



Autumn → Winter Horse & Pony Planner

CHECKLISTS | CARE | TACK | SEASONAL TIPS



The seasonal jobs worth doing before winter arrives

*A little preparation now can make the colder months
so much easier — for you and your horse.*

AUTUMN → WINTER

HORSE & PONY PLANNER

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September → winter

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Appointments • shopping • notes

Love from Leasha x



SEPTEMBER → EARLY AUTUMN

The aim: catch the autumn jobs while the ground is still workable and before winter becomes urgent.

Pasture & poisonous plants

- Walk every paddock and boundary after the first autumn storms: look for fallen branches, damaged fencing and new hazards.
- Identify oak trees and check where acorns are landing. Restrict access to areas with significant acorn fall where appropriate.
- Check for sycamore trees and clear/manage fallen seeds and leaves where practicable; remember seeds can blow into paddocks from outside the boundary.
- Walk the fields for ragwort and other poisonous plants; remove/manage safely and prevent access.
- Check hedges, trees and boundary vegetation for anything that has become newly accessible.
- Clear blocked ditches and check drainage before the wettest months.
- Check gateways, troughs and high-traffic areas: decide now whether mats, hardcore or another suitable surface is needed.

Remember: Autumn is a key period for atypical myopathy risk from sycamore material and for acorn exposure. Sudden weakness, muscle stiffness, sweating or dark urine is an emergency—contact your vet immediately.

Parasite plan — autumn

- ■ Check when the last faecal worm egg count (FWEC/WEC) was done and book the next one if due.
- ■ Risk-assess your horse rather than automatically giving an autumn wormer.
- ■ Check whether the six-monthly tapeworm test is due; autumn is one of the recommended testing points.
- ■ Record results and treatment dates so your winter plan is based on the whole year's history.
- ■ If a wormer is prescribed, make sure the dose is calculated for current bodyweight and follow the prescriber's instructions.
- ■ Ask your vet/SQP about the winter plan for encysted small redworm—this is a separate issue from an ordinary WEC.

Remember: Current UK guidance favours targeted parasite control. Autumn typically means WEC monitoring plus tapeworm testing when due; the winter encysted-redworm decision comes later and should be risk-based.

OCTOBER → GET WINTER-READY

Rugs, clipping & coat

- Inventory every rug: turnout, stable, fleece/cooler and any spare.
- Check fit, straps, surcingles, fastenings and lining for wear or rubbing.
- Wash dirty rugs and arrange repairs/reproofing before they are urgently needed.
- If clipping, decide on the clip that matches your horse's workload, living conditions and ability to stay warm.
- Make sure there is a suitable way to keep a clipped horse warm and dry, with spare rugs available if needed.
- Check drying space—wet rugs and wet horses become much harder to manage as temperatures fall.
- Don't rug simply because you feel cold: assess the individual horse, coat, condition, shelter, wind and rain.

Remember: The BHS advises assessing each horse individually. Prolonged wet and wind can be more challenging than dry cold, and good shelter matters.

Forage, feed & body condition

- Arrange winter hay/haylage supplies early and check storage is dry, clean and rodent-proof.
- Check the quality of stored forage and make sure there is a contingency if supplies are delayed.
- Record body condition/weight now so winter changes are easier to spot.
- Review the ration as grass quality and quantity change—don't automatically add hard feed if forage is sufficient.
- Plan how forage will be provided if turnout is restricted, while considering the individual horse's weight and health needs.
- Check feed bins, scoops and measuring equipment.
- Make sure salt and water provision remains adequate.

Remember: Forage remains the foundation of the equine diet. Winter management often means more forage and/or less grazing, but the correct amount depends on the horse.

Water & freezing-weather preparation

- Check every trough, tap and automatic drinker for leaks and poor flow.
- Insulate exposed pipes where appropriate and identify which pipes are most vulnerable to freezing.
- Make sure you have enough buckets and a backup water plan for freezing weather.
- Check that stable water buckets are safe, clean and positioned to reduce spillage.
- Work out who will check frozen water during severe weather if you're away.

TWO AUTUMN JOBS

EASY TO FORGET • VERY WORTH DOING

■ CHECK SADDLE FIT

Seasonal changes can alter your horse's shape — including changes in weight, fitness, muscle development and coat. Before winter work ramps up, check that the saddle is still fitting comfortably and arrange a professional check if needed.

✂ GET YOUR CLIPPERS READY

If your horse will be clipped this season, don't wait until clipping day to discover the blades are blunt! Have the clippers serviced if due and have the blades checked and sharpened before the first clip. CAFRE specifically advises ensuring clippers are serviced and blades sharpened for the new season.

A little preparation now can make the first cold, wet week much easier.

OCTOBER → NOVEMBER: MUD, STABLES & ROUTINE

Mud management before the fields churn

- Identify the first places to become muddy: gateways, troughs, shelter entrances and feeding areas.
- Move/rotate high-traffic areas where possible and protect vulnerable gateways before they become deep mud.
- Plan a winter turnout area or all-weather area if your management system allows.
- Keep poo picking going regularly; it helps pasture hygiene and parasite control.
- Check legs daily for heat, swelling, scabs, cracked skin or soreness.
- Let muddy legs dry and brush mud off rather than repeatedly washing them; if washing is necessary, dry thoroughly.
- Check hooves regularly for thrush, softening, cracks or lost shoes.

