



Horse & Pony News

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NOVEMBER 2025



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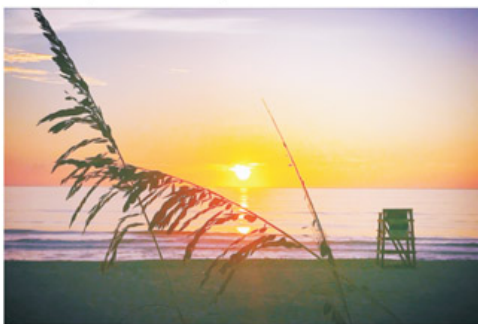


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Here Come the Holidays! Are You and Your Pet Ready?

If the sounds of school bells, crunching of leaves underfoot, and touchdown celebrations has not yet alerted you, summer has ended and fall festivities loom on the horizon. Dr. Canaan Shores, a veterinarian who heads the Urgent and Convenient Care service at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital, has advice for making sure the upcoming holidays are just as safe and enjoyable for our pets as for the human members of our family.

He says pet owners face different sets of safety concerns depending on whether they are traveling with their pet, traveling and boarding their pet or leaving them with a sitter, staying at home with their pet, or hosting a gathering.

Traveling with Your Pet

Dr. Shores recommends taking a few precautions before you travel with your pet to help the trip go as smoothly as possible.

- * If your pet takes any medications, double check your stock to verify that you have enough to comfortably last the duration of your trip. Do this well in advance to avoid needing a last-minute refill on your way out of town.

- * Research urgent or emergency care facilities on your route and at your destination so you're aware of their locations before an issue arises.

- * Talk to your vet about any medications that may make travel easier, whether by relieving the pet's stress or preventing GI upset with a bland prescription diet. As Dr. Shores says, "Sedatives are our friend!" The goal is to minimize the impact of travel on your pet.

When Your Pet Stays Behind

Again, it's important to make sure your pet has all necessary medications before you depart.

Additionally, Dr. Shores offers a few considerations for the times you are boarding your pet. "Most boarding facilities require proof of vaccination and deworming. Fulfilling these requirements can take two to four weeks, depending on which vaccines are needed," he says. "Try to plan as far ahead as possible and go through your pet's medical record to ensure all criteria are met."

Even if the boarding facility does not require these protections, your pet may fare better having maximum preventive care. "Talk to your primary care veterinarian about what additional steps can be taken to limit your pet's risk," he advises.

Holidays at Home with Your Pet

Before exposing your pet to all the chaos the holidays can bring, you should consider several potential hazards.

"There are going to be many more tasty treats around, with a lot of 'high-value' foods being thrown in the garbage, such as turkey carcasses and steak fat," notes Dr. Shores. "Make sure the trash can is well-secured. Don't assume that just because your pet hasn't gotten into something in the past they won't do it now. Pets change as they get older: sometimes becoming more obedient, but sometimes becoming less obedient."

He also strongly recommends keeping the number for an animal poison hotline on hand. "I recommend the ASPCA hotline (888-426-4435). There is a small fee for using this resource, but it is well worth it," he says. "If you're concerned that your pet has ingested something that may



be toxic, you can call that number and they will help determine if your pet should be seen by a veterinarian."

Cats are especially likely to chew on things like tinsel and wire. Unfortunately, this can lead to serious problems, such as GI obstruction. "Cats are also more likely to climb up onto objects, such as

decorative trees," says Dr. Shores, "If those objects fall, the cat could be injured."

He advises putting up decorations when you're going to be home for a few days. That way you can watch how your pet is going to react to these objects. "If there is concern that the pet may not fare well, scale back on the decorations," he advises.

Hosting a Gathering

Just like people, our pets may feel a range of emotions, depending on their personality, at the prospect of having guests in the home. Pet owners should consider that before the party begins and take steps to minimize their pets' stress.

"Some pets are going to be gregarious, greeting people at the door happily and not causing any problems," says Dr. Shores. "For others, gatherings can be a time of high stress, fear, and anxiety. This situation can lead to GI issues and even bite incidents."

To minimize problems, Dr. Shores advises keeping these pointers in mind:

- * Give the pet a quiet, dark area to retreat to if they choose. This will help prevent them from getting overstimulated, scared, or anxious.

- * Sedatives can help.

- * Tell your guests about your pet's personality type to prevent unwelcome interactions.

Final Thoughts

Whether traveling or staying home, you should know that holidays are high-volume periods for urgent care and emergency veterinary facilities. It's a time when primary care facilities are closed and pets are extra likely to need veterinary care. (Dr. Shores says pets more often get into high-fat foods or tangle with a visiting dog.) This combination adds up to longer wait times at the clinics that are open.

Dr. Shores also has advice for anyone considering surprising a loved one with an adorable new pet: "Don't. If the recipient has a well-thought-out plan, then great. But a pet should not be gotten on a whim and given to someone who is not expecting it."

He notes that there is a well-documented jump in pets coming into the shelter after the holidays.

