

H&H VETERINARY CLINIC
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Hooves on Pasture

Can you imagine taking the day off from work – getting your morning coffee, grabbing the newspaper and going outside and lying in your yard to have a leisurely morning. You have a nice new outfit on; your sipping your mocha, reading about the latest tragedies of the world . . . the morning sun is warm on your face and you decide to take a little siesta. You wake up moments later to a very wet back and rear ---- what's the deal . . you haven't irrigated in days???

Just like leather boots that get wet and dry continuously, they eventually split and crack --- your horses hoof capsule can do the same. The hoof capsule is meant to support the bony column. If you continue to allow your horse out on pasture (in this wet/dry environment) it will eventually become compromised. You become the farrier's nightmare and expose your horses to the following possible complications:

- * develop a mushy hoof capsule that will collapse and not be a proper support to the bony column
- * splitting/cracking hooves
- * increased likelihood of abscesses
- * increased likelihood of founder/laminitis
- * rotting of frog
- * white line disease
- * increased susceptibility to bruising

Your farrier is doing his best to help your horse. The more you can do to help his cause – and your horses' – the better off you all will be.

Every horse is an individual – however; no horse should be out on pasture more than 3 hours per day. It is best to turn out either late morning or anytime in the afternoon/evening – when the dew is off the grass. Try to be consistent on a daily basis. Remember a horse can consume a lot of feed in one hour (normal time it takes to eat a healthy helping of hay); so he could easily overeat even with three hours on the grass. Study your situation and determine what is best for your horse.