Tips for Summer

• Go for a trail ride or try a new discipline with your horse. Horses get bored if they are asked to perform the same tasks over and over. Try your hand at cattle sorting or learn to jump. It will keep your horse interested in his job and give his mind a break.

• Be sure to increase your horse’s access to water as the temperature rises. She will consume more water as she loses water in her sweat. Expect her water intake to double.

• Allow either free choice access to salt, or add salt as needed to the grain of your horse. As the horse increases his sweating rate, he will need to replace the electrolytes he has lost. Horses cannot store the electrolytes they need so they must be supplied as they lose them.

• Avoid riding in the extreme heat of the day, especially if your horse is not acclimated to the climate. Early morning rides generally take advantage of the coolest temperatures.

• Be sure to provide shade or shelter. Horses will seek relief from biting insects by standing in the shade. The bugs are less likely to follow them there.

• Check the airflow in the barn if your horse is housed inside. If there is limited air movement, add a fan to increase circulation and aid in evaporative cooling. However, make sure the cord is completely inaccessible to your horse!

• If traveling to hotter climates, allow your horse a week to acclimate before you expect him to compete at his top level.

• Avoid overgrazing pastures during droughts. This may kill the grass and ruin your investment in providing pasture as a nutrient source and not just an area for exercise. Also, weeds tend to be hardier, and your horse may begin to ingest potentially hazardous plants as the grass becomes limited.

• Time to lay in your hay supply! Make sure you plan ahead for your needs for the year.