With these tips in mind, you and your pet will be well equipped for a cheerful holiday season. As always, if you have any specific questions about how your pet and the holidays, it's best to talk directly to your primary care veterinarian.

Horse & Pony News

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From Horse & Pony News

Why You Should Sign Up for the Great Florida Cattle Drive 2026



In January 2026 the Great Florida Cattle Drive will once again send a herd South from the University of Florida's IFAS DeLuca Preserve toward Okeechobee. For six days riders drive cattle across prairies and pinewoods, sleep under the stars and revive the traditions of Florida's Cracker cow hunters. If you've ever dreamed of riding through open country and living history, this event promises "the trip of a lifetime." Along the trail you will experience live cow dog demonstrations and have opportunities to ride with the cow hunters moving the cows along the trail.

A living chapter of A Land Remembered

Patrick Smith's novel *A Land Remembered* follows the MacIvey family's struggles in Florida's wilderness. The 2026 route echoes parts of the book, allowing riders to see the landscapes that inspired the story. As part of a statewide program, more than 17,000 fourth graders will read *A Land Remembered* and watch live streams of the drive, making participants characters in an educational adventure.

Campfire culture every night

After long days in the saddle, riders gather round the campfire for nightly entertainment that celebrates cowboy culture:

- * Cowboy stories & poetry: Tuesday night features seasoned ranchers and young cowboys sharing tale and verses.

- * Bluegrass night: Wednesday brings upbeat music from the Bluegrass Express.

- * Seminole Stomp Dance: On Thursday the Seminole Tribe of Florida leads a cultural evening with a traditional Stomp Dance.

- * Steak dinner & auction: Fridays closing camp supper features a hearty steak and live auction.

These evenings evoke old cow camps where songs, stories and cultural exchange were as important as the day's miles.

End-of-Trail celebration

When the herd reaches Okeechobee, the public can join the End of Trail & Heritage Festival on January 31. The event includes demonstrations, mutton bustin', a brisket cook-off, art displays, vendor markets a kids' zone and live music. It's the perfect p-lace for family and friends to meet riders and enjoy Florida ranch culture.

Sneek peek at a TV adaptation

Tampa filmmaker Todd Wiseman Jr. and producer Christa Boarini are developing a multi-season TV series based on *A Land Remembered*. Wiseman says the show will highlight Florida's agricultural roots and remain true

to history. During the drive the production team plans to share insights and gather material, giving participants an insider's view of how the novel will come to television.

Education meets adventure

The UF/IFAS six week program built around a Land Remembered teaches fourth graders about land stewardship, cattle ranching and Florida ecosystems. As the drive moves through the DeLuca Preserve and working ranches, students watching online see conservation practices in action. Riders become ambassadors, connecting classroom lessons to real world experiences.

Register now – spaces are limited

Registration closes Dec 1, 2025, and costs \$700-\$850

The fee covers the drive, camp meals, nightly entertainment and festival entry. Whether you join as a drover, wagon rider or support crew, you'll be a part of a rare event that keeps Florida's ranching heritage alive.

From cowboy poets and bluegrass bands to Seminole Stomp dancers, cow dog demonstrations and a preview of a major TV series, the 2026 Great Florida Cattle Drive offers a unique blend of adventure, culture and history. The next drive won't happen until 2031- so saddle up and become part of Florida's living heritage.

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This Agility Q Is Not Important

By Christy Gammage Practice Makes Pawfect

Dog Agility is a competition. The objective is to do well enough to win or to at least get a 'Qualifying' score (a 'Q') so you can get titles and move up in the levels. Whether your goal is to stand on the top podium at the world championships or just get out of Novice level, I'm here to tell you that getting a qualifying score in your next class should not necessarily be your goal.

What?!? Shouldn't I want to do well and win? Yes, but to advance quickly and win consistently you really need to take the long view. And that long view should start with how does your dog feel coming out of the ring and what did they learn in there? Because dogs (and people) are learning all the time. And how they feel will influence everything they do from here on out.

Novice dog Scenario 1: The handler does a long lead out (that they've practiced before), looking around trying to remember the course (and the dog feels a little deserted in a strange environment). The first line of jumps goes OK. The next turn is smooth to a tunnel. Coming out of the tunnel, the dog looks around for the handler and spots the friendly looking jump crew sitting by the fence. HI! Oh wait, my handler looks mad. Guess I'll go back to them. Now the handler is embarrassed, frazzled and cues the next obstacle poorly. The dog heads for what they think the handler wanted. The handler screams "NO!" and the dog pulls off looking at the handler for clarification. The rest of the run the handler is very clear about what is next, the dog hesitantly complies. The run ends without any actual



faults. A Q! Maybe a placement! The dog just wants to get out of the ring where his handler was so stressed and he got yelled at twice.

