

Looking after ponies in the winter:

It is extremely important that ponies are well cared for at this time of year. Here are some tips to help ensure that they remain happy and healthy this winter:

- Check water troughs twice daily to make sure clean fresh water is always available and break ice if necessary.
- Ensure that horses have adequate feed at all times such as hay or haylage.
- A constructed shelter or hedge will ensure that your horse can find protection from the elements.
- If your horse has to be rugged, always have a spare one available so you can swap if it gets very wet. It's important to remove and re-adjust rugs every day so you can check your horse thoroughly.
- If your horse lives out 24/7, keep a close eye on their legs. In deep and prolonged snow and wet conditions, their legs are not able to fully dry off, which can cause skin conditions.
- Check your fencing regularly and remove any snow and ice from electric tape as the extra weight can bend and break plastic poles.
- Remember that after snow, ground will be soft and easy to churn up. To avoid injury and mud fever, take steps to stop the ground being disturbed. Moving your horse to different fields to graze will help. Or you could change the point at which you enter the field so that you don't disturb the same area repeatedly. Move water troughs regularly if possible and cover particularly muddy areas with straw or sand.

These tips are general guidelines only - each horse has different requirements

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