

Environment Protection Act 1990 and Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994. Contravention of these regulations constitutes a criminal offence and could lead to heavy penalty upon conviction. Similarly pollution of 'Controlled Waters' is regulated under the Water Resources Act 1991.

If the manure is to be spread where it has been composted, it is exempt from waste management licensing regulations.

Solution

The best way for the private horse or pony owner to manage their manure is to compost it at home, in a properly constructed manure store for use on their own holding.

Commercial premises, unless they are on legally defined agricultural land, will have to use a registered waste contractor to remove their manure.

It is still possible for allotments to receive manure from large stable yards as long as they are registered as being exempt from the waste management licensing regulations, and a registered waste carrier transports the manure to them.

Summary

Horse manure is a valuable by product, which with proper handling can be of little concern to other users of the county. Horse owners can help to create a positive image of their activities by handling and storing manure as inoffensively as possible.

Even if the regulations, which govern how waste from commercially kept horses doesn't apply to you, consider applying the standards, as they will help to prevent pollution of your environment.



Further Information

BHS Guide to Grassland Management for Horse and Pony Owners
British Horse Society 2000

Country Guide: Grassland and Grasskeep Management
NFU Countryside

Country Guide: Horse & Pony Management
NFU Countryside

Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys
ADAS Consulting Ltd 2002

Five Point Plan for wildlife friendly farming
English Nature & NFU 2002

Horses, grasslands & nature conservation
English Nature 2002

Equipment & Vehicle Storage Advice Note (012)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Exercise Areas & Exercise Equipment Advice Note (005)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Feed & Bedding Advice Note (011)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Fencing Advice Note (002)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Gateways Advice Note (008)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Grassland Management Advice Note (003)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Poisonous Plants Advice Note (010)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Stables & Buildings Advice Note (006)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Tenancy Agreement Advice Note (008)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Trees & Hedges Advice Note (001)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2002

Water Regulations Advice Note (004)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2002

Water Supply Installation Guide to Agricultural Premises
Published by Water Regulations Advisory Scheme 2001

Worming Advice Note (009)
Horse Pasture Management Project 2003

Useful Contacts

ADAS
01954 267666
www.adas.co.uk

British Horse Society (BHS)
08701 202 244
www.bhs.org.uk

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)
01491 839766
www.btcv.org.uk

Business, Farming and Rural Advisor:
Businesslink Surrey
0845 749 4949
www.businesslinksurrey.co.uk

Country Land & Business Association
01435 865106
www.cla.org.uk

Countryside Agency
020 7340 2900
www.countryside.gov.uk

English Nature
01733 455101
www.english-nature.org.uk

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
01483 404255
www.fwag.org.uk

Fencing Contractors Association
07000 560722
www.fencingcontractors.org

Horse Pasture Management Project
01372 741783
www.surreycc.gov.uk/horsepastureproject

Lower Mole Countryside Management Project
01372 743783
www.countryside-management.org.uk

National Association of Agricultural Contractors
01733 362920
www.naac.co.uk

National Farmers Union (NFU)
01483 414016
www.nfucountryside.org.uk

Surrey Hills Partnership
01372 220653
www.surreyhills.org



Horse Pasture Management Project
2 West Park Farmhouse, Horton Country Park, Horton Lane, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8PL
Tel: 01372 741783 Fax: 01372 742291 Email: horsepasture@surreycc.gov.uk

Manure Storage & Disposal Advice Note (007)

© Horse Pasture Management Project
By Rachel Simpson
March 2003



Purpose

This brief guide is intended to provide horse and pony owners and keepers with some basic advice on how to store and dispose of their manure. It will demonstrate how the regulations set down by the Environment Protection Act of 1990 impact on the way that horse manure should be stored and disposed of. Both the Environment Agency and local authorities administer the Act, with the Environment Agency working to ensure that no pollution occurs, and local authorities dealing with issues relating to public nuisance.

Introduction

Surrey is a beautiful county, with over 25% having been designated the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and much of the county being of national importance for landscape or nature conservation reasons. Horses and ponies can have an effect on the landscape, and it is up to their owners and keepers to ensure that this effect is a positive one!

The storage and disposal of horse manure can really impact on neighbours as well as visitors to the area, such as those on footpaths and bridleways. A well thought out plan for storage and disposal can ensure that the impact your horse manure has on the environment is a positive one – horse manure is a valuable by-product if it is correctly managed.

