

## Northwood News.....



## November

I know you just received your October newsletter but it was running a bit late. My goal is to have the newsletters out towards the first of each month.

Finally, wonderful fall weather, just in time too! With the little rain we received and the change of weather we were finally able to have the pastures seed drilled. Since the past weather basically killed all of the grass we felt we had no choice but to plant for next year and included a treat for our furry friends to enjoy until the dormant season sets in! Beautiful tasty Rye grass was drilled in as well. We will be keeping the horses off of the planted places temporarily until we can get a good start of the Rye grass. The benefits of the fescue won't be seen until spring, hopefully. I for one am wishing for a white winter to soak our drought stricken land.

The WSRS horse show at Ogburn Stables benefited HERO with outstanding sales. The concessions sold out completely leaving a total of \$471.00 for the rescue of equines. Every year there are numerous horses that are neglected and abused. Every source I know is predicting more equines than last year needing help due to the hay shortage. If we do not get massive amounts of the wet stuff this winter and spring, the shortage will continue and so will the equine needing services.

There was an article in the WS Journal a few days ago that referenced the hay shortage and the rising cost for hay. Many of the farm owners I know are already buying shipped hay at no less than \$6.50 a square bale. The actual bale of hay does not cost that amount in the areas shipped from such as New York, Canada and Ohio, it is the freight fees that boost the prices. If you think it is bad now, just wait until January when hay sources are depleted and fuel costs are higher. Here at Northwoods we have been diligently stocking up on our hay.

We do not yet have what we think we will need to get through this winter. Of course the colder the weather, the more hay we will need. We are hoping to get another cutting from our Orchard Grass source. Everyone cross your fingers and hope! In the past we have paid anywhere from \$1.50 a bale to \$3.50 a bale but this year has been different. We have paid as much as \$4.50 a bale and may have to pay more than that. We are desperately trying not to have to buy the shipped hay. Some of you may ask why we do not purchase round bales. The answers are simple. We have no storage, we do not have enough land to just put round bale holders out and this year, there are no round bales to be found for horse consumption. Last year we purchased at least 25 round bales to finish the season. This year the farmers are saving it for their cattle. The shortage is so vast that they are even baling their corn stalks for forage.

There are hay alternatives that can be utilized so do not be dismayed. We will make sure that your horse has what is needed for forage. We just wanted everyone to be aware of the situation. That being said, please work with us in conserving our hay resources. Make sure if you are feeding hay that you get up all of the scatters that can be fed. Our motto for this is "waste not, want not".

## Events

Our next event here at Northwoods Stable is the annual "**Barn Decorating and Cleaning Party**" on November 24<sup>th</sup>. We will begin the cleaning and decorating around 2:00 PM. Please **do** bring an appetizer and/or dessert to share. We will provide the Stew and drinks!



The annual **Christmas Barn Party** will be held on December 15<sup>th</sup>. We realize that there will be many parties to attend this year and hope that ours is one of them!

## Announcements

We will be welcoming two, possibly three more members to the family here at Northwoods. Rachel has found her dream horse, Megan and Barbara are adopting Bendigo and Peg Newsome will be joining us with Lovie at the end of November. Dreamer and Lovie are mares and of course you all know Bendigo already. Hopefully everyone can meet and greet at our barn event on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Since we have new horses I thought it appropriate to have our education article dealing with herd behavior and manners.

## Education Corner



Most of you know that we here at Northwoods promote partnerships with their horses, to be part of their herd, so to speak. [Partnership training, regardless of the method or style, is reliant upon the fact that horses instinctively seek leadership.](#) In order to accomplish leadership, one must understand a little about Herd life. Just how do you become a leader will depend on how you can interrupt the ancient language of unspoken laws within the equine herd. My favorite thing to do is to actually sit and watch the herd. Horses are great about finding their niche within the structure of the herd. It is us humans that have a hard time dealing with their way of establishing the "pecking order." Pecking order is always established by the herd authoritarians. In the wild you have a herd Matriarch who provides leadership and security and a herd Stallion who is viewed as the protector. In our case, we have the Matriarch, Missy, and herd gelding, Shadow. Shadow is aging out and it looks like Jackson will be his replacement.

The Matriarch: She is the Alpha mare that would normally lead the herd to safety and food. She is also the disciplinarian. Have an unruly horse and just place them with the Alpha mare they will quickly get

put in their place. Leadership within the herd is not necessarily the strongest. Leadership is more about domination and decision making.

There are small bands within the herd with other "chosen" leaders. This horse does not actively try to gain followers. He usually avoids fights, or breaks up fights and will stand back and observe a situation before taking action. These horses end up being followed by a usually peaceful band of horses that have mutual respect.

So what does this have to do with being a partner to your horse you ask? You, must become a herd leader (alpha) in order for your horse to respect you. You must establish dominance over your horse to be truly acknowledged as their leader. Otherwise you will be viewed as one of the herd and subjected to the pecking order. You must not allow any disrespect what so ever. That, to a horse, shows weakness. Weakness is not the trait of a leader. To be an effective leader one must be consistent and remain calm. Have the ability to act swiftly in dealing with a defiant or disrespectful act from your horse. Once established as their leader you can be flexible. When you are fair and just to your horse there will be no resentment of authority from your horse. Be sure never to act out of frustration or anger to your horse. This will breed resentment and defiance. One must also make clear to the horse what you are asking it to do. The horse, like a child, is happiest when they know what to expect and what their boundaries are.

In the near future we will be practicing some natural horsemanship techniques that will help your horse to recognize you as their herd leader.

**Happy Thanksgiving Everyone !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**