

Local Resources

The **Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District** can provide you with technical handouts.

(831) 464-2950
sccrcd@cruzio.com

The **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service** offers free, confidential, non-regulatory technical assistance, including site visits.
(831) 475-1967

Ecology Action of Santa Cruz has an online exchange program, Promax, where you can post your manure to give away or sell for local gardeners and growers to use.

(831) 426-5925
www.ecoact.org/zero_waste/promax

Other Resources

Horse Keeping: A Guide To Land Management for Clean Water

This complete 108 page manual is available by sending \$25.00 (California residents please add sales tax) per copy plus \$5.20 postage for priority mail (2-3 days) or \$2.25 postage for media mail (3-10 days) to:

**Council of Bay Area
Resource Conservation Districts
1301 Redwood way, Suite 215
Petaluma, CA 94954-1134**

For information about water quality regulations contact the **Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board** at (805) 549-3147.
www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb3



Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District

*Helping people protect,
conserve, and restore
natural resources through
information, education,
and technical assistance
programs.*

The Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District (RCD) was started by local landowners in Santa Cruz County over 50 years ago. The RCD is a non-regulatory, not-for-profit entity. We are a special district formed under the California Public Resources Code. We work closely with our technical partner, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, at the Local Partnership Office.

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Resource Conservation District
820 Bay Avenue, Suite 107
Capitola, CA 95010**

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HORSE OWNERS

*Improving Horse Health
and
Water Quality*



**A partnership between
the Santa Cruz County
Resource Conservation District
and
Ecology Action of Santa Cruz**

**Funding provided through the
State Water Resources Control Board
319(h) Clean Water Act
Grant Program**

Do you own or board horses?

Using **Best Management Practices (BMPs)** at your horse facility can improve horse health and water quality as well as ease of operations. What are Best Management Practices? These are practices that you can use on your land to address issues such as erosion, drainage, mud, and manure.



HORSE KEEPING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- * **Manage Manure Piles**
- * **Prevent Animal Waste From Polluting Rainwater Runoff and Drainage Ways**
- * **Protect Sensitive Areas**
- * **Manage Grazing**
- * **Maintain Proper Site Drainage**

Manage Manure Piles

- § Manure composts into an excellent amendment. Compost piles should be kept moist and well aerated to speed decomposition and improve compost quality.
- § Remove stockpiled manure on a regular basis.
- § During the dry season, moisten paddock areas after manure clean up to facilitate decomposition of residual waste.

Prevent Animal Waste From Polluting Rainwater Runoff and Drainage Ways

- § Collect manure from uncovered paddocks daily, particularly during winter, and store in sheltered stockpile areas.
- § Cover manure piles to prevent water from picking up any contaminants and carrying them to surface and ground water sources.
- § Locate manure stockpiles on an impervious surface (concrete pad or plastic tarp) to prevent leaching.
- § Prevent excess chemicals from horse grooming and health products from draining directly into waterways.
- § Maintain buffer strips of vegetation between barnyards, paddocks, manure storage areas and water ways to filter sediments and absorb nutrients in runoff.

Protect Sensitive Areas

- § Maintain animals in paddock areas to reduce trampling impacts on pastures and prevent compaction of wet soils.
- § Locate paddock areas as far as possible from streams and sloping areas to reduce erosion, and protect water quality.
- § Locate fencing to keep animals a minimum distance of 50-100 ft from streams and 30-50 ft from smaller stream/drainage ways.
- § Maintain buffer vegetation near water bodies. Riparian corridors and wetland areas naturally filter contaminants, reduce erosion and provide excellent wildlife habitat.
- § When crossing a stream, ride straight across. Manure in water harms aquatic life. Trampling degrades stream banks and increases sedimentation by destroying vegetative cover.



Vegetating steep slopes can protect soil from eroding during the rainy season.

Manage Grazing

- § Maintain pasture productivity by controlling the number of horses and amount of time they spend on a pasture.
- § Prevent bare areas from forming in pastures. Allow time for re-growth. Graze grass to a height of 3-4 inches and allow re-growth to 6-8 inches before returning horses to pasture.
- § Cross-fence pastures to allow rotation of grazing animals.
- § Use exclusionary fencing and limit grazing of riparian corridors.

Maintain Proper Site Drainage

- § Install roof gutters and down spouts to divert clean runoff away from paddocks, pastures and manure storage areas.
- § Construct/repair trails, arenas, roads, parking areas, drainage ditches and culverts to drain water in a non-erosive manner.
- § Channel clean runoff around manure storage areas and paddocks. Use grassed ditches, berms or subsurface drains to divert contaminated runoff away from waterways to low-gradient vegetated buffer areas.
- § Site and design new facilities to address water quality concerns and minimize erosion.
- § Grade and base rock paddock areas to minimize water-logging.