



**Revolutionary Software System**  
'worry-free horse management and business operations'

[click here](#)



The latest news and in-depth, veterinarian-approved articles on equine health care from *The Horse* magazine.



Find horse health articles by keyword:

 

Welcome Alejandra Abella | [Logout](#) | [My Account](#)

- HOME**
- BROWSE TOPICS**
- NEWS**
- E-NEWSLETTERS**
  - Subscribe
  - Archive
- RESOURCES**
  - Video Library
  - PDF Library
  - Glossary
  - New Products
  - Events
  - Classifieds
  - Equine Directory
- MAGAZINE**
  - About Us
  - Subscribe**
    - Gift Subscription
    - Freelance Info
    - Upcoming Topics
    - Buy a Copy
- ADVERTISE**
- CONTACT US**
- HELP**

**Related Topics:** [Farm/Facility Management](#) > [Air Quality](#)  
[Farm/Facility Management](#) > [Barns/Sheds](#)  
[Farm/Facility Management](#) > [Feed Storage](#)  
[Farm/Facility Management](#) > [Stalls](#)  
[Farm/Facility Management](#) > [Waste Management](#)

▼ ADVERTISEMENT



Subscribe now and save 66%

## Healthy Habitats

by: Sharon Biggs  
March 01 2007, Article # 9226

- 

There are many benefits to keeping horses on your own property, but there are also responsibilities, and one of the biggest is barn maintenance. Whether your barn is old or new, there are products on the market that can help ease the burden. And if your barn is too old to cut it, there are ways to augment what you have or replace it.

### Stalls

Stall flooring is a big maintenance issue, particularly if the floor is made of dirt. "Many horses paw and pace in their stalls, which can cause uneven areas in the flooring," says Alejandra Abella, project director for Equestrian Services, LLC, a consulting, planning, and design firm specializing in equestrian facilities and amenities that's based in Charlottesville, Va., and Silver Spring, Md. "This can lead to leg fatigue and injury. Rubber mats are a good choice and can help prevent holes and uneven surfaces."

Mats have come a long way since the days of reusing old escalator and conveyor belting. The pioneering thick black stall mats cut down on the abuse to dirt floors, but they were a chore to lift, tended to move out of position, and didn't allow urine to drain. Stall Skins do everything that those old heavy mats do, yet they are lighter (about 12 pounds) and made of polypropylene, a permeable material that allows urine to drain through to keep bedding drier.

Neutralizing urine spots can be a problem in stalls. Lime has always been the old standby, but it can make mats slippery, can be toxic if a horse licks or ingests it, and has the ability to combust if not stored properly. Alternative commercial products have the benefits of lime, but are less harsh. Sweet PDZ Horse Stall Refresher is a product made from a mineral called zeolite, which absorbs water and gases such as ammonia. It can be added to the manure pile to safely compost. Stall DRY by Western Industrial Clay Products, made of diatomaceous earth and clay, neutralizes ammonia and other odors and absorbs liquid.

### Keep up-to-date with our weekly e-newsletters!

- Horse Health News
- Horse Welfare and Industry News

Your Name:

Email:

**Pinching Pennies**

**What are you doing to save money on the farm this year?**  
(Check all that apply)

- Downsizing the herd/breeding fewer horses
- Reducing energy and gas usage
- Repairing/reusing rather than buying new
- Going to fewer shows or trail riding local routes
- Other

**Share your tips**  
(100 characters max)

[Vote](#)  
[View Results](#)

Go to Article #:

[Go](#)

## ADOPTABLE HORSE

*Indiana*  
Featured Adoptable  
Pet:



Katie

Indiana Horse Rescue  
Frankfort, Indiana  
[compliments of Petfinder.com](#)

Sponsored By  
[Exclusively Equine](#)

Holy Cow is an all-purpose organic cleaner that can be used for everything from cleaning water buckets and troughs to stall walls and even tack.

### Manure Removal

Cleaning stalls is not only time consuming, but it's hard on the joints and back. The Muck-O-Matic was designed by Larry and Marsha Simms to overcome these human health issues, and to prevent bedding and time wastage. The Simms say that using the machine reduces their own stall cleaning from three hours to forty minutes, and it cuts down on bedding waste. The machine takes the place of a wheelbarrow and works by vibrating a grid to separate the soiled bedding from the clean shavings as you scoop the stall bedding onto the grid. The manure and used bedding tumbles into a bucket and the good bedding falls back down into the stall.

