

Horse Health Terms Glossary

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healthcare TERMS

There is a wealth of jargon used throughout the horse world. This is especially true when discussing equine healthcare. Learning this vocabulary allows you to better understand articles, event language, and what trainers, farriers, veterinarians, and other horse owners are saying. The following list of terms, while in no way comprehensive, contains some of the terms used to discuss horse healthcare.

Aged: A horse of 15 years of age or older. Prior to this age, experienced horsemen can estimate the age of a horse by examining the teeth, but after this age it becomes more difficult.

Aging: The process of estimating the age of a horse by examining the appearance and development of the teeth.

Alter: To castrate a horse, to geld.

Astringent: Drugs that cause contraction of infected areas, such as tannic acid, alum, and zinc oxide or sulfate.

Barren mare: A mare that is not in foal.

Brood Mare: A mare used for breeding purposes.

Cast: A horse, which rolls and gets stuck, either up against the wall of his stall, or near a fence, etc. is said to be cast. Human intervention can be necessary to release the horse.

Castration: Removal of testicles from a male. A castrated male horse is a gelding.

Cavy: A group of horses; usually refers to horses used for working cattle.

Colostrum: First milk produced by a mare following foaling. Contains special proteins (globulins) to provide the newborn foal with temporary immunity against disease.

Colt: Uncastrated male horse up to four years of age. Male foals are called "colt foals."

Conformation: The overall way in which a horse is put together and also the relationship of specific parts of the horse in regards to its proportions.

Dam: A horse's female parent.

Deep Going: Term used to describe ground that is wet or soft, into which the hooves sink.

Entire: Uncastrated male horse. (Also called *Stallion*.)

Family: A group of animals within a breed, all of which trace directly to a common ancestor.

Farrier: Skilled craftsman who shoes horses.

Filly: Female horse under four years old. A female foal is called a "filly foal."

Floating: The action of rasping the horse's teeth (U.S.).

Foal: Colt, filly, or gelding up to one year of age.

Furacin: Brand name for nitrofurazone, an antibacterial medication.

Geld: To geld; to cut or castrate a horse.

Gelding: Castrated male horse.

Gestation period: The length of time for the development of the foal from time of breeding, usually about 11 months.

Get: The offspring of a sire.

Good Doer: Describes a horse that is easy to keep, which maintains good condition of small rations. (See also *Thrifty*.)

Hand: Unit of measure used to describe the height of a horse, measured from the ground to the top of the withers. One hand equals 4 inches, partial measurements being described as 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, etc.

Horse length: Eight feet; distance between horses in a column.

Knackers: Slang word for slaughterhouse, abattoir. Someone who buys horses at auction for purposes of taking them to slaughter.

Livery Stable: English term for boarding stable.

Mare: Female horse aged four and over.

Meconium: Firm, dark brown or black fecal matter passed by the foal shortly after birth.

Mucking or Mucking Out: Daily stable chore which involves the removal of wet and soiled bedding and general tidying of the stable.

Neat's-foot: An oil made from suet, feet, and bones of cattle, used for softening leather.

Oxer: Spread fence. Can be an *ascending oxer* - with the front rail lower than the back rail, or a *square oxer* (also known as a *parallel*), with front and back rail of the same height.

Paddock: Small enclosure in which horses are turned out for grazing.

Produce: The offspring of a dam.

Quidding: A horse that drops partially chewed food from his mouth, because of age or dental problems, is said to be "quidding." *Floating* the teeth usually resolves the problem.

Remuda: A collection of saddle horses at a roundup from which are chosen those used for the day. A relay of mounts.

Shoe, To: The act of fitting and securing metal shoes to the horse's hooves, usually done by a *farrier*.

Sire: A horse's male parent.

Sound: Free from lameness or injury.

Stable Management: The art of looking after one or more stabled horses, including all aspects of their care and welfare.

Stallion: Uncastrated male horse. (See also *Entire*.)

Teaser: Substitute stallion used to test the mare's readiness for breeding with the breeding stallion.

Thrifty: Describes a horse that is easy to keep, which maintains good condition of small rations. Also called a *good-doer*.

Turnout: A. The practice of turning horses loose in a field or pasture for all or part of the day. B. The standard of dress and appearance of horse and rider, or horse and carriage.

Veterinarian: One who is trained and skilled in the treating of diseases and injuries of domestic animals.

Weanling: A weaned foal.

Yearling: *Colt* or *filly* between one and two years of age.