Novice dog Scenario 2: The handler expects the young dog to make mistakes and considers this a training run, even if they did not enter the class as NFC/FEO/DTIR, where no actual judging is done. The handler has already studied the course before getting the dog out and can concentrate entirely on the dog from crate to ring. The handler does a short lead out keeping the dog's focus (even though really long lead outs have been done before in practice). The first line of jumps and tunnel entrance go well. Coming out of the tunnel, the dog spots the jump crew sitting by the fence. HI! Oh wait, my handler is calling me in a happy voice. They look like fun. I'll go back to them where they praise me for coming. Later in the run, the handler cues an obstacle indecisively. The dog heads for what they think the handler wanted. The handler accepts that the dog could have misunderstood and just allows the off-course to happen. Then they happily call the dog back and continue as if that was all just part of the course. The rest of the run goes well. No Q. The dog is happy. He had fun with his handler and got praised for doing the right things. Trialing is fun!

Novice (or experienced) dog Scenario 3: The handler is always positive with the dog. They accept

that sometimes they haven't trained a skill or the dog can misunderstand, but in general they make a good team. Off-courses are rare and the dog ignores distractions. Now they want to start pushing for the Q or the win. They've trained a 2-on-2-off (2o2o) stopped contact and the dog is solid in training. But with the exciting environment the dog is going faster than in practice or is distracted by the tunnel after the A-Frame. The dog hits the yellow contact zone, but doesn't even try to stop. Should the handler ... A) continue on, happy that the dog hit the contact zone and is going fast or ... B) call the dog back and emphasize that wasn't the correct A-Frame performance, sacrificing the Q with an intentional off-course?

Here is where your dog's temperament and feelings come into play. If it is a one-off, or with a 'soft' dog who would feel badly about being brought back to do the A-Frame again, maybe you keep going and just plan on more training at home. However, if this is not the first time or your dog can happily accept corrections, then you have 2 choices. Both choices sacrifice the Q in the name of training. You could just hop the dog back up into the 2o2o position, reinforcing to the dog that this is what must be done before you get to continue to play the game. But if your dog does this a lot in training, they may think the correction is part of the behavior. In which case you could try "Fix and Go" where you get to go back an obstacle or two and try the problem area again, maybe with stronger deceleration cues. (Note: you only get to try the fix one time, for one thing. If they still don't perform to your criteria, then you either can continue or leave the ring.) With any of these choices, keep in mind what you want the dog to feel or have learned when coming out of the ring.

Now we get to the hardest part. The handler's feelings. It is HARD to not care about the Q, or how your dog performs, or how it makes you look to the hordes of people watching (just kidding here). But, I'll tell you this, you will look like a more experienced and effective trainer giving your dog a good experience in the ring, rather than yelling at your dog to save the Q. People who focus on getting the Q to the detriment of their dog will struggle with motivation and speed as they progress up in the levels.

So remember, it IS all about the journey. Keep the dog thinking they are awesome. When your dog enjoys agility trialing, success will come more quickly and easily. They will stay connected with you and run faster with more confidence. And that leads to more Qs in the future. Better Practice!

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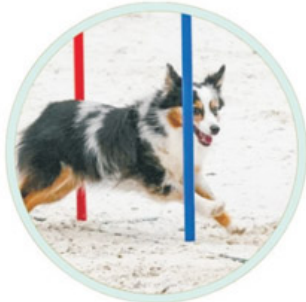


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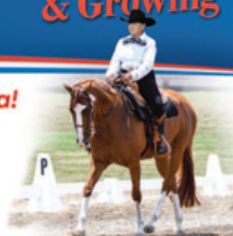


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Western Dressage: Tips From a Judge's Perspective

By Lynn Palm



these pitfalls. Let's jump into Level 4!

In this series, Western Dressage from a Judge's Perspective, I will give you tips from my point of view as a judge that may help your scores and learn to ride with more accuracy and precision. As we go through the levels, I will explain some common errors that I see and suggest ways to overcome

In the extended walk the horse covers as much ground as possible, without haste and without losing the regularity of the steps. The hind feet touch the ground clearly in front of the hoof prints of the fore feet. The rider allows the horse to stretch out the head and neck (forwards and downwards) without losing contact with the mouth and control of the poll. The nose must be clearly in front of the vertical. This is a necessary task to do at this level, as the jog and lope have been asked for, now the walk must be shown! The walk is the hardest gait to keep extended, as the walk is the hardest to control the length of stride. When the extended walk is perfected, you have your driving aids working! To extend the walk, the horse must be obedient to the aids and rider has to extend with seat and leg aids, and allow the head and neck of the horse to slightly extend lower, with the poll not below the wither, for best results. Often, I see the stride too short with reins too tight which retards the extension.

The collected walk is a shortening of the steps working of walk without losing engagement of the hind legs with energy. The horse may shorten his outline without tightness and quick steps. The horse must be relaxed and maintain a fluid tempo.

The horse must be shortened from warm up. When collected, the rider should always have invisible aids, riding from legs to hand contact, which will eliminate shorter and quicker steps when training.

The flying change of lead will ideally begin with the sequence of the new hind leg, the diagonal pair and followed by the new leading front leg. The change of lead of the hind and front leg takes place immediately after the moment of suspension without a break of gait. The aids should be precise and unobtrusive.

