

OPRC PIEDMONT NEWSLETTER
FEB 2010

Not much going on this month or last!! Wait for mud season to start. Frankly, I'll take the snow over loosing my boots in a quagmire! We probably won't have any rain all summer. What can ya do?

We will try to have the new member rating and the musical ride at Sue Knox's on Sunday, Feb 28th. I'm sure we will have found our trailers by then.

As to the dressage lessons, we will try to fit in another with Danielle on March 21 and then the last one on the 28th: More to follow on this subject via email.

Be aware of the change in Summer Camp dates. Although camp is now the 18-20 of June, Luanne and Karen are still able to teach which is a big plus. Everything else remains the same. Miranda will send out more information so I won't take your time here.

I thought I'd take this opportunity to talk about reconditioning.

Please don't think your horses will be their normal selves after all this snow and bad weather. Treat them as you would after a summer (or winter) lay off. They need to be brought back slowly. Yes, walking through the snow did condition them somewhat but their tendons are still delicate so be careful. Long walks up and down hills would be wonderful. I might interject that longeing first for a couple of days might be wise! Groundwork to reestablish manners would be prudent. Getting yourself into some sort of shape is another area. If you haven't been going to the gym, try some big time stretching, some ab work, and some lunges. Our first musical ride will only be at walk trot but the trot sessions can be long. Please condition as you can and as often as you can. It's not fair to make either of you ride for an hour without some sort of preparation. My only caution is to be very, very careful of slipping on mud or frozen ground. You could easily tear or pull something and then you'd be out of it for months. Also a caution about coats: It sounds silly to warn you NOT to clip your horse's winter coat at this time as his summer coat is starting to grow underneath all that hair. We all live with hair between our teeth for months. Suck it up, brush that coat and endure. Of course clippers can be used on whiskers, facial cat hairs and pasterns just to make you feel better. Pull manes and trim tails and you will have done all you can do. Baths???? Well, that's up to the weather and your patience. Hot ragging is the easiest; elbow grease is the best. What a wonderful surprise you will have after all that dead hair is gone. Now is the time to check all your tack, your horse's equipment and your clothes. Make any repairs you must and buy whatever you must. Get it all done before everything hits the fan. In addition to all your other "jobs", OPRC has a very busy year ahead.

KICK ON, follow snowmen!

P.S.

Catherine Mack sent me the following information from Susan VanWagoner about a new feed. IF you are interested please contact Catherine at cmack@wildblue.net or look on the website given below. I guess we missed the Feb 16th lecture – oh well.

I've been hearing a lot lately about toxins in grains. That's human quality grain, so I can only imagine what is in our animal products. I have started feeding my horses organic feed from a wonderful source in Fishersville, VA. The prices are comparable to other feed and they deliver to our area. They also have all kinds of organic products for dogs and cats and cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, etc. They also have a seed mixture for pastures that is a mix of healthy herbs instead of just sugar-laden grass. And they will do a soil and vegetation analysis of pasture to see what (or if) any of their many natural, organic fertilizers are needed. They also have natural and organic supplies for gardeners.

Their horse feed is really nice with pure, organic ingredients, no soy, no processed anything and no molasses or other sugars. And for those of us who have horses who can't eat any or a lot of grain, they have just produced a feed concentrate that includes all of their wonder ingredients except the grains. So it can be fed as is for all the needed nutrition or mixed with beet pulp or smaller amounts of grains of your choice. My horses love it and it is actually less expensive than what I was feeding – and I really feel good about feeding it. Catherine Mack is also feeding it to her horses and can let you know what she thinks.

The owner of the company, Kevin Fletcher, is so nice and knowledgeable and is available to consult about any of his products. We have invited him to come speak with anyone who is interested on Tuesday, February 16th, at 10:30 AM. We will decide the exact location, which will be in or near The Plains, when we know many people would like to talk with him. He will bring information about all of his products, so you can ask about whichever interest you. You can check out the website at www.countysidenatural.com, too.