



ALL-WEATHER HORSE PADDOCKS

A Guide For Geauga County Landowners

All-Weather Paddocks for the Horse Industry

What is an all-weather paddock?

All-weather paddocks (corrals) are small, non-irrigated, non-grazable holding pens or exercise lots, often adjacent to horse stalls. They are made up of a combination of a geotextile material and limestone. The combination of these products creates a surface area which stays relatively dry and mud free. All weather paddocks help protect soil and water resources by reducing the erosion and transportation of sediment into rivers and streams which often results from heavy use areas during rainy weather.



All-weather paddocks also allow for rotation of pastures to enable establishment of more mature and dense vegetation, which aids in reducing mud, erosion, and sedimentation.



All-weather paddocks are an approved USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation practice and are eligible for Ohio Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil and Water Conservation (ODA-OSWC) Agricultural Pollution Abatement Program (APAP) cost share money. The APAP funds will pay for up to 75% of the cost of the all-weather paddock to a maximum of \$50,000 or whichever is less.

All-weather paddocks can be an eligible practice to treat nutrient runoff and improve degraded soil conditions through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is a farm bill program providing a cost share incentive to install conservation practices to treat resource concerns. The program is competitive and aims to cover roughly 50% of implementation cost if the application is funded.

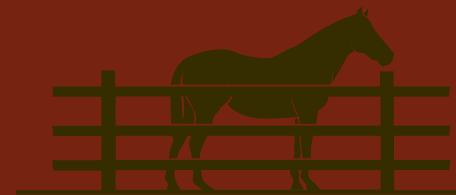
Design and Planning Considerations

To build an all weather paddock, the following must be considered during the planning phase:

- All runoff should be directed away from the paddock area. Roof and runoff from barns, arenas, and other buildings should be placed in gutters and downspouts directed away from the paddock area;
- The compatibility of horses matters because horses do not always get along, so be sure to consider the number of horses which will be placed in the given area and the shape of the pen. A round pen may be desired over a square pen to avoid horses being cornered by other horses;
- General sizing is 400-600 square feet per horse (not taking into consideration issues related to compatibility);
- If more exercise is desired for the horse(s) a longer and narrower pad should be considered;
- Owners are responsible for fencing around pad.

Construction Details

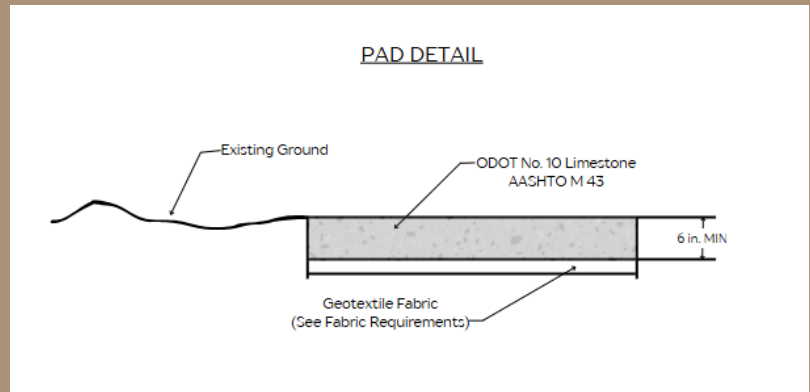
- Average cost = \$1.30 per square foot of pad (includes excavation of topsoil/organic material, fabric, stone, seed, mulch, and labor).
- Fabric must be buried in the soil on the edges of the paddock. Horses have a tendency to "paw" up the edges and rip at the fabric if it gets exposed.
- Pad should be placed at a 1-2% grade.
- Ideally the pad should sit 1-2" above existing grade. The depth of stone on top of fabric may need to be adjusted accordingly.
- Compaction is critical in preparing subbase and placing the ODOT No. 10 Limestone topping. A minimum of 4 passes with a drum roller or rubber tired equipment is required.



Geotextile Fabric Products

The following commercial geotextile products can be used and are available at your local home improvement and pipe supply stores;

- Non-woven fabric
 - Amoco ProPex 4553
- Woven Fabric
 - Amoco ProPex 2002
 - SI Geosolutions GeoTex 200 ST
- Or other products comparable to the above



Technical Assistance and Cost Share

Representatives from the Geauga SWCD will visit any Geauga County property upon request to provide technical assistance on proper manure storage, disposal, paddock management, and available cost share opportunities. Cost share or financial assistance may be available for manure storage structures, and other conservation practices. Technical assistance received during these site visits is voluntary and confidential, and will help ensure that the operation is conservation-friendly.

Benefits

The horse industry in Geauga County is very prominent. More than 3,000 horses are estimated to be in the county, and that number is increasing steadily. Proper management of soil and water resources within this industry is imperative in order to maintain the integrity of our local watersheds.

All-weather horse paddocks allow horse owners to reduce sediment erosion on their property which protects local water resources while improving the overall health and integrity of their own horse pastures and exercise areas. Not only are all-weather horse paddocks environmentally friendly, they are aesthetically pleasing and are relatively simple and inexpensive to install.

For further assistance please contact the Geauga County Soil and Water Conservation District at 440-834-1122 or the USDA-NRCS Representative at 1-888-217-3947 for design assistance and/or cost share funding opportunities available to horse owners.