

IN SUMMARY ...

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- Choosing an agistment property from price alone, without considering the state and management of the land and relative feed expenses, is false economy.
- Soil degradation from over-stocking and over-grazing has many negative effects on the environment, the health of your horse and your enjoyment of horsekeeping.
- Your horse's welfare is intimately linked with the welfare of the land.



For further information or assistance regarding agistment, contact:

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THE INVALUABLE ...

Checklist

The following checklist outlines the facilities and features of desirable horse agistment, so check the relevant sections against your prospective properties.

All facilities

- ✓ Safe, secure fencing and gates
- ✓ Daily supervision
- ✓ Shelter and shade
- ✓ Continuous clean water.....
- ✓ Parking
- ✓ Tie-up and saddling areas
- ✓ Safe exercise area
- ✓ Solid-surfaced, flat vet/farrier platform.....
- ✓ Knowledgeable property owner.....
- Consider: • costs
- location.....
- your time (labour involved)

Yards

- ✓ Between 45m² and 100m².....
- ✓ All-weather surface
- ✓ Shelter against the elements

Stables

- ✓ At least 3.7m x 3.7m and 4m high.....
- ✓ Guttering
- ✓ Adequate ventilation.....
- ✓ Kick-proof panelling.....

Both

- ✓ Daily manure removal from stables and yards
- ✓ Manure management
- ✓ No stormwater intrusion into stables or yards
- ✓ Regular feeding routine of at least two feeds a day

Paddocks

- ✓ Rotational grazing
- ✓ Fertiliser program
- ✓ Weed control program
- ✓ No poisonous weeds
- ✓ Few, if any, other weeds
- ✓ Minimum 70% pasture groundcover
- ✓ Minimum pasture height of 3cm
- ✓ Manure management program
- ✓ Little fenceline tracking and few bare areas
- ✓ Safe access (i.e. safe terrain, no loose stock)
- ✓ Not subject to waterlogging
- ✓ Creeks, boggy and dangerous areas fenced off
- ✓ No slope steeper than a car can handle

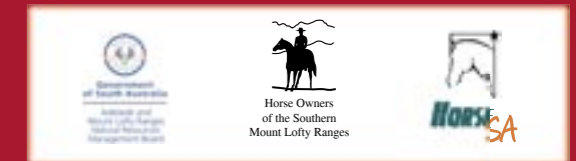
Additional services and facilities you may need

- ✓ Rugging
- ✓ Local riding/pony clubs
- ✓ Training facilities
- ✓ Instruction
- ✓ Safe trails
- ✓ Parking for floats.....
- ✓ Secure feed storage.....
- ✓ Secure tack storage.....
- ✓ Wash bay
- ✓ Toilet
- ✓ Lunch shelter.....
- ✓ Farrier on call
- ✓ Vet on call
- ✓ Care and facilities for injured or sick horses
- ✓ Consultation over agistment arrangements

horse agistment



HORSES, LAND AND WATER



WHAT'S WRONG WITH ...

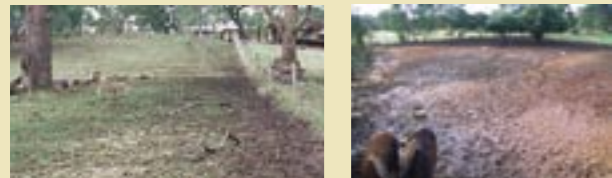
Bare ground

Soil degradation causes many problems for you and your horse. The major causes on horse properties are lack of pasture cover due to overgrazing, pugging of wet ground by horses' hooves, and formation of hard tracks due to compaction.

All three lead to the erosion – by water or wind – of topsoil, which is the most valuable part of the soil for growing pasture.



Examples of paddocks without erosion from tracking.



Examples of tracking causing significant soil degradation.

What can land degradation do to your horse?

- Dust can cause respiratory problems, especially in young stock.
- Boggy, slippery ground greatly increases the incidence of hoof problems, falls and fungal outbreaks on skin.
- Hard ground jars horses' legs and can cause lameness.
- Weeds flourish on badly-managed land and some species, such as Salvation Jane and Cape Tulip, can harm or even kill your horse.

LET'S KEEP THE ...

Soil

To prevent these problems, horse yards must be properly surfaced and paddocks must:

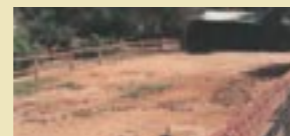
- not be overstocked;
- have stock rotated between paddocks to allow pastures to regenerate;
- maintain at least 70% groundcover at least 3cm high all year; and
- where possible, have horses removed during continuous or heavy rain.



Examples of approximately 70% groundcover (30% bare ground and residue).



Examples of approximately 50% groundcover (50% bare ground and residue).



An example of almost no groundcover and no manure management.

Eroded soil blows and washes away causing water pollution and neighbourhood problems and has long-term effects on plants and animals.

WHAT ARE YOUR HORSEKEEPING ...

Options



Low input



Medium input



High input

The price of agistment increases with the number of facilities and services required.

There are three general options for horsekeeping, each of which has a different level of work input.

The agistment manager may undertake these at a cost, or you can do them yourself.

Whichever system you choose, make sure your horse will be checked daily.

● Low input

Paddocking is often the cheapest and easiest system, as the horses usually do not require frequent manure removal, exercise or feeding. Rugging is optional if good natural or artificial shelter is available. Paddocks need to be rotated.

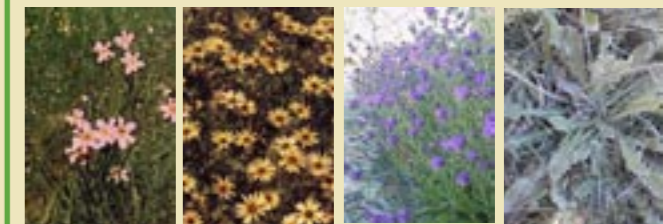
● Medium input

Day paddocking (conditions permitting) and night yard/stabling systems require daily manure removal from the stable/yard and medium feeding and exercising.

● High input

Yard and/or stable systems are generally the most expensive and time consuming as all manure needs to be removed, the horse is entirely hand fed, requires regular exercising and generally requires day and night rugging.

Remember that weeds are green too! Check your horse's pastures – they may really be covered in any of the toxic weeds below.



Cape Tulip

Capeweed

Salvation Jane

Cat's Ear