

Sop Up the Sweat and Move On

By Cindy Hale

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Can summer please be over? I am so done with the sweat. I am tired of my jeans sticking to my skin. I have to peel them off my body every afternoon like I'm a giant fruit roll-up.

In an attempt to get my riding done before the temps soar into triple digits, I make sure Wally and Joey are fed by dawn. It could be a scene from an eerie equine vampire movie. "Quick! Hurry, before sunrise! Throw them the hay! The hay!"

It kind of takes the fun out of riding when it's a contest to see who is sweating more: me or my horse. At least the horses get the luxury of a cool shower after they're untacked. Me? I figure I don't need a shower until my boot socks have melded to my toes and sweat has trickled into my outer ear.

I want Summer 2009 to be history. I keep checking my calendar to make sure there isn't some cosmic mistake. It's nearly the end of September. Shouldn't pumpkins be ripening on their vines? Aren't home-raised turkeys getting a little suspicious each time they're fed a teensy bit more grain? Hel-lo! Halloween and Thanksgiving are on the horizon. Let's put the tank tops to bed and move on to zip-up sweatshirts.

I already have my very own Summer 2009 souvenir. I grew a scaly sunspot on the bridge of my nose. It's not skin cancer, but it's a warning. My doctor scolded me for wearing mere ball caps and visors around the barn instead of a wide-brimmed hat. So I went out and bought a genuine straw cowboy hat. Of course, with my scrawny shoulders and thin neck it looks like an over-sized sombrero on my head, but it seems a small price to pay to avoid a permanent dent in my nose from having a lesion removed. And just so you know, I religiously smear my face with SPF sunscreen no less than twice a day. Quite frankly, I fear that it makes my face appear somewhat iridescent, as if I'm a member of a traveling troupe of Cirque du Soleil performers. Yes indeed, I'm quite fashionable on the bridle paths. Nonetheless, even with the sombrero and the clown make-up, I ended up with a brownish freckly thing on my nose. Every time I looked in the mirror it stared back at me. I began to wonder, "If I were a solid sorrel, and that were a white spot, would it be large enough to qualify me for Pinto papers?"

I'm sure I'm not the only horsewoman who winds up besmirched with sunspots, freckles and nascent skin cancers by the end of summertime. It's kind of an occupational hazard. With an obsessive amount of attention, my personal nose medallion is fading, thankfully. Now if only this summer would fade away as well.

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