Chicks will be hatching on or about January 26, March 2, April 13 and May 18.

If you are interested in receiving any of these chicks, please call Ellen at 441-7180. (EK)

Holiday gift ideas

If you need great gift ideas, here they are! The Lancaster County Citizen Washington Focus group will be selling prepaid phone cards and Village Inn pie certificates during the holiday season. The phone cards cost only \$10 and are good for 30 minutes. The pie certificates will sell for \$10 also. If you would like to purchase either of these two items, please call Deanna at 441-7180. All proceeds will be used to offset costs of the youth's trip to Washington D.C. this coming June. (DK)

1999 4-H Teen Council officers

- President: Valerie Lemke
- Vice President: Megan Bergman
- Secretary: Jessie Schrader
- Treasurer: J.R. Schepers
- Historians: Brenda Fiala and Connie Lemke
- Leader: Marilyn Schepers

If you would like to become a member of the 4-H Teen Council, call Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)

Guinea pigs are great pets

Another name for the guinea pig is cavy. The cavy is really a small rodent native to South America where Indians used these little creatures for pets and sometimes, for food. The name guinea pig may have come from the fact that they were commonly sold in England for the price of one guinea. A cavy is shaped like an eggplant with feet. It has no tail.

Guinea pigs are gentle. They live a long time, as long as seven years or more. They are odorless, but their cage may become smelly if you forget to change the litter. Cavies are inexpensive to feed, resistant to disease and pleasant to handle. A cavy may be described as a clean cuddly hairy lump that whistles. Care must be taken against falls. A guinea pig can be severely injured if dropped.

Guinea pigs come in many colors and patterns. There are English, Peruvian and Abyssinian.

Guinea pigs are not very fussy about where they live. They do need to be dry, out of a draft and not too cold. You will probably keep your guinea pig indoors in a cage or glass-sided house. Your pet will need at least two square feet of space. Since guinea pigs are not climbers, a secure wire screen top is necessary only for safety from other animals. You can use wood shavings, coarse sawdust, shredded newspaper or hay for litter on the bottom of your pet's pen. Change it as often as necessary.

Cavies are unhappy and uncomfortable at temperatures below 40 degrees or over 90 degrees. Be sure your pet has plenty of cool water. Your pet will appreciate a snug little house made by cutting an opening in one end of a shoe box turned upside down without the lid. It will not last long because guinea pigs like to chew up anything they can get their teeth into—even the wood of their cage. This chewing is necessary for the proper wearing down its teeth.

Cavies are vegetarians. That means they eat only plants and fresh produce. Any vegetables, fruits and green forage plants may be offered. Be sure they are washed clean and crisp. A guinea pig will refuse to eat certain vegetables like onion, peppers and potatoes. They may enjoy occasional feedings of whole grains such as corn, oats, wheat or milo.

And...you will want to play with your pet regularly and gently, feeding it from your hand and stroking its fur. It will be far happier if you do. (ALH)

Character Counts! training



A great opportunity for training in the national character education program, Character Counts!, will be Tuesday, January 19, 1999, 9 a.m.-Noon. This training will prepare you to use the Character Counts! curriculum in your own educational settings. Learn about trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, citizenship and decision-making. If you have questions or are interested in attending please contact LaDeane Jha or Karen Whitson at 441-7180. Registration Fee: \$5.00. (KW)

