

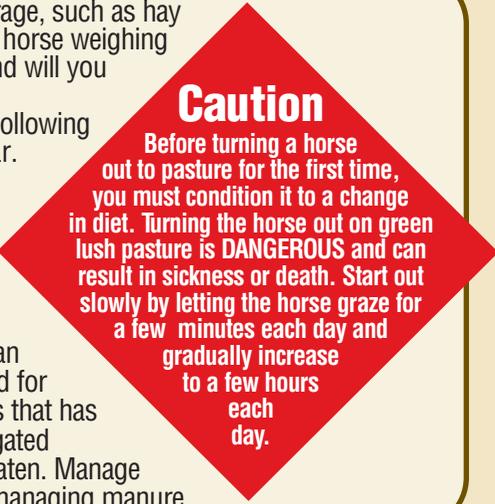
**Pasture:** The major component of a horse's diet is a good forage, such as hay (see below for information about hay) or pasture. A horse weighing 1000 lbs. will eat about 600 lbs. of forage each month. How much land will you need to feed one horse for a year?

If you're keeping a horse on dry land (non-irrigated) pasture, use the following formula to determine how many acres your horse will need per year.

1 animal unit (1 horse) per inch of annual rain (for the region) per section of land (640 acres). Example: 640 acres divided by 8 inches of rain = 80 acres per 1 horse.

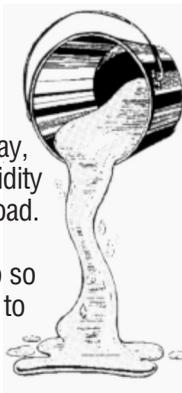
To keep pasture grass healthy **DO NOT** let the horse overgraze the land so that the grass will no longer grow. **Overgrazed dryland pasture may never recover.**

Irrigated pastures with adequate moisture will grow more forage than dryland pasture so less acreage is needed. The amount of land needed for one horse ranges from 3/4 to 1-1/4 acres. The horse will not eat grass that has been trampled or has manure on it. Overgrazing will also damage irrigated pastures. For good quality regrowth, leave about 1/3 of the grass uneaten. Manage your pasture as a crop by soil testing, fertilizing, clipping weeds and managing manure.



## Water:

Your horse must have plenty of clean, fresh water available at **ALL** times. A horse will drink 10 to 12 gallons of water each day, depending on temperature, humidity levels, ration content and work load. In the winter months, stock tank heaters will help stop ice buildup so that water is **ALWAYS** accessible to the horse.



## Grain:

A grain mix (usually oats and corn) should be added to the diet when you increase the horse's training, work or activity. Young and old horses may also need grain.

*This chart shows how much grain to feed an average 1000 lb. horse:*

	No Work	No Grain
Light Work (1–2 hours per day)		1-1/2 lbs. Grain per hour of work
Medium Work (2–4 hours per day)		1-1/2–2 lbs. Grain per hour of work
Heavy Work (4 or more hours per day)		1-1/2–2-1/2 lbs. Grain per hour of work

## Hay:

Your horse will need supplemental hay during periods of snow cover or other times when forage is not available. Feeding hay will also extend the grazing season on properties with small acreage. A small rectangular blade of hay can weigh between 45 and 85 lbs. How much hay to buy and feed to your horse should be based upon the weight of the bales and the nutrient value of the hay. You can feed less hay if it is higher quality. It is best to have your hay analyzed to determine nutrient value.

An average 1000 lb. horse will eat 20 lbs. of medium quality hay per day. How do you determine how much hay to buy? Use this formula and fill in the blanks with your own numbers.

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days to feed hay x 20 lbs. hay per day ÷ \_\_\_\_\_ lbs. of weight per bale = # of bales needed.

example: 365 days x 20 lbs. hay per day ÷ 50 lbs. per bale = 146 bales needed for one year for one horse.

**Contact the New Mexico University County Extension Agent in your county to get additional information on all these topics and more.**

## Quick Facts about Hay:

-  Legume (alfalfa and clover) hay is higher in protein than grass hay so you need to feed less (weight) legume hay than grass hay. Grass hay will keep the horse busy eating longer and prevent boredom.
-  In New Mexico, alfalfa is cut up to six times per year. Later cuttings may have higher protein content. Do not switch diets abruptly between grass and alfalfa. Hays in your region will vary in type and cost. Consult your veterinarian as to what is best for your horse.
-  Hay for horses must be mold and dust free.
-  Weeds have limited nutritional value. Weed seeds can be passed through the manure and infest your pasture. Buy hay that is free of weeds, as some weeds are poisonous to horses.



## Minimum Health Requirements

It is critical that you develop a partnership with a veterinarian prior to an emergency situation. This can be done by consulting your veterinarian for your horse's routine and preventive health care.

### Dental Care:

Teeth should be checked by a veterinarian at least once a year. The teeth may need to be *float*ed (filed) due to uneven wear from the grinding motion used while eating.

### Vaccinations

All horses should be vaccinated at least once a year, usually in the spring. A vaccination program is determined by age, use and overall health of your horse. Time of year influences the risk of infectious diseases. Contact your veterinarian for recommendations.

### Internal Parasite Control:

Your horse needs to be de-wormed several times each year. The frequency of treatment varies with your horse's management.

### First Aid:

Consult your veterinarian about an appropriate first aid kit. It should contain bandage material, a thermometer, ointments and other related items. Contact a veterinarian any time your horse appears sick or disoriented, or has been injured.

### Foot Care:

Clean out hooves before and after you ride. Examine them regularly for problems. Hooves should be trimmed regularly. The need for hoof care varies with the use and age of your horse. Contact a qualified farrier (horseshoer) for recommendations for your horse.

**Contact a veterinarian and farrier in your area to get additional information on all these topics and more.**