

# Housing of Newfoundland Ponies

The Newfoundland Pony is typically very hardy, allowing it to be comfortable in weather conditions that are unsuitable for many other breeds. They grow quite a long hair coat which insulates them from the cold. However, due to the variability of our climate, there are many conditions that warrant the provision of shelter for the comfort and health of these heritage animals. The goals of housing for the Newfoundland Pony should be protection from the wind and rain, in a safe and clean environment.

## Important Considerations:

Important components of housing the Newfoundland Pony include ventilation, lighting, and the availability of an exercise area. During the late spring, summer and early fall, a Newfoundland Pony can be pastured. This allows unlimited exercise, natural lighting and an abundance of fresh air. Caution should be taken when introducing ponies to pasture in the spring as they are prone to laminitis (founder), a very serious lameness that can be caused by the overindulgence of lush green grass. Ponies should be initially turned out for brief periods of time, gradually increasing the length of time on pasture. Also, feeding plenty of hay prior to turn out can help reduce the amount of green grass consumed.

## Inclement weather

During inclement weather, access to shelter from wind and precipitation should be provided. Minimal shelter consists of a three-sided structure deep enough for all ponies to comfortably stand in the back of the shelter. More elaborate facilities, such as an enclosed barn with individual stalls generally increase the comfort level as long as the barn is adequately ventilated. An improperly ventilated barn will have poor air quality and high humidity leading to the growth of molds and the accumulation of allergens. These conditions will decrease comfort and lead to health problems.

## Exercise

Exercise throughout the winter months, as well as summer, is very important. Traditionally, Newfoundland Ponies have been used throughout the winter for work such as hauling wood. Recently, there are many Newfoundland Ponies kept as pleasure or companion animals which are not required to work. It is very important that these animals get regular turn-out or exercise to maintain general health, well-being, and fitness. Also, ponies on a regular exercise program will be less likely to develop vices such as cribbing and weaving.

## Barns

In all barns attention should be paid to safety and cleanliness. Flooring should be kept clean and dry to avoid slippery surfaces and the risk of injury. Stalls should be cleaned daily to avoid high ammonia levels and the accumulation of parasites. Natural lighting should be maximized.

The Newfoundland Pony is renowned for its hardiness. However, as caretakers of this very small breed, we must remember that many ponies perished in harsh winters from neglect. We have the responsibility to protect and provide for our few remaining Newfoundland Ponies.

## More Information

This factsheet is one in a series written on the care of Newfoundland Ponies. Further information can be obtained from these factsheets; from the many magazines and books on horse care; from your Regional Veterinarian; and from knowledgeable horse people in your area. The barn design in the illustration is from a series of designs available through the Canada Plan Service (Two-Storey Horse Barn, Plan M-8203).

## Written By:

Dr. Beverly Dawe,  
Regional Veterinarian,  
Animal Health Division  
P. O. Box 340,

Pasadena, NF  
AOL 1K0

(709) 686-2672 phone

(709) 686-5465 fax This factsheet was produced in conjunction with the Newfoundland Pony Society.