Now we are having fun! The is no better feeling than when your horse is doing flying lead changes! One must have the skills to position the horse for the new lead while maintaining the horse's correct body position during the lead change. For this transition, you must keep your horse straight with the slightest bend in preparation for the new lead, without changing it. The lead change is accomplished when you cue for the change of lead while maintaining your horse's body position during the change to get it with balance and fluidity and smoothness.

Common errors are break

of gait, changing from the front then the hind and riders overexaggerating their aids. Again, the key is the horse's straightness and the rider's light use of aids while maintaining correct position and balance in the saddle.

For the quarter pirouette, the horse is highly collected for 1 or 2 strides before and then through a 90 degree turn around the haunches in 2-3 strides, maintaining a correct canter footfall.

Although this is a great progression to train the pirouette, it is the beginning of doing the 180 degree turn and more. I do like to show the very collected strides, and I will do 3 or more, to allow my horse to know that I am going to make the tightest turn at the canter that is possible! Often riders do not show the collected strides at the beginning, or they don't truly move around the haunches rather make too wide a turn.

The half-pirouette is a half-circle executed on two tracks with a radius equal to the length of the horse. The forehand moving round the haunches. The forefoot and the outside hind foot move round the inside hind foot which forms the pivot and should return to the same spot, or slightly in front of it, each time it leaves the ground. The horse is slightly bent in the direction in which it is turning should remain on the bit with a light contact, turn smoothly and maintain the appropriate sequence and timing of footfalls of that gait. The poll stays at the highest point during the entire movement. The quarters are well engaged and lowered and show a good flexion of the joints.

When you perfect the quarter turn, the half or 180 degree pirouette comes easily. It is a wonderful feeling of your horse being at his highest degree of collection and to do the canter pirouette which is one of my favorite movements in dressage. To do the pirouette well, keep the same bend throughout the turn, and move the forehand around to make the turn. Like the quarter pirouette, I see not enough collection prior to the turn, or the steps are too big. Here the riders need to sit back and continue to use the driving aids to shorten the step to keep the hind end engaged.

Level 4 has so many fun maneuvers that call on all the skills learned from the previous levels for both rider and horse. It is so close to the current highest level-Level 5!

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Florida Cracker Trail Association History

In 1987, a group of energetic individuals, with a love and respect for history, came together to form the Florida Cracker Trail Association, to recreate a part of Florida's past that has become a traditional event. The Annual Cross-State Ride serves to highlight and preserve the importance of Florida's role in the introduction of horses and cattle into the New World as well as the birth and continuance of the cattle and horse industries by Florida's future settlers and their descendants. Community developers are moving into the heartland of Florida, buying huge multi-thousand acre ranches and converting this wild land to tracts of housing. As a result, the area's history is being threatened.

In the early 1500s, Spanish conquistador, Juan Ponce de León landed on the shores of Florida in an attempt to colonize. Thwarted and attacked by Native Americans, the colonists abandoned their quest, leaving behind the first livestock in North America... horses, hogs and Andalusian cattle, the ancestors of the Texas Longhorns.

Florida was mostly wide, green spaces (natural pastureland) and livestock bred and ran wild for centuries. In northern Florida, those who raised cattle fought Indian raids, mosquitoes, fever ticks, storms, swamps and snakes.

By the 1800s, the Seminole nation possessed extensive herds (5,000 to 50,000 head) of cattle. As Indian and white settlers moved south, so did the cattle, searching for new pastures.

As railroads reached into Florida, it became a chief supplier of cattle to the Confederacy for hides, tallow, leather and meat during the Civil War.

Florida was an open range. There was not a fenced pasture anywhere in the state and cattle roamed freely. Rustling became particularly widespread by the second half of the 18th century, and was one of the elements that led to the Seminole Wars.

Following the Civil War, a rugged brand of individual settled along Florida's east coast and central corridor. These early settlers became known by their Northern neighbors, as Florida Crackers, Cracker Cowmen or Cow Hunters.

The early Crackers would hunt and round up cows over the wooded rangelands and miles and miles of open plains, in the hammocks, and by the rivers and streams, and had a unique way of herding cattle. The Crackers relied on bullwhips to flush cows out of the palmetto scrub and spur on oxen that pulled their carts and wagons. They used 10- to 12-foot-long whips made of braided leather. The snaps of these whips would break the sound barrier making a loud CRACK.

Physicists Alain Goriely and Tyler McMillen at the University of Arizona explain: "The crack of a whip comes from a loop traveling along the whip, gaining speed until it reaches the speed of sound and creates a sonic boom. Even though some parts of the whip travel at greater speeds, it is the loop itself that generates the sonic boom."

The sound earned the Cowmen the nickname of Crackers.

The crack could be heard for miles, so they also used them to communicate with each other, like a form of Morse code, and were able to identify each other by their whip

cracks.

Many Crackers rode rugged, rather small horses known as cracker ponies and relied on herd dogs to help get a cow out of a marsh, work a hundred steers into a tidy group and move cattle along the trail. A good dog, a horse, and whip were all the tools a true Cracker needed.

