

Monday, January 23, 2012

I am a slow learner

We have had horses for 12-13 years now and it has taken us this long to figure things out for the good of the horses, our pocket books and us. When we started we spent a lot of money getting the barn renovated for box and standing stalls, bought tons of blankets, etc. Lots of money was wasted.

Now we:

- leave the horses out 24 hours a day year round with a run in shed
- bed the run in shed with coarse sand instead of straw (it stays drier and is a lot easier to pick clean)
- insulate the stock tank and use a bucket heater to keep it open in the winter
- throw a handful of pennies in the stock tank to control the algae
- feed in a round bale slow-feeder net in a tombstone feeder
- fecal test 4-5 times a year and only deworm as required
- only vaccinate the minimum for a closed herd
- trim as required instead of on schedule (changes with season and ground conditions)
- 99% of diet is forage, supplement based on analysis
- adjust diet based on body condition

They are healthier and less stressed and so are we. I am looking forward to the time we have the same breakthroughs for the sheep. I hope it doesn't take 12 years.

TTFN,
Laurie