

## Odors, Ammonia and Flies, Oh, My!

Reducing odors, ammonia and flies is the best way to prevent disease and respiratory problems, while creating a clean-smelling environment in your barn.

By Keith Salls.

Maybe your horse has the life of luxury – long days of turnout on lush, green pastures. No bugs. No bad weather. No need for a barn or shelter.

Then again, maybe your horse lives in the real world. The world where, particularly in suburban areas, horses are stabled for more hours than not. The world where bedding and odor products, manure removal implements and fly sprays are necessary for safe, comfortable barn living. Yet no matter how hard you try to create the most sanitized environment, there's always a smell in the barn.

say cheese

“We keep our stalls really clean,” says April Kamp, equestrian director for the Ford Plantation in Richmond Hills, Georgia, where Kamp oversees 16 horses on 22 acres of paddocks and 16 miles of trails. “And we still have a need for products that help us control odor and flies.”

Kamp uses ammonia-controlling products like Sweet PDZ in her program, particularly for horses that urinate more than normal. Tom Menner, spokesperson for Steelhead Specialty Minerals in Spokane, Washington, understands Kamp's problem, and he's concerned that many horse owners and barn managers don't realize how dangerous ammonia – which is produced as animal waste decomposes – can be to horses and humans.

Research provided by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health reveals that horses can be severely harmed by ammonia levels reaching 50 parts per million. Possibility of pneumonia and other respiratory problems are elevated at those levels, and severe reductions in animal performance and health have been documented. Sadly, Menner says he has measured ammonia levels exceeding 400 parts per million in many barns around the country.

“That's why we emphasize that when you smell ammonia in your barn, you have more than an odor problem – you have a health problem,” he says.

Sweet PDZ is bagged in granular or powder form, and is now available already mixed in bedding products, such as Hunt Club Bedding. Hunt Club is a dust-free, odor-free, environmentally friendly bedding product made of recycled corrugated kraft.

Another product to hit the market in the past few years: Stalosan F. Developed and used in Denmark for decades, Stalosan F is still a new face in the North American equine market. But it's catching on fast. Labeled as a "the unique hygiene product for effectively lowering the presence of infectious diseases and improving the environment in animal houses," Stalosan's pink powder is safe and odorless. Stalosan F is also available in Seminole Red Bird Shavings as a value-added product. Flies, odors and disease are prevented with the use of such products.

"When you reduce odor, you see less insects," says Dr. Maxcy Nolan, retired University of Georgia professor of entomology. "Organisms – mostly flies found in stalls – prefer the odor, so when you apply something like Stalosan, it creates an environment those organisms don't like. If they can't detect odor, they won't come around."

Prefer a different form of odor and bacteria control? Last fall, Extra Mile Marketing, LLC, of Woodstock, Georgia, presented ODORSAFE, an odor-free spray that neutralizes smells and is safe for stalls, riding helmets, shoes, clothing, saddle blankets and more. The makers of ODORSAFE also released STALLSAFE, a non-toxic, biodegradable liquid product that removes harmful bacteria from equine housing and trailers, effectively reducing outbreaks of strangles, streptococcus, E coli, rhinovirus, rhodococcus and staphylococcus. That's good news for breeding facilities, boarding and training environments, horse health professionals and horse owners in general. Plus, STALLSAFE can be applied to a stall while the horse is inside, unlike harsh bleach products that require time to dry before the environment is safe for horses. Peggy Miles, co-owner of the company, says STALLSAFE is so safe, you can literally gargle the liquid without any harmful consequences.

"The difference between this product and other cleaners like bleach or ammonia is that STALLSAFE gets rid of the biofilm," Miles says. "If you don't remove the biofilm, the bacteria, mold and fungus will return because you are leaving a favorable environment for them."

Ask your local tack store for products like Sweet PDZ, Stalosan F or ODORSAFE and STALLSAFE. With improved scientific research and better stable management each year, there's little reason to fight odor and pests in your barn.