

Insulation

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The necessity for barn insulation is somewhat controversial among horse owners, but in fact, it is more for the benefit of people than horses. Horses are quite comfortable in non-insulated buildings with adequate ventilation.

Doyle Pokorny of M.P.B. Builders Inc., located in Ripon, Wis., believes there is a fine balance between the right amount of insulation and enough ventilation to keep horses comfortable and healthy. "Many people want warm buildings and insulate them without taking into consideration the amount of moisture and heat generated by a number of horses. Then, they make matters worse by giving short shrift to ventilation. What they don't realize is that's how you end up with condensation problems, moldy tack and horses with respiratory problems."

Doyle recommends installing insulation on metal roofing because it is inexpensive and evens out temperature differences between the outside and inside air that can cause "rain" in the barn. He also emphasizes the importance of exhaust fans, vents and natural air sources.

Tami Newman, marketing coordinator for Wick Buildings, concurs. "We advise our customers to build their horse barns for their horses' safety and comfort first, then to consider human concerns. Horses are most comfortable in an airy and dry barn from about 0 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit, so you could almost say that unless people feel somewhat chilly in a barn, the horses are probably warmer than necessary."