The Crackers survived in difficult conditions. They fought off panthers, wolves, bears, and cattle rustlers and spent weeks or months on cattle drives across difficult marshes and dense scrub woods, often enduring burning heat, torrential thunderstorms, and hurricane winds.

Today, the term Florida Cracker refers to an independent, self-reliant cowboy and the lifestyle that goes with that character.

Each year, the Crackers gathered west of Fort Pierce to drive their giant herd of scrub cattle west across the state toward Bradenton and then to Tampa, Punta Gorda, and Punta Rassa, to ship them to Cuba.

Needing provisions for the trip, but having no money, Crackers often stocked up at P.P. Cobb's General Store in Fort Pierce. Mr. Cobb let them fill their saddlebags with his merchandise and pay him after they had sold their herds to the Cubans, who were willing to pay in Spanish gold coins.

The Cracker Trail was the only dry route across Florida.

To the north, the Kissimmee River and its floodplains blocked the way. To the south, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades made passage impossible.

Each year, the Florida Cracker Trail Cross-State Ride honors the Cracker Cowmen and their history.



Cracker Trail Annual Cross State Ride Ride Dates February 14-21, 2026 *Our 39th Anniversary!!!*



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Poker Ride at Colt Creek State Park The Dream Trip: Riding in Peru



Save the Date!
Colt Creek will host another family Poker Ride on Saturday, February 21st. All you need is your own horse (with a current

Coggins); you don't have to know anything about poker. The ride will officially begin at 9am, although people can start earlier if they are ready; all riders must be out before 10am and return by 12:30pm.

The ride is FREE after park admission (\$3 for an individual, \$4 for a carload up to 8 people). The Friends want to make this event affordable for families; there will be a donation jar that we hope people will "feed" to pay the Friends back for their gift—and to support the park. Please keep in mind that poker rides in other parks can cost around \$25 per rider!

Each rider will locate 5 buckets along the trail and take one envelope from each. Bring the envelopes back to Registration where a volunteer will open them, remove



the playing cards, and determine how good your hand is. Stick around to enjoy a hot dog lunch while all riders return and the hands are rated before the winners are announced. First prize is \$100, second is \$50, and third is \$25.

Colt Creek has 21 miles of beautiful trails, with an additional 22 miles in the adjoining Hampton Tract. The primitive equestrian campground has water, a beautiful pavilion, and a bathroom (no shower). Follow the Friends of Colt Creek's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcoltcrreek>) to stay abreast of park news.

How to Pick a Riding Tour

By Janet Schneider

Riding with tour groups can be fantastic or disastrous. Knowing what to look for when choosing a trip can help to ensure a wonderful time.

1. Evaluate the company as best you can. Look for reviews and ratings, awards, and affiliations with other organizations. Does the web site explain what kind of horses they use and what care those horses receive?

2. Pick a trip that you can actually complete. Be brutally honest when evaluating your own physical fitness and riding ability! Walking for an hour once or twice per week on your slow, steady quarter horse will not prepare you for galloping across hills on a feisty thoroughbred for 6 hours. European tours are almost always have English saddles, which many American riders find frighteningly flimsy compared with a Western saddle. BE HONEST when the tour operator asks about your riding ability! Most of us ride at a lower competence level than what we think we do.

3. Some tours are luxurious, others primitive. Will you have your own room, or must you share? Will there be a private or shared bathroom, or none at all? If you're a hot-shower-every-night person, you won't enjoy a tent out in the woods with a port-a-pottie or tree for a bathroom.

4. Does the company require insurance? Responsible groups insist that riders carry enough medical insurance that they can be safely evacuated if necessary.

5. How many people are allowed on each tour? The larger the group, the greater the logistics challenges and lower degrees of personal attention if needed. Small groups are generally more agile and less prone to problems. Likewise, how many guides will be with the rides? The more riders, the more guides you should have.

6. What will the average speed and length of rides be each day? Pick something your physical condition and riding experience can handle.

7. Will you have to groom and saddle your own horse every day? If so, can you lift a heavy saddle up for a 15-hand (or larger) horse?

8. Can you mount your own horse without help? Mounting blocks or rocks may not be available, and having a guide plant a hand or shoulder on your posterior to shove you up can be embarrassing.

Most importantly, go with a great attitude! Be flexible if things don't go quite as you expect. Be friendly and helpful to those around you. Constructive comments if you see a problem is good, unsolicited advice not so much. Be the person everyone wants to be around, enjoy the horse and scenery, and have a great time.

By Janet Schneider

One of my top bucket list items was to visit Peru and Machu Picchu, and this past September that dream was achieved! I joined the Wild Women Expeditions' (<https://wildwomenexpeditions.com/>) 10-day Peru Riding Expedition Tour.

I can honestly say that this trip was the absolute best I have ever taken, albeit the most physically taxing—the altitude, starting at 11,000 feet in Cusco and rising to 14,000 in the Andes' mountain passes, was extremely challenging for a Florida girl.