A small utility vehicle, such as the John Deere Gator or the Kawasaki Mule, can be helpful for manure removal and also for bedding delivery and cleaning the stalls.

Driving the utility vehicle down the aisle to collect soiled bedding can eliminate the need for a wheelbarrow, but try not to keep the engine running. The fumes from the tractor can be a pollutant, particularly if your barn doesn't have enough ventilation.

### Aisleways

Although leaf blowers can move the mess out of barn aisles and cut down on sweeping, they can create a dust bowl atmosphere in your barn; this is not a healthy environment for you or your horses. KD Lawn Vacuum, made by Billy Goat, picks up stable debris easily. It also has an onboard hose kit to clean tight corners and hard-to-reach places. The vacuum is powerful enough to pick up large debris such as soda cans and pop bottles.

Those of us who own older barns with a dirt floor know how dusty they can be, and that dust is easily turned to mud when dampened down or when water buckets spill. Rather than replacing the floor with cement, the problem can be solved by using mats or brick pavers.

### Old Barns and Maintenance

How is that old barn working for you? Are you taking a long look and considering whether it is time for demolition? "We frequently work on sites that have existing barns," says Abella. "And the question of whether the barn is still appropriate or must be torn down is a big concern for our clients, and understandably so; those old barns have a charm. And building a new barn can be expensive."

Historically, very little planning was done to make life easier. Convenience seemed to be the uppermost consideration when it came to storing hay; it was usually kept overhead. Of course, this is also a modern problem and most of us choose to keep the hay as close to the horse as possible, so we either store hay in a stall or hay area next to the horses. But considering the combustible nature of hay, convenient storage might not be the safest option.

Moving hay outside in a pole barn will cut down the chance of a barn fire, but it can be an inconvenience.

To cut down on "to-ing and fro-ing," several bales can be stacked in area that is fitted with fire-retardant-treated wood (FRTW). This is made of a mixture of lumber and plywood, along with a fire-retardant solution. It works by delaying the spread of flames and cutting down on smoke. All fire-retardant wood will be stamped with FRTW. You can also paint over existing wood with fire-retardant paint and varnish.

Stall size is another important consideration for barn organization. If your stalls are too small, not only is there a risk of your horse getting cast, but he will have a difficult time keeping out of his manure pile. If your barn has a good open floor plan, you can make a better stall system.

"Sizing of horse stalls is imperative for the comfort of stabled horses," says Dennis Rusch, equestrian facilities product manager for Morton Buildings in Morton, Ill. Morton stall options include powder-coat painted steel stalls and an anodized aluminum stall system, which extends the life of the stall's finish.

Classic Equine Equipment has several stall lines to fit all barn types, such as self-



### Marketplace links

#### BOOKS & VIDEOS

[Exclusively Equine](#)

#### HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS & SUPPLEMENTS

[JeffersEquine.com](#)

[Well-Horse](#)

#### HOOF CARE

[Keratex Equine](#)

[Hoofcare](#)

[Nanric Inc. Equine](#)

[Podiatry](#)

#### IMAGING EQUIPMENT

[Products Group](#)

[International](#)

#### TACK & EQUIPMENT

[JeffersEquine.com](#)

supporting, post-frame, and even custom-designed buildings.

If your stall flooring is completely shot, rather than stripping it out and starting with a new surface, Equustall's molded grids help augment an old floor and improve drainage. They are easily cut to fit and install quickly with a tongue- and-groove system.

One of the biggest factors to consider when deciding if it's worth renovation is ventilation, which is both a health and maintenance concern. "Many old barns are built on banks with low ceilings and few windows," says Abella. "As a result, they lack the number of air exchanges necessary to maintain proper ventilation and health for the horse. Ammonia fumes from urine can damage the respiratory tract."

In addition, spores and particles from mold, hay, and dust can be harmful and can accumulate, particularly if the hay is stored above the horses' stalls. Properly placed windows and doors and open soffits create good air exchange that can improve these situations, but they aren't easy to add to an old barn.

