

The Importance of Clean Water



Would you drink dirty water? Water that had algae, mud, maybe even feces in it? Would you be able to put it to your mouth and swallow?

I would, if it was a matter of survival. Chances are, if it was a matter of life or death, you would too. If that was the only water available and the choice was to drink that water or die, I am betting there are not many people who wouldn't take at least a sip. But, would you drink your fill of that dirty, nasty water? Would you drink deeply so that your thirst was satisfied and your body was hydrated, all the way down to a cellular level? Probably not. And neither would your horse.

We all know that [water is the most important nutrient](#) that any animal can have. It is essential for almost every function, from digestion and respiration, to reproduction and lactation. But what we may often forget is that even though our animals have access to water, that doesn't mean they are well [hydrated](#). If their water is teeming with algae or full of mud or excrement, chances are that they are choosing not to drink as much as they could. In the winter, if it is too cold or even frozen over, horses will have lowered intake as well.

A horse that is not well hydrated can run into a myriad of problems, not the least of which can be impactions that can lead to [colic](#). Veterinarians will tell you that winter is prime-time for colic episodes that are directly related to lack of water. This is why it is important to monitor your horse's water intake and make sure they are getting their fill on a daily basis.

The bare minimum amount of water that a horse needs on a daily basis is 0.5 to 1 gallon for every 100 lbs. of weight in a maintenance environment with a temperate climate. Add in performance demands, lactation, [hot weather](#), humidity, etc. and the demand for water increases significantly. Your best bet? Keeping free choice clean cool water available at all times.

But how do you know if your water supply is up to snuff? There is a pretty easy test to tell. Ask yourself these questions as you stand at your horses' pond, water trough or bucket:

-) Is it the right temperature? (between 45 – 65 degrees Fahrenheit is preferred)
-) Is it fresh?
-) Is it clean?
-) Is it abundant?

Would I want to drink it?

If you can answer “yes” to these questions, then you are providing a good water source that your horse should be happy to drink their fill from.

Take this “water quality quiz” today, and then **take it again in the middle of winter**, when the way you supply water to your horse may be entirely different. Because no matter what the season, water is key to a healthy, active horse.

The Feed Room Blog

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