I flew into Cusco 4 days early both to give myself time to adjust to the altitude as well as to see the city. Cusco is considered the oldest continuously inhabited city in the Americas, with evidence of habitation dating back over 3,000 years.

My tour group met for the first time on Monday September 1st and consisted of 7 women. We had at least 2 guides with us at all times—expedition leader Kyd, historical interpreter Paola and later Nilo, who was invaluable keeping us all safe on the trail. A secondary support team

transported our luggage, met us along the trails with supplies, and cared for the horses every day.

We met our Peruvian Paso horses on Tuesday and began riding on Wednesday, traveling past archaeological



treasures such as the Maras Salt Flats, temples and terraces, and the Incan Agricultural Research Center. Each day Paola gave us miniature history lessons as we traveled, and out of the saddle we learned about Peruvian culture and lifestyle, animal husbandry, agricultural practices, medicinal herbs, textiles, and more in an incredibly

immersive experience.

The horses were wonderful—well trained, in excellent condition and very responsive. The terrain was definitely challenging as we climbed and descended along well-traveled routes, parts of the ancient Incan trail, and tiny alpaca paths. The riding portion of the trip took 6 days; our final full day was spent going to and from the ancient Incan city of Machu Picchu.

I've been on many riding trips and can easily say this experience ranks at the top. Our leaders were outstanding in personality, organization, experience and horsemanship. Our small group of ladies was congenial, and the Wild Women office attentive to details and communication.



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November 21st is the DEADLINE for the December 2025 issue of Horse & Pony News. Call 813-967-1931 or email Horsepony@tampabay.rr.com today!



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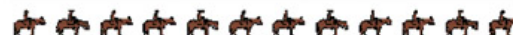
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Calendar Of Events

Calendar listings are FREE if you are also running a display ad in Horse & Pony News. Listings without ads are \$12 each. Call 813-967-1931 or visit www.HorseAndPonyNews.com.

HORSE SHOWS

November 15-16: Ocala, FQHA All Novice Show, 941-321-3247, fqhasecretary@aol.com. (see ad pg 3) 10x

December 5-7: Ocala, FQHA Last Chance Futurity & Show, 941-321-3247, fqhasecretary@aol.com. (see ad pg 3) 10, 11x

January 2-6: Ocala, FQHA Florida Gulf Coast, 941-321-3247, fqhasecretary@aol.com. (see ad pg 3) 10, 11, 12x

TRAIL RIDES

November 15: Friends of Little Manatee River State Park Treasure Hunt. www.FriendsoftheLittleManatee.org or (813) 677-9291.

January 26-31: Great Florida Cattle Drive, 863-287-1835, www.greatfloridacattledrive.com. (see article & ad, pages 6 & 7) 10, 11, 12, 1x

February 14-21 Cracker Trail Annual Cross State Ride www.floridacrackertrail.org or [Facebook.com/floridacrackertrail](https://www.facebook.com/floridacrackertrail) (see article page 13) 11, 12, 1x

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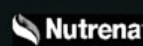


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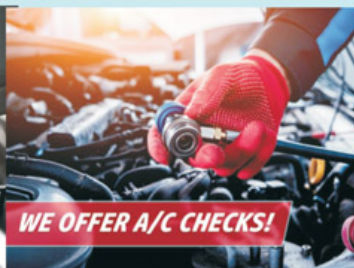
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5 Easy Steps to Treating Hot Spots on Dogs



Noticed a hot spot on your dog? They're extremely common during the warmer months, when temperatures get human and bugs are on the prowl. Don't let hot spots cramp your summer adventures. With the right treatment and care, your dog will feel better in just a few days.

What are Hot Spots?

Dog hot spots are areas of infected, inflamed skin that are very uncomfortable for your dog. Often these spots get moist or itchy and can even ooze. Your dog will likely be tempted to lick or chew the area of discomfort, but doing so only makes those hot spots worse.

Hot spots on dogs are caused by a condition called acute moist dermatitis. They are itchy, painful skin lesions that result from constant licking, biting, and scratching of one area. Inflammation causes these spots to become warm, which is how they gained the name "hot spots." Irritants such as bugs and allergens can be the initial cause for your dog's irritation, and excess moisture from rain or pools can sometimes amplify the effects.

How to Treat a Hot Spot on a Dog:

1. TRIM SURROUNDING HAIR

Carefully trim the hair around the affected area with clippers or scissors. Your pup may get frightened or flinch as you clip around the area of pain, so it may help to have a second person to hold and comfort them as you trim. You can also seek professional help if you need assistance to safely remove the hair.

2. CLEAN THE AREA

Clean the affected area with a pH-appropriate product, so as not to cause your dog any more pain or discomfort. For best results, use a product that's specially formulated to treat hot spots.

3. SOOTHE THE HOT SPOT

After the area has been cleaned, apply a cool wash cloth or compress to soothe the area and relieve irritation, before patting it dry.