### Modular Barns

If you have decided that now is the time to rebuild, you might want to consider a modular or pre-engineered barn. These can be customized to create an easy-to-maintain barn, such as one with wider stall doors and aisles to allow you to strip a stall clean with a utility tractor's bucket rather than with fork and wheelbarrow. And if your horse chews wood, you can request stalls lined with wood, but topped with a metal bar.

Morton has been manufacturing farm buildings since the early 1950s. Rusch says there are several maintenance basics to keep in mind when considering a modular barn.

"Look for a proper roof system vapor barrier/retarder, which reduces condensation and the problems associated with that," he advises. "The exterior roofing and siding should also use the most current and reliable coatings to provide the best life on the exterior of the building."

Abella says, "The key is to go see as many barns as you can before making a decision, and don't just go see the barns that have just been put up; go see the ones that have wear and tear."

### Handmade Barns

There is a growing trend for Amish-made barns because of the handmade quality and work ethic of the builder. Those living near an Amish community, in particular, can often find a builder easily, either by word of mouth or by referral. Cathleen Graham of Nassau County, N.Y., found her builder through an Amish broker called Lancaster Barns.

She made the choice for an Amish building because she wanted the look and feel of a solid wooden barn. She also knew the Amish, with their shunning of electricity and labor-saving devices, would design the barn with easy horsekeeping in mind.

### Take-Home Message

We all know an initial investment spent on a labor-saving device or a new product can pay for itself soon enough. And if you have a friendly barn, your horses will be healthier and you'll have more time to spend riding instead of slaving.

---

### Related Articles

**R** = Available to registered members only.

#### [Farm/Facility Management](#) >> [Air Quality](#)

- ▶ [Breathing Easy: Air Quality Testing in the Equine Barn](#) **R** - July, 2007
- ▶ [Shredded Court Documents Give Horse Allergy Relief](#) **R** - August, 2006
- ▶ [Ammonia is the Enemy](#) **R** - August, 2006
- ▶ [Winter Respiratory Health](#) **R** - December, 2004
- ▶ [How Safe is Your Barn?](#) **R** - February, 2004

**Farm/Facility Management >> Barns/Sheds**

- ▶ [A Place to Call Home \(Barn Design Tips\)](#) **R** - August, 2007
- ▶ [Home Sweet Barn](#) **R** - October, 2006
- ▶ [Barn Makeover: Gathering Storm or the End of the Rainbow?](#) **R** - May,

2006

- ▶ [Run-In Shed Makeover](#) **R** - May, 2006
- ▶ [Housing the Horse](#) **R** - March, 2006

**Farm/Facility Management >> Feed Storage**

- ▶ [A Place to Call Home \(Barn Design Tips\)](#) **R** - August, 2007
- ▶ [Nine Steps to a Better Feed Room](#) **R** - May, 2006
- ▶ [Quick Barn Fixes](#) **R** - September, 2005
- ▶ [A Clean Sweep](#) **R** - October, 2004
- ▶ [Locking Down Your Feeds](#) **R** - September, 2004

**Farm/Facility Management >> Stalls**

- ▶ [A Place to Call Home \(Barn Design Tips\)](#) **R** - August, 2007
- ▶ [Safe and Healthful Stall Mats](#) **R** - June, 2007
- ▶ [Stall Stuff](#) **R** - May, 2007
- ▶ [To Stall, or Not to Stall?](#) **R** - October, 2006
- ▶ [Home Sweet Barn](#) **R** - October, 2006

**Farm/Facility Management >> Waste Management**

- ▶ [Olympic Horse Manure Management Going Green in Hong Kong](#) **R** -

January, 2008

- ▶ [Stall Stuff](#) **R** - May, 2007
- ▶ [City Fights To Preserve Equine Identity](#) **R** - December, 2006
- ▶ [Oh, Horse Manure!](#) **R** - March, 2006
- ▶ [Racetrack Compost Plan Underway](#) **R** - July, 2005

**Readers are cautioned to seek the advice of a qualified veterinarian before proceeding with any diagnosis, treatment, or therapy.**



Copyright © 2008 BLOOD-HORSE PUBLICATIONS. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without written permission of BLOOD-HORSE PUBLICATIONS is prohibited. THE HORSE, THE HORSE logo, THEHORSE.COM and THEHORSE.COM logo are trademarks of BLOOD-HORSE PUBLICATIONS.



[Terms of Use](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Site Map](#)