

HorsesLandWater

Improving the health of horses and the environment

EYE PROBLEMS

Grass seeds • Dust • Fencing injuries • Rank, dry stubbles

EYE PROBLEMS

Daily inspection of your horse for general health and welfare needs to include an inspection of the eyes. Any abnormalities can quickly become serious.

The eye of the horse has a transparent outer surface called the cornea. It protects the delicate structures within the eye while allowing for vision.

Unlike humans, horses also have a third eyelid, or nictitating membrane, which originates from the inside corner and closes horizontally across the eye. The function of the third eyelid is to protect the cornea.

Common causes of eye problems

- Abrasive impact of sand.
- Penetration of grass seeds from summer pastures and hay.
- Scratches from paddock stubble.
- Injury from poorly designed fences.

It is important to inspect the horse's eyes daily, especially in summer.

Early treatment of eye injuries will prevent irreversible damage.

Symptoms of eye problems

- Squinting
- Rubbing of eye on foreleg
- Redness in the eye
- Spasms of the eyelid
- Swelling
- Cloudiness of the eye
- Excessive tears
- Discharge of pus and eyelids partially closed

What to do if eye problems are suspected

- Place the horse in a stable or shelter, out of direct sunlight.
- Contact your veterinarian.
- Follow the recommended treatment program.



It is important to inspect horses' eyes daily.



Take care with fence design.

Check horses' eyes regularly, especially during summer.

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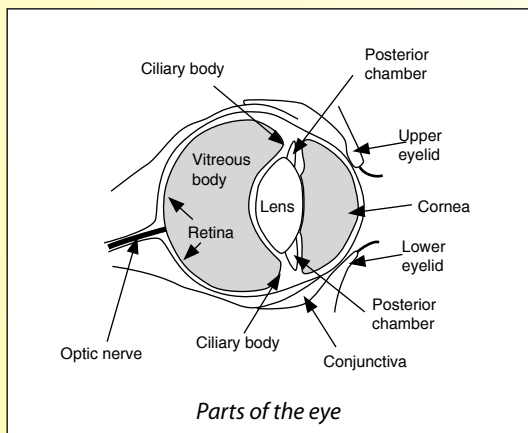
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Land management

- Position ground level feeders in yards, or on good pasture or in stables.
- Minimise exposure to dust and sand by keeping appropriate pasture cover (do not overgraze).
- Check paddock plants and hays for excessive seeds or stalks. Grazing, cutting hay, and slashing in spring will prevent pastures becoming rank and tough. Pastures grazed to 5 cm are quite easily managed.
- Check fencing for protrusions.
- Bare areas in paddocks may need to be resown. Soil testing to determine fertiliser and lime requirements is a key strategy along with good weed control.
- Perennial grasses such as cocksfoot, phalaris and kikuyu are particularly hard wearing (seek professional advice).



Slashing in spring



Top Tip

It's easier to check your horse's eyes out of direct sunlight. By placing the horse in the shade, or in a stable, conditions are better for observing any abnormalities.

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Funding for the HorsesLandWater Peri-Urban Project has been provided through the National Landcare Programme – Natural Resource Innovation Grant



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
National Landcare Programme

This update of this publication has been sponsored by the Environment Protection Authority, adapted from an original Fact Sheet produced with support from the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board:



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