4. TREAT THE HOT SPOT

Once dry, to treat the hot spot start by applying a topical hot spot treatment to protect and soothe any lasting irritation. Continue to apply this treatment 3-4X daily and try to monitor how often your pet licks or scratches the area. If they continue to lick excessively, an e-collar or plastic cone may be necessary.

5. MAINTAIN CARE

Dog hot spot healing time usually lasts anywhere from a few days up to a couple of weeks. Continue to clean and check the affected area daily. If the area worsens or does not show improvement in a couple of days, or in extreme cases, you should contact your veterinarian for further



treatment, such as antibiotics.

Regularly brushing and bathing your dog, especially during the summer months, will help to remove any allergens and irritants from their skin and coat and prevent hot spots from forming. For the healthiest clean, use a shampoo like Vetericyn FoamCare® that's properly formulated for your dog's coat type and pH balanced for optimal skin health.



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A Guide to Blankets and Blanketing



Fran Severn

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To blanket or not to blanket – that is the question

And there are as many answers as there are horses and horse owners. The only answer is – it depends. Every owner has different criteria for deciding when to blanket. Some go by the air temperature. Others by whether the horse seems cold in the morning. Some decide by the age or breed of the horse. The only constant is that a new blanket will be torn or muddy before you get the credit card bill you used to buy it.

The language of horse blankets can also be confusing. “Weight” refers to the amount of fill between the lining and the outer fabric. That translates into the temperature range for using the blanket. You also need to consider whether the horse is clipped or has its natural winter coat. Here’s a handy guide explaining blanket weights and temperatures:

Now you must make sure you get the right size. Measure from the withers to the top of the tail for the back seam. Then measure from the center of the chest to the end of the rump. That gives you the body length. You’ll now have the size in inches.



Proper fastening is important to ensure that the blanket stays on and that the horse can’t be injured by misfastened snaps.

Clips: Make sure all clips are turned towards the horse and make sure that they are fully closed. That prevents them from getting caught on anything.

Belly straps: If your blanket has straight belly straps, bring them straight across the belly. If your blanket has angled straps,

bring them across diagonally and hook them in the opposite receiver. T-locks are notorious for jamming or opening at will. Use plumbing washers or T-lock fasteners to make them behave.

Leg straps: These can be tricky. Do not cross them diagonally. Loop them through each other on the same side. You want the strap to stay on the same side but get looped around and clipped to the D-rings on the same side. It’s too easy for the horse to get a leg or foot tangled if the strap is hanging long and loose. (Photo of proper strap placement)

To hang blankets when not in use, thread several strands of bailing twine or rope through PVD pipe and tie them to stall bars.

More information about blanketing (including photos demonstrating how to fasten blankets) is in *The Book of Barn Hacks*, available



at www.bookofbarnhacks.com.)

Weight	Unclipped Horse	Body Clipped Horse
No fill	Fleece Cooler /Sheet 40° - 50°	Fleece Cooler/Sheet 50° - 60°
0g – 80g	No Fill Sheet 30° - 40°	Lightweight 40° - 50°
100- 150 g	Lightweight 20° - 30°	Lightweight /Medium 30° - 40°
180g – 275g	Medium 10° - 20°	Medium/Heavy 20° - 30°
300g- 450g	Heavy Below 10°	Heavy/maybe with liner Below 20°

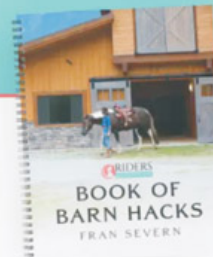
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November 15th Little Manatee River State Park Treasure Hunt

Keep the date November 15th marked on your calendar to join the search for treasure in Little Manatee River State Park!

You will search the trails guided by a map for 10 buckets with numbered keys in them. Collect 1 or all 10 and deposit them in treasure chest with matching numbers for a chance to win prizes valued at \$25. and up if your key is drawn at 2pm.

The event starts at 9am with last entry out at 11am. All must be in by 1:30 to deposit keys. A delicious lunch is included with entry fee of \$25. in advance or \$30. day of event. Extra meals are available. You can ride, hike or paddle this event and a silent



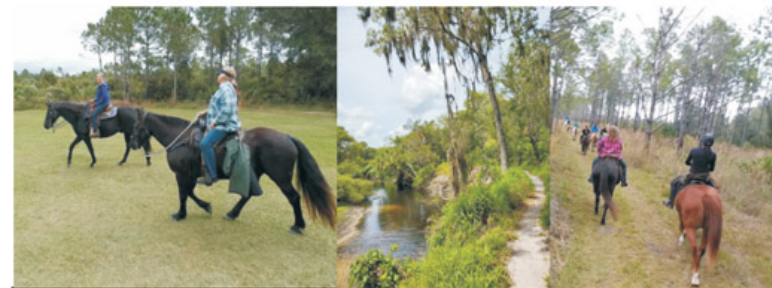
Auction will run during the event to give everyone a chance to bid on the items donated. Need a horse call Born to Ride 941-812-1980.

For advance tickets go to <http://www.FriendsOfTheLittleManatee.org>. Proof of

negative coggins required and helmets for riders 16 and under.