Problem

An average horse will produce 20.4 kilos (or 45 pounds) of manure each day or 7.5 tonnes annually. This does not allow for bedding that is removed from the stable when soiled. Whilst some manure is dropped onto fields when horses and ponies are turned out, best practice recommends that this is collected and stored both for paddock hygiene and to improve the appearance of the holding.

Duty of Care

Any one who keeps horses and ponies has a 'Duty of Care' to ensure that their horse manure is stored and disposed of correctly. The Environment Agency regulations state:-

- *“The Duty of Care requires that you ensure all waste is stored and disposed of responsibly, that it is only handled or dealt with by individuals or companies that are authorised to deal with it and that a record is kept of all wastes received or transferred through a system of signed Waste Transfer Notes.”*

Design for manure

Stables should be designed to prevent drainage contaminated with manure entering any watercourse or drain.

- The regulations state that it is mandatory to ensure that *“When cleaning and disinfecting the stables never let this effluent enter surface water drains or watercourses.”*
- They suggest that you *“Divert uncontaminated water, e.g. roof drainage away from dirty areas as only clean water can be discharged directly to watercourses or soakaways.”*

Storage

Responsible storage is necessary to protect our local environment from the harmful affects that the 'run off' from manure can have if it is allowed to get into watercourses such as streams and rivers via your paddocks and fields.



Environment Agency guidelines for stables states that the following is **mandatory**

- *“Run-off from manure heaps, contaminated yards, stable washings and hay soaking should not be allowed to enter surface waters or watercourses unless a written authorisation (a discharge consent) has been received from your Environmental Regulator.”*

As an example of how to ensure that the rules are followed, they offer guidelines for *Good Practice*

- *“Temporary field heaps should be sited where there is no risk of run-off polluting watercourses. They should be at least 10 metres from a watercourse and 50 metres from a well, spring or borehole that supplies water for human consumption or for use in farm dairies.”*
- *“Permanent stores should have an impermeable base that slopes so that run-off can be collected easily in a sealed underground tank.”*

A well-constructed permanent manure store must therefore have a concrete base, which slopes to the back of the store (in the absence of a sealed underground tank), and solid sides which will prevent the muck spilling out and contaminating adjacent land. Ideally, the muck should be kept as dry as possible. A rule of thumb would be that one horse would require an area of 5 cubic metres per week.

Well-composted horse manure can be used as a valuable addition to the garden and even spread back on the horse's own fields. Once manure has been composted for twelve months, it is generally accepted that the larvae of harmful parasites will have died.



Disposal

The issue of disposal of horse waste nationally is currently unresolved. Historically, horse waste from stables where 'bedding' material was straw, was sold to the mushroom compost growers. Local farmers would also remove manure heaps for spreading on agricultural land, but, due to the decline in the number of small farms in the county, there are now fewer small farmers with the time, or the machinery to remove, compost and dispose of their muck heaps.

A certain amount of horse manure has always been composted for use on allotments and private gardens,

For many reasons, including changes in agricultural practices, the majority of horses and ponies are now bedded on materials such as wood shavings, shredded paper, shredded card, and even by-products from hemp and wool. Many of these bedding products do not compost in the same way as straw. Wood shavings, for example, have a high lignin content that slows down their rate of decomposition.

As with most waste, important legislation now controls the disposal of horse waste from commercial premises and there are now cost implications to the horse owner.

The law

There are different regulations for disposing of manure from commercially kept horses and those that are kept privately, and also for horses kept on legally defined agricultural land.

Current legislation states that commercially kept horses, such as those in livery yards or riding stables produce 'controlled waste' that must be disposed of by a licensed waste disposal contractor.

'Controlled Waste' is the definition used in the regulations, and waste becomes 'controlled' where: -

- *it is discarded,*
- *where there is intent to discard*
- *or where it is required that it must be discarded.*

There are circumstances where, on private land, the waste is composted and reused and so may not become a controlled waste. But if the regulations, which govern how waste from commercially kept horses doesn't apply to you, consider applying the standards, as they will help to prevent pollution of your environment and to ensure that unfortunate prosecution does not occur.

Where waste is controlled: i.e. it is discarded or produced as a commercial waste, it is subject to the licensing regime 'Duty of Care' etc. Exemptions can be made and the exemption registered with the local EA office (Frimley, Surrey). Any exemption must comply with the requirements of the Environment Protection Act. In short you can't be exempt if there is a risk of pollution or if nuisance is caused.

All controlled wastes are subject to regulation under the