Remember: Deep wet mud can contribute to mud fever, rain scald, thrush and softened hooves. Early management is much easier than trying to fix a badly poached field.

Stable & yard winter reset

- Check roof, gutters and downpipes before prolonged rain.
- Check doors, bolts, hinges, partitions and stable fittings for wear or sharp edges.
- Check lighting and replace bulbs/batteries before the clocks change.
- Check electrical equipment, extension leads and chargers; keep wiring safely away from horses and water.
- Clean out cobwebs and reduce dust around stable areas.
- Check ventilation—winter does not mean shutting every vent.
- Check fire safety equipment and make sure emergency access and escape routes remain clear.
- Check that first-aid supplies for horse and humans are complete and in date.
- Save vet, farrier, dentist, feed supplier and emergency contact numbers somewhere accessible.

Tack & saddle winter check

- Clean and inspect bridle, reins, girth, stirrup leathers and irons.
- Check stitching, billets, buckles and attachment points for wear.
- Check saddle condition and arrange a professional fit check if your horse's shape or workload has changed.
- Check pads/numnahs for hardened areas, damage or trapped dirt.
- Wash/dry saddle pads thoroughly before winter use increases.
- Have a backup girth/strap where appropriate so one failure doesn't stop you riding.
- Create a small 'winter tack kit' for dark, wet days.

Remember: Autumn is a sensible time to reassess saddle fit because changes in grass, body condition, clipping and workload can alter the horse's shape.

NOVEMBER → THE WINTER HANDOVER

This is where the autumn checklist becomes your winter plan.

Encysted redworm & winter parasite plan

- Look back over the year's WEC results, treatment history, grazing and risk profile.
- Check when the last WEC was taken; winter WECs do not detect encysted small redworm larvae.
- If your horse is low risk, ask your vet/SQP whether a small-redworm blood test is appropriate.
- If your horse is not suitable for testing, discuss the appropriate winter treatment with your vet/SQP.
- Do not choose a winter wormer purely because it is 'December'—use the risk-based winter protocol.
- If treatment is given, ask whether a post-treatment reduction test is appropriate to monitor effectiveness/resistance.
- Record the product, active ingredients, date, dose and horse's weight.

Remember: Current guidance commonly places the encysted-redworm decision in December–February, after autumn monitoring. The exact plan depends on risk, previous results and veterinary/SQP advice. Do not blindly repeat wormers.

Final winter pasture checks

- Fence off or manage areas of severe poaching.
- Choose the best-drained field for winter turnout where possible.
- Check shelter is still effective now that natural tree cover may be reduced.
- Check for holes from rabbits/burrowing animals around boundaries.
- Keep ditches and drainage channels clear.
- Make sure hay/forage can be delivered without creating an unsafe muddy feeding area.
- Keep checking acorns and sycamore material after storms and strong winds.

Winter routine & welfare

- Decide how your horse's turnout will work when daylight and weather restrict options.
- Plan exercise/enrichment for days when riding isn't practical.
- Keep forage available for periods of reduced turnout, appropriate to the horse's needs.
- Check water daily during freezing weather.
- Monitor body condition regularly rather than waiting until the horse visibly changes.
- Keep checking skin, legs and feet as wet weather continues.
- Review your emergency plan for storms, flooding, power cuts and transport disruption.

MY AUTUMN → WINTER ACTION PLAN

The five jobs I absolutely want done before winter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appointments / dates

Date	What / who	Done

Things to buy / repair / arrange

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Notes for my horse / pony

SURESTRIDE SEASONAL REMINDER

Autumn is less about doing everything at once and more about getting ahead of the jobs that become difficult when winter arrives.

A few key things worth remembering:

- Check the autumn hazards: acorns, sycamore seeds/leaves and poisonous plants.
- ■ Get ahead of mud rather than waiting for gateways and feeding areas to become unusable.
- Check rugs, clipping plans and shelter before the first really cold, wet spell.
- Secure good-quality forage and a reliable water plan.
- Record body condition now so winter changes are easier to spot.
- Review parasite control using testing and risk assessment; autumn tapeworm testing and winter encysted-redworm planning are different jobs.
- Recheck saddle fit if your horse's shape or workload has changed.
- Prepare for dark evenings, winter lighting and emergency situations.

SURESTRIDE EQUESTRIAN

Helping you find the right saddle for the right horse or pony.

surestrideequestrian.com

Sources checked for this seasonal edition

- British Horse Society — Winter Care; Pasture Management; Mud Management; Risk-based Worm Control; Atypical Myopathy; Acorn Poisoning; Mud Fever; Stable Safety.
- Westgate Laboratories — Autumn Parasite Control; Winter Parasite Control; Winter Protocol; targeted worm-control guidance.
- Blue Cross — Keeping Your Horse Warm in Winter and mud-fever prevention guidance.

This planner is educational and does not replace individual professional advice. Parasite control, feeding, rugging, exercise and health management should be tailored to the individual horse. Always follow your vet/SQP's advice where applicable.