If you need special assistance call park office at 813-671-5005 Jordan. All profit goes to projects in the park.

This event presented by the Florida State Parks and Staff, the Friends Of Little Manatee River, Canoe Outpost, Wolfe's Born to Ride and ACE Crossings Hardware, Big Bend.



Little Manatee River State Park Upcoming Events



The Little Manatee River State Park hosts events throughout the year, from a Treasure Hunt to Moonlight Trail Rides and a charity poker run on land or on the water. On November 15th you can join the search for treasure in Little Manatee River State Park!

State Park Family Events

The state park Moonlight Rides are scheduled for Nov. 8, Dec. 6, Feb. 28 and March 28. Please pre-register in advance. RSVPs can be made at 813-833-6047. Wolfe's Born to ride will also have horses available to rent for the evening with a guided trail ride through the Little Manatee River State Park. We must have at least 10 riders to register for a Saturday night Moonlight Ride

The 2026 Poker Ride will be held on January 31! You can ride, hike or canoe the trails to collect playing cards from up to 6 locations to make your best poker hand. Take a chance to improve your hand with extra cards available for donation. The highest five card hand and win great prizes!

Bring your whole family to the "All

About Horses" fun and educational event at Little Manatee River State Park! This event is will be held on April 16 and you won't want to miss the displays, speakers, raffles, bake sale, food & drinks, T- shirts and games! A Parade of Breeds will be held to display all of the horse breeds onsite! Information will be available on horse rescues, training stables and local horse rentals and more!

Cowboys will speak on the history of the Cracker horse & bull whips! There will be tack & farrier displays and horse health speakers!

Located in South Hillsborough County

The Little Manatee River State Park is located in South Hillsborough County near the Manatee county line and is divided by the Little Manatee river.

The Friends of the Little Manatee River State Park is a 501c3 organization support group and the Florida State Parks. for more info go to www.friendsofthelittlemanatee.org/special-events/ For Park info go to: www.floridastateparks.org or call 1-800-326-3521

Little Manatee River 7th Annual Treasure Hunt Saturday, November 15

To be held at the Little Manatee River State Park
215 Lightfoot Road Wimauma, FL 33598

Food-Treasure-Prizes-Silent Auction = Fun Day!



Search the trails or river of the park by horseback, canoe or by hiking! Use any of these way to find the keys to the Treasure Chest for chances to win prizes!

Entry fee per rider or hiker is \$25 in advance or \$30 day of event. Entry includes a yummy lunch & drink. Extra lunches are available. Negative coggins test required & helmets for riders under 16 year old

Presented by the Florida State Parks Staff, Friends of the Little Manatee River State Park, Canoe Outpost, Wolfe's Born To Ride, Ace Crossings Hardware and Feed, Big Bend.

For tickets & information visit
www.FriendsOfTheLittleManatee.org
813-677-9291, need a horse 941-812-1980



LITTLE MANATEE RIVER STATE PARK

Located 4 miles S. Of Sun City Center on Hwy 301
215 Lightfoot Rd. Wimauma, FL.33598
813-671-5005

MOONLIGHT RIDES: Nov. 8,
Dec. 6, Jan. 3, Feb. 28, March 28

TREASURE HUNT: Nov. 15

POKER RIDE: Jan. 31

ALL ABOUT HORSES: April 16

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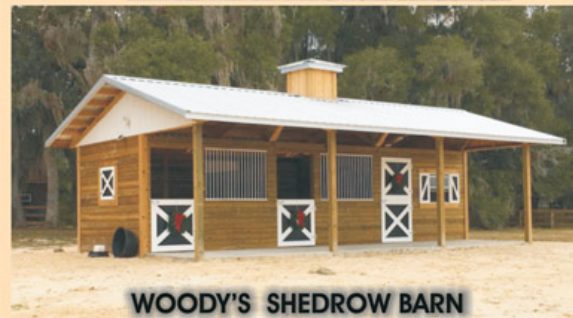
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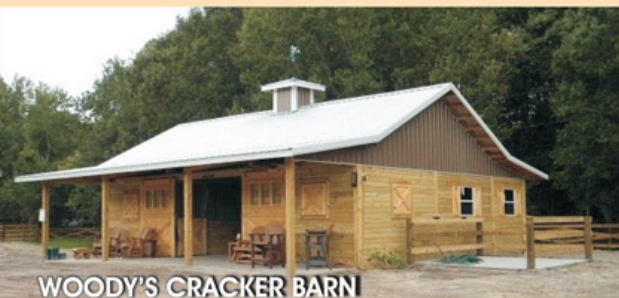
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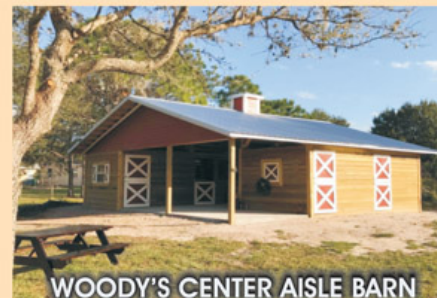
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