

Equine Layout and Facility Planning Checklist

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Horse facilities should be planned and laid out to meet the needs and goals of the operation. Horse owners need to consider how horses, humans, vehicles, equipment, and water will flow through the operation.

This publication is designed to help horse owners design or redesign their facilities. When considering flow, horse owners should evaluate:

- Parking for trucks, trailers, and other pieces of equipment
- Structures to be used in caring for horses
- Access to electricity, fresh water, and potentially septic systems
- Airflow within structures that horses inhabit
- Movement of horses in and out of buildings
- Convenient access to pastures, paddocks, and other turnout areas
- Transport of feed and bedding, both into storage and to the areas where it will be used
- Manure management (composting, spreading, or hauling off the property)
- Water flow off buildings and other areas to prevent areas of mud

Completing this planning checklist should aid in improving the location of buildings and other infrastructure within the farm.

Access

Access to the property and within the property needs to be considered. Is easy access available to the typical vehicles that will be coming onto the property? Can the supplied hay get on the property with the size of vehicle and trailer used for delivery? Can trucks and horse trailers easily be maneuvered—both onto the property and also within the property? Can hay- and mowing-related equipment (cutter, rakes, balers, and wagons) get through the required gate openings? Are the roadways on the property suitable for the traffic expected?



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Keep in mind that the space necessary to maneuver easily onto the property and around the property is typically larger than one might expect.

Buildings

When constructing the barn, consider how many stalls will be required and what size the stalls should be. Plan accordingly, as a barn that is too big creates extra cost, but one that is too small may restrict the usage potential. In most cases, a 12-foot-by-12-foot stall should meet most needs, but also consider the width of the aisleway. At a minimum, a 12-foot aisle is recommended, but this will be dependent on the desired use of the barn.

Another consideration is related to hay and bedding use. Will some of the needed hay and bedding be stored in the barn, or will there be a separate structure for hay and bedding storage? If sized correctly, the separate structure for hay and bedding might also accommodate basic equipment (tractor, manure spreader, drag, UTV, etc.) present on the farm.

Both indoor and outdoor riding areas need to be sized to meet the expectations of the facility users. In addition to size,

consider the preferred footing type, based on the activities for which the horses will be used. An added consideration will be the equipment needed in managing the arena (tractor, watering set-up, drag, etc.) to properly maintain the riding surface.

Much of the infrastructure (for example, buildings and drives) creates impervious areas. It is important to not only have a proper layout for these different parts of the facility but also a plan for how to divert the water from precipitation, so it does not make the facility more difficult or impossible to operate.

Spend time on planning in order to more easily care for and enjoy your horses. If this is a personal operation, a little less convenience may be tolerable. If it is a business, being efficient and effective in time management for horse care within the facility is highly important. Regardless, taking time to complete the following checklist will help to ensure that the facility is safe and functional for horses and humans. After the checklist is completed, discuss results with county agents, extension specialists, and others within the industry to ascertain the suitability of the proposed or reworked facility.

Equine Facility Planning Checklist

General Farm Information

How many total acres will be devoted to the horse facility?

How many horses will reside on the property? ..

How many will reside in stalls?.....

How many will reside on pasture?

Class of horses (check all that apply)

- Broodmares
- Stallions
- Young horses (foals/yearlings)
- Horses in training
- Boarding horses

How many acres of pasture will be included? ..

How many pastures will there be?

Will the pastures have shelters? Yes No Some

Will the pastures have water? Yes No Some

How many small turnout paddocks will be needed?

What size will the turnout paddock(s) be?

Do you have or plan to have a dry lot? Yes No

Access to the Facility

Does the entrance/road access allow for larger trailers and possibly semi-trucks delivering hay? Yes No Unsure

Are drives and parking areas within the facility large enough to allow vehicles to maneuver? Yes No Unsure

Is parking adequate for trailers? Yes No Unsure

Is parking adequate for cars/ trucks? . Yes No Unsure

Are all-weather surfaces available or planned for heavy-use areas? Yes No Unsure

If hay is harvested on the property, are the gates large enough for hay-related equipment to pass through easily? (Sixteen feet is recommended, and 12 feet would be the minimum for most hay equipment.) Yes No Unsure

Barn and Horse Housing

How many stalls do you want/need?

Size of stalls:

Size of barn aisle(s):

Size of tack room:

Will the facility include:

Wash rack?..... Yes No

Storage areas in the barn?..... Yes No

Restroom? Yes No

Office?..... Yes No

Feed/Bedding Storage in the Barn

Will the facility use:

Main floor area for hay and bedding? Yes No

Overhead structure for hay and bedding storage? Yes No

Amount of hay typically stored (in tons or bales):

Amount of feed typically stored (bulk or bags): .

Amount of bedding typically stored (bulk or bags):

Arenas for Working Horses

Do you have or plan to have an outdoor riding area? Yes No

If yes, what size? ft x ft

Does the outdoor arena drain well?..... Yes No

Is the outdoor arena close to the barn or other horse housing structures? Yes No

Are you planning an indoor arena? Yes No

If yes, what size? ft x ft

If yes, is it attached to the barn? Yes No

Other Buildings

Do you have or plan to have an additional structure for hay and bedding storage? Yes No

If yes, what size? ft x ft

Do you have or plan to have an additional structure for equipment storage? Yes No

If yes, what size? ft x ft

Do you have or plan to have an additional structure for muck composting/stockpiling? Yes No

If yes, what size? ft x ft

Water Management

Are there currently issues with ponding or mud that need to be addressed with the facility layout? Yes No Unsure

Is there a location, or multiple locations, on the farm to which you want to divert the water? Yes No

Does the property have sinkholes that need to be considered? Yes No

Do you have a plan for how to get the water to the desired location? Yes No

Do buildings currently have gutters, or do you plan for them to have gutters? Yes No

Resources

Sinkhole Management for Agricultural Producers (AEN-109)

Appropriate All Weather Surfaces for Livestock (AEN-115)

Maps for Farm Planning (AEN-141)

The Importance of Water Source Layout in Farm Infrastructure (AEN-155)

Composting Horse Muck (ID-168)

Suitable Spaces for Indoor Horse Activities (ID-259)

Riding Arena Footing: Materials and Characteristics (ID-265)

Riding Arena Maintenance: Dragging and Watering (ID-266)

Riding Arena Maintenance: Equipment Guide (ID-267)

Temporary Fencing for Horse Pastures (ID-165)

High Traffic Area Pads for Horses (ID-164)

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