

Prepping Your Barn For *Winter*

As the leaves begin to change, the majority of the masses begin to think about snow, soup and hot cocoa. For those of us with livestock, our thoughts start to drift toward being prepared for sub zero temperatures and frozen buckets. Check out the following list and begin your own to prepare for the upcoming season!



① Clear Out Cobwebs

Cobwebs can completely take over the barn during the summer months. Use a broom to clear these out, especially if they are covering light fixtures or outlets as they can become a fire hazard. With the dark coming on earlier in the day, you're more likely to be using lights than you do in the summer months and you don't want to take any chances.



Check Your Electrical ②

Don't wait until you're floundering around in the cold dark because a light bulb blew. Take some time to check all of your bulbs and replace them as needed now, before the cold sets in. Remember Murphy's Law: whatever can happen, will, which means that when you're freezing and just want to get barn chores done so you can go inside and get some hot cocoa, that will be the time that a bulb or circuit will blow, keeping you out in the cold longer while you fix the problem! This is also a great time to have a licensed electrician to come out to inspect your wiring to make sure everything is safe and doesn't need replaced. Another good lighting tip: have a few flashlights handy near the barn door in case you need a light!



3 Check Heated Buckets

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Guaranteed: the one thing you need this Winter will also be the same one thing that everyone else needs and will either be out of stock or on back-order when you desperately need it! Prepare ahead of time and check your heated buckets and tank heaters. Check plugs and wiring and make sure that everything works. Replacing what you need now will put you ahead of the curve of last minute shoppers who have the same problem that you have: icy water that their horses won't or can't drink.

Insulate Exposed Water Pipes 4

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Adding a little bit of insulation to the part of your water pipes that are exposed will save you the headache of dealing with frozen pipes later. Home improvement stores sell inexpensive pipe insulation to put around your pipes (looks like a pool noodle!) to make sure you have access to water when you're ready to fill those heated buckets!

5 Be Ready With Hay and Feed

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This one is pretty obvious. Most horse owners make sure they stock up on hay during the summer months, so they don't have to worry about running out when it's more difficult to find in the Winter and Spring. Horses tend to eat more hay in the Winter to keep up their body temperatures, so keep that in mind.

The rule of thumb is to keep at least 2 - 4 weeks worth of extra feed and supplements for your horse in case of inclement weather where you can't get out or no one is capable of delivering to you.



Wash and Repair Blankets

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If your horse's blanket has been sitting in a trunk all summer, it's not a bad idea to get it out, give it a wash and inspect it for any areas that need fixed. Horses will be horses, and it's never uncommon to see rips and tears in their turnout blankets! Repair any problem areas now so you don't have to worry about doing it when the blanket is actually needed for those super cold days.

7 Make Repairs To Your Barn

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Inspect windows, doors and other areas of your barn and make necessary repairs now. Making sure that windows latch and that doors are able to freely open and close will make it easier on you to keep drafts out of your barn this Winter. Check door tracks and grease hinges to keep things moving without obstruction. It's much easier to do this now than later!



Taking time to check things off of your prep list now will make Winter go so much smoother for you and your horse. Make your list today!