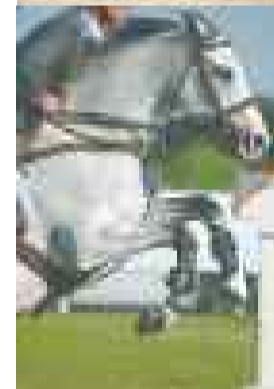
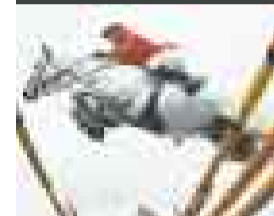
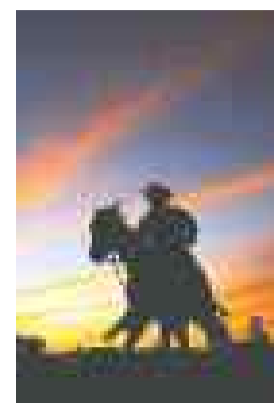


# Celebrating the Horses' Birthday with HORSIN' AROUND

BEGA DISTRICT NEWS ADVERTISING FEATURE



## Health care for your horse

- Hoof and leg care of your horse is extremely important because after all, no legs, no horse! Unlike humans, it is hard to treat serious leg and hoof injuries in horses as you can not tell a horse to 'keep your weight off it'. The number one priority for a horse owner's daily check of their horse is to quickly glance over all four legs and hooves and to observe for any signs of lameness when walking. Lameness is shown by limping, short stepping or irregular movement. By running your hand down the length of the horse's leg will quickly show up any cuts, swellings or foreign objects that may have found their way into the leg. If your horse experiences any of these symptoms it is worth your while asking an experienced horseperson for advice or calling your local vet.

- Hoof care differs for each horse depending on their age and what they are used for. A horse that is used for competition or consistent riding should be shod by an experienced farrier approximately every six weeks. This will keep the horse's hoof in correct shape, prevent cracking, and prevent painful bruising of the sole as well as absorbing some of the shock that the leg receives from activities such as jumping.

Constant care is vital as the horse's hoof, just like fingernails, grows at a fast rate and needs to be trimmed back for ultimate comfort. If your horse has hoof or movement problems, it is recommended that you ask your qualified farrier to apply corrective shoeing techniques in an attempt to fix any problems. Horses that are just in the paddock or are only lightly exercised can get away with the occasional hoof trimming. This can be performed by your farrier or experienced horseperson about four times a year or when required.

- Feeding your horse is a subject that can go into huge depth. Of course horse owners should feed their horse according to the horse's energy requirements. Ask your local feed store for advice. A horse can healthily survive on just grass but as we all know, quality grass all year round is hard to come by. The most important thing to remember is that the majority of your horse's diet consists of roughage (grass, hay or chaff) and the appropriate amount of concentrate depending on your horse's work level, age or stage of lactation if pregnant. Make sure to keep an eye on your horse's eating habits so that you know that what you are feeding is enough to maintain good health. Do

not quickly change your horse's feed, allow it to eat mouldy food or let it have access to poisonous plants. These three things can result in a painful bout of colic (stomach upset) and a call to the vet.

- Additional but equally as important health care measures for your horse are drenching and visiting an equine dentist. A horse should be drenched for worms at least 4 times a year (or every season or school holidays for easy remembering). Signs of a horse that may have a bad worm infestation is the inability to gain weight, dull coat and itchy behind (tail rubbing). It is important to regularly rotate the brand of wormer you use to prevent a chemical resistance in the parasites. Calling a qualified horse dentist regularly is very important as, unlike human teeth, horses' teeth grow continually and need to be floated (rasped down.) If left unattended, horses' teeth grow long and sharp which make chewing feed and grass difficult and having a bit in their mouth painful. It is recommended that a horse's first check-up should be just after they are broken in. While the horse is young, teeth are constantly growing and moving and your qualified dentist may recommend a check-up every 6 – 12

months. Older horses may be able to go as long as two years between check-ups. Obvious signs that your horse may be due to see the dentist are dropping feed out of their mouth while eating, losing weight, and suddenly becoming sensitive in the mouth when riding or "one-sided" with their steering.

- If your horse is trying to tell you that there is something not quite right and you can't work it out, you may need to call a professional. For example, a qualified equine chiropractor may be required if your horse suddenly becomes irregular in its movement, unusually cranky or irritable when riding or saddling up, stiff or un-supple when riding or just not performing at their usual happy level. It may be as simple as having a shoulder or hip slipping out of place that a professional can easily deal with or then again the problem could be much deeper and require repeat consultation. Maybe a quick call to your local qualified Bowen therapist, acupressure professional, natural alternative supplement supplier or accredited saddle fitter may be all you need to make your horse